

In the near future, you will be hearing more about the

YOUTH MINISTRY

SENIOR CITIZENS MINISTRY

EDUCATION MINISTRY

BUILDINGS & GROUNDS MINISTRY

WAYS & MEANS MINISTRY

PUBLIC RELATIONS MINISTRY

STEWARDSHIP MINISTRY

CHURCH GROWTH MINISTRY

and their programs. If you have any questions concerning any of these ministries, their work, their purpose and goals, please feel free to ask any council member or your pastor and they will gladly help.



(Put Name & Address
of Parish here.)

MINISTRY

THE GOOD SAMARITAN:



An
Explanation

Many people have been wondering why the words, "minister" and "ministry" are being used so often in our parish, lately. After all, does not "minister" really apply just to the priest, and is not "ministry" simply all the things that he does? Besides, are these words not really just Protestant words borrowed just to make the Orthodox Church seem more like other churches? We never used these words before, so why do we need them now? What do they have to do with being Orthodox?

We hope this pamphlet will answer these questions and define, clearly, the terms, "minister" and "ministry".

First, the words "minister" and "ministry" are used in various ways throughout the Bible, particularly, the New Testament. In the Biblical sense, a "minister" is not just an ordained person. He is foremost someone who "renders service to another", who "relieves", "assists" or "supplies the necessities of life."

Everyone in the New Testament had a "ministry". The angels ministered to Jesus in the wilderness (Mt. 4:11). The women (who later became the myrrhbearers) ministered "out of their means" to Christ during his life (Lk. 8:2). The apostles had a ministry (Acts 1:17). St. Paul received his ministry from the Lord Jesus (Acts 20:24). The family of Stephanas devoted themselves to the ministry of the saints, and others sent relief to the Christians living in Judea (Acts 11:29). Finally, Jesus Himself came "not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many." (Mt. 20:28).

From this, we see that "ministry" is at the heart of the New Testamental life. This applies to the Church's life today, as well.

The point of "ministry", whether it be two thousand years ago or today, is the use of one's gifts and talents for the welfare of another in need. St. Peter wrote simply, "As each has received a gift, employ it for one another" (I Pet. 4:10).

Perhaps without knowing it, all of us have "ministered" to others during our lifetime. Whenever one visits the sick, makes an effort in caring for someone, works to support the church, or just tries to assist people in any way, then he is "ministering". Here, "ministry" means the conscious use of one's talents for the needs of others without personal material or social gain.

The question we face, then, is not, "Should we minister?" -- (to some extent we are already doing that) -- but, "How can we encourage more people to get involved? How can we use our resources (as a parish and individually) more effectively and creatively? How can we meet the needs of our parishioners?"

Finally, all of this talk of ministry has a great deal to do with being an Orthodox Christian, for we will be judged not only for the evil things we have done, but for the good things which were not done: "'Lord, when did we see Thee hungry or thirsty, or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to Thee?' Then He will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it not to one of the least of these, you did it not to me'" (Mt. 25:45).

Our parish is in the process of developing various ministries. The purpose of these ministries will be to encourage, help, support and meet the needs of our parishioners, and therefore to enhance and strengthen the fiber of our community. Simply, these ministries will help in "building up the church" (I Cor. 14:12).