

12 Principles of Ministry: Part 1—Proverbs 29:18; Jeremiah 29:11; Colossians 1:28

1. **Our ultimate goal is to build the kingdom of God through the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ**—This is done by participating in God’s plan and partnership with the Holy Spirit. Simply growing the church is NOT the ultimate goal (though it is often a byproduct). Therefore we should be concerned about spiritual depth as much as numerical growth. Nor are we a social club keeping busy with social activities. This should be kept in mind as we utilize our time, energy, and resources, as well as how we measure success.
2. **It is ultimately God who opens the doors**; and therefore, prayer needs to be both the starting point and the foundation (along with Scripture) for our church to move forward. How can we make this a greater priority?
3. **Simplicity is beautiful**—sometimes Christians make things unnecessarily complicated and add more stress to the people involved, which then leads to burn out as people forget the purpose of why they were doing something. In a related way, sometimes church become overly complicated with too many programs. Too many good things is not a good thing.
4. **People over Programs**—people are more important than programs or activities. Do not be so much about getting a task done if it is at the expense of a person (either burning them out or overcriticizing them for their mistakes).
5. **Ministry should be a calling, not a coercion**; it should be joyful and not burdensome. We should not have to guilt people into doing things for the church, nor should we just stick them where there is a gap. We should help people recognize their gifts and what they are passionate about and where that fits within the church ministry. This may mean at times when there are not enough ‘volunteers’, that it’s a sign from God to scale back or cut a program. This does not mean ministry will always be easy; it is often challenging, but it should be in a way that is stretching the person and not burning them out.
 - a. **Disclaimer**—there may be occasions where something really does need to get done and there’s no one clearly gifted or called to do it at the moment and one may need to sacrifice to fill in. However, this should be (1) The exception, not the rule; and (2) temporary.
6. **Good ministry tends to be lay driven and outward focused**—it has been said that dying churches are usually too pastor centered, program centered, and building centered. Some of the best ministry happens outside the church walls and are done by people other than the pastor.
 - a. Dying churches often treat their buildings like a museum or ‘sacred site’ rather than places to get messy with ministry.
 - b. Members of dying churches sometimes tend to view the church as a vendor to meet their needs because they paid their dues