

Ed Horak

# Excellence of Ministry

## Chapter 1

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### Introduction

**I**t seems as if some people because of ignorance or neglect spend their lives cultivating insignificant lives in a vain attempt to evade a multitude of sorrows. The world is largely mired in mediocrity and so much potential is wasted as days drag into weeks and weeks into months and years of aimlessness.

In God's kingdom things are and ought to be different! God's ministers, if they are to accurately represent the God of excellence, must go over and above the ordinary and manifest God's majesty. God did not send an average person to do an average job in saving an average people destined for average things. No, He gave us Jesus, His best, so that we could live a life of excellence that brings Him glory. Thank God, He is different, and sets such a high standard. If He did not, He would not be supreme and we would continue sinking into lower and lower states, having nothing to look up to!

It is always a joy to purchase a product that is well engineered and constructed. It works exactly as it was made to, and keeps on working. You have no twinge of regret for paying what you did after years of flawless use. The 'product' in ministry, is the gospel. The channel through which it flows is your ministry. The gospel is the most excellent message ever, and each generation faces the challenge of cultivating a ministry that reflects the excellency of our God.

*They shall see the glory of the LORD,  
The excellency of our God. **Isaiah 35:2***

The definition of excellence is to be "over and above, to surpass or go beyond the ordinary or mediocre." This in itself is not a bad thing. But in God's economy, His person and character is the standard. Let me explain.

In the ways of the world, excellence will be comparative and competitive in nature. 'I am richer, faster, and smarter than you.' As a result pride is unavoidable. For pride gets no satisfaction or pleasure in having something, only in having **more** of it than the next person. Pride is a character matter in God's eyes. Yet the world rewards achievers even if they don't have character.

What is highly esteemed amongst men can be an abomination with God.

*And He said to them, "You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts.  
For what is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God. **Luke 16:15***

Status, prestige, power, possessions, impact and influence are highly valued amongst man. Yet a morally impeccable person may be considered a failure if he makes no public impact. In contrast, a person whose personal life is riddled with moral failure is often still able to make a public impact at least for a while. Hitler, Stalin, Napoleon, all showed all showed determination,

skill, resourcefulness, and were decisive. They were leaders and stood out, but unfortunately they stood out above the average in evil. Excellence must have a moral component.

Then too, God's ways are not the ways of ordinary man. He is extraordinary in all His ways and thoughts.

*"For My thoughts are not your thoughts,  
Nor are your ways My ways," says the LORD.*

**Isaiah 55: 8**

God measures everything in terms of calling, gifting and function. All things are of Him as the source, through Him as the process, and to Him for the glory, leaving no room for competition and its cousin, pride. Every minister has a unique position and function in Christ, and eternal rewards are given out in the light of the minister's response to his call. Not someone else's. We are all unique, and our place cannot be filled by someone else. If we realize this, we can be delivered from insecurity, competition and pride to pursue our calling with passion and excellence. Of course, the challenge is then to pursue excellence alongside some ministers still trapped in their unrenewed world view of excellence.

### **Look At Excellence This Way**

The standard of excellence is God's pure character, and not how well we are doing compared to someone else. The model of excellence is Jesus Christ Himself, making the goal of excellence becoming like Him. Character development is thus the focus of excellence, and the motive of excellence is to glorify God. There is no room for personal glory here. It's all wrapped up in God, not self! How big your ministry is, how much you have done for the poor, is not at the heart of the Bible view of excellence. Rather it is who you are. What you do must be rooted in who you are in Christ, for without Him we are nothing and can do nothing of eternal value.

Does that mean that ambition is improper for the minister of excellence? No. There is both godly and ungodly ambition. Ambition (or the desire or aspiration to succeed), when properly focused on bringing God glory, is a good thing. The need for man's acceptance and acclaim is closely linked to ungodly ambition. We should serve God with excellence out of gratitude for the love and acceptance He has already lavished on us, and not because of the standing and acclaim we can earn amongst men. We are 'complete in Christ' and excellence in any good work should start with that assurance.

*...and you are complete in Him,...* **Colossians 2:10**

The antidote to selfish ambition is to adopt a new mindset of service towards others.

*Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.*

**Philippians 2:3-4**

To be highly motivated is not as important as being motivated by high things!



## Chapter 2

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# Qualified for Public Ministry

Everyone in Christ has at some time heard the stinging criticism: “You are all a bunch of hypocrites. You say one thing and do another.” Sometimes that is true of Christians, and sadly even ministers. But it need not be, indeed should not be with the minister of excellence. Jesus was attacked in His ministry, but not ever for neglecting to follow through with what He said He would do. Because ministry has a lot to do with saying (preaching and teaching), the minister has to be sure that he preaches what he practices and practices what he preaches.

Personal integrity and discipline has a deep impact on public ministry. Jesus spoke with authority, because He lived life on the personal level with integrity. His disciples saw His devotion, love, discipline and faithfulness in private settings. He qualified for public ministry because of the victories He won in private. The temptations in the wilderness show this most clearly. Isolated and alone He faced temptations that zeroed in on the very core of His being.

*Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. **Matthew 4:1***

Ministry has to stand on firm foundations if the stormy winds are not to blow your ministry ‘house’ down. Be sure to build the following elements solidly. What we do must flow from who we are in Christ.

### Submitted To His Lordship

The enemy will exploit areas that are not submitted to the Lordship of Christ. Financial gray areas, relational weaknesses, ungodly need based ambition, are all open to the adversary to weaken ministry effectiveness and excellence. Obedience is the hallmark of excellence. The parable of the talents shows us that faithfulness in small things qualify the minister for bigger things. The Lord tests us in areas like food appetites, personal discipline in our thoughts words and attitudes so that we can see whether we are ready for more. It is relatively easy to ‘learn the lingo’ and speak words of edification that are proper. But to have a straight line connection between the meditations of our hearts to the words we speak is the real challenge of ministry.

*Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart Be acceptable in Your sight,  
O LORD, my strength and my Redeemer. **Psalms 19:14***

True ministry is from the heart. Jesus asks of everyone who represents Him:

*"But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do the things which I say? Whoever comes to Me, and hears My sayings and does them, I will show you whom he is like: He is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently against that house, and could not shake it, for it was founded on the rock. But he who heard and did nothing is like a man who built a house on the earth without a foundation, against which the stream beat vehemently; and immediately it fell. And the ruin of that house was great." **Luke 6:46-49***

To be submitted to His lordship involves a walk of humility and meekness. Humility opens the door to God's perspective, provision, and promises. If you 'stand up' in pride, you are no longer in the low place where you can receive from the Lord. He is obliged to resist you till that area comes under His control.

*Blessed are the meek,  
For they shall inherit the earth. **Matthew 5:5***

It's one thing to be taught of the Lord Himself, but to be taught through someone who is less than perfect is sometimes a challenge. When you are least expecting it, there will be a moment when the Lord wants to teach you something about life, people, or ministry through someone you don't necessarily consider in a better place than you. The minister of excellence learns the most **after** he thinks he knows it all! You always know and prophesy 'in part', so stay open to what more the Lord has to say about something. Do not allow a 'hardening' to develop in the 'school of hard knocks'. Get before the Lord to cleanse you of defilement and your 'youth' will be renewed like that of the eagle.

*But those who wait on the LORD  
Shall renew their strength;  
They shall mount up with wings like eagles,  
They shall run and not be weary,  
They shall walk and not faint. **Isaiah 40:31***

Some of the greatest tests come in the home. Your family knows you as you really are. That is what really counts. Jesus is not looking for the professionally successful minister, but the privately successful husband, wife, son, daughter. He instituted the family before the church, later modeling the church after this original blueprint of the family. Avoid making an idol of ministry and escaping family responsibilities through public ministry. How many destroyed 'ministry kids' can testify to the disconnect between private and public life of their parents? Unfortunately, there are far too many discouraged children of ministers. Paul instructs that leadership in the church ought to spring from leadership in the home.

*This is a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach; not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous; one who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence (for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?); not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil.*

**1 Timothy 3:1-6**

The crucible of character development is definitely not in the pulpit, but in the home. Charisma without character is like a car with its wheel about to fall off on the freeway.

Private failures sooner or later manifest in public failures. You cannot minister with excellence without a sure footing in private. Proper respect and agreement with your spouse is cardinal. Provision and protection of your first disciples, your wife and children, is what the Lord wants to see. He is not pleased with a worldwide ministry if your own 'hood' is not reached.

A disciplined lifestyle promotes excellence. It has been said that the secret to success is found in your daily routine: spirit, soul and body. Routine and good habits have to be cultivated. They do not come naturally. Only bad habits come “naturally.” Like weeds, bad habits will grow without any special cultivation. That is why Jesus said that disciples, or His close followers, have to be made!

*“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, ... teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; ...”* **Matthew 28:19**

Disciples have to be taught to observe or put into practice what they have heard. The process starts when the one doing the discipling has first been disciplined himself. Jesus commands us to be disciplined followers. Then and then only can a true impartation to others be made. You cannot reproduce what you are not yourself.

Discipline may be defined as a life lived in accordance with rules or within boundaries and subject to control. Like a river that flows within its banks, a life and ministry of excellence that is subject to God’s rules and boundaries, is a blessing. Whether we understand or like it or not, we live our lives according to some or other law.

*There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.* **Romans 8:1-2**

You either live according to the dictates of the flesh or the ‘liberating laws’ of the spirit. Lawlessness lands you in trouble, whereas obedience to God’s word lets you in on abundance of life as He lives it. He is free from sin, sickness and selfishness. Only in Him can we be truly free. He abides by His own law, and as we follow Him as disciples we also enjoy true freedom.

Discipline must be exercised in three areas: spirit, soul and body. Bodily discipline is a little help, bringing thoughts into subjection to Christ, even more helpful, but when our spirits are disciplined for the purpose of godliness, this practice becomes profitable for all things.

*...exercise yourself toward godliness. For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come.*

**1 Timothy 4:7-8**

Salvation is from the inside out. When my spirit is disciplined I have the inner strength to manage my mind and body. The inner man brings the outer man into subjection.

*But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.* **1 Corinthians 9:27**

There are no short cuts to developing a disciplined lifestyle. We are the sum of a series of ‘small’ choices: to go to sleep early enough, exercise regularly, eat less, study diligently, pray, pick up our clothes, wash the dishes right away. In themselves they are not significant, but together they build a life of discipline or a life characterized by slackness.

*Go to the ant, you sluggard!  
Consider her ways and be wise,*

*Which, having no captain,  
Overseer or ruler,  
Provides her supplies in the summer,  
And gathers her food in the harvest.  
How long will you slumber, O sluggard?  
When will you rise from your sleep?  
A little sleep, a little slumber,  
A little folding of the hands to sleep--  
So shall your poverty come on you like a prowler,  
And your need like an armed man. **Proverbs 6:6-11***

The ant is a little creature with a big lesson to teach. Just a little neglect can go a long way in the end. As King Solomon taught, it is not the big things that trip us up, but the ‘little foxes.’ Like promptness in returning calls.

Often great harm is done through simple neglect to do the right thing. In time, a ministry can drift off course not by any conscious choice to do wrong, but by unconscious neglect.

*Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away. For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation,...*

**Hebrews 2:1-3**

The corrections needed to stay on track over time in all areas of life and ministry, are usually small ones. It is like driving a car. Once on the freeway, only small adjustments are needed to keep the car safely in its lane. But if the driver neglects to keep his eye on the road and stretch for something behind him on the back seat, a small neglect can have a big consequence as he drifts off course.

We are instructed to examine ourselves to see whether we are ‘in the faith.’

*Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. **2 Corinthians 13:5***

You would think it would be obvious whether we were in faith or not? Not according to this scripture. Faith or wholehearted trust in God’s word pleases the Father, and according to this scripture, it is possible to continue along and ‘drift off’ into practicing life and ministry without truly being in faith. Paul goes on and makes this point to the Colossians that it is not automatic that just because you start well you will end up on target, pleasing the Father through your faith. Many ministers begin in faith but end up in the flesh, reverting back to their own ways, not being totally committed to continue in God’s higher ways of faith.

*...if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard,...* **Colossians 1:23**

There is continual pressure to be ‘moved away’ from a position of faith, and the minister of excellence must stand his ground and fight the good fight of faith, leaning not to his own natural understanding, but trusting in the Lord to do what He has promised.

## Chapter 3

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# The Priority of Personal Passion

### Introduction

**I**n serving the Lord there is a temptation to miss the better part and be busy with the work of the Lord to the neglect of a vital devotion to the Lord of the work Himself. God saved us for His pleasure and seeks worshippers first, not workers. We are saved from a life of striving through our own efforts to please Him and earn His favor. He wants us to learn to sit at His feet first and receive an abundance of His grace, so we can then go out in the strength of that intimacy and truly carry His grace to those who have no real knowledge of His love.

*Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word. But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me." And Jesus answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her."*

**Luke 10:38-42**

Martha was distracted with much serving. Maintaining a balance between ministering to the Lord, one another and the lost is something we are responsible for. The Lord will allow you to overwork, just the same way as He will allow you to overeat. Imbalance is not His fault. It is ours. He has given us His word and expects us to attach the proper weight to our worship that He demands. Jesus showed that the good part that Mary chose, to sit at His feet in devotion, would not be taken from her. He implied that work would someday be taken from a person, but not worship. He thus set a priority in ministry. Worship first, work second. We are expected to minister out of the overflow of our intimacy to the Lord, bringing the warmth of fresh bread straight from the heart of God. Remember God first breathed His life into Adam, and then Adam breathed out. This is the divine pattern of ministry. Breathe in, and then breathe out. Daniel learnt that in order to do great exploits we must first know God.

*...the people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits.*

**Daniel 11:32**

Know God and make Him known. That is our mandate. The apostles learnt the danger of improper balance and focus early on in their ministry. A situation arose when they labored at the tables to the neglect of their ministry to the Lord in prayer and the word. So they met and instituted deacons to help them attain a balance to their ministry.

*Now in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a murmuring against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution. Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, "It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables."*

*Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word." Acts 6:1-4*

Later on, we see that Paul and Barnabas were sent out together on their apostolic ministry in an environment of ministry to the Lord. The leadership of the church at Antioch was given to worshipping the Lord, praying and fasting together.

*Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away. Acts 13:1-3*

They ministered to the Lord and fasted. God wants ministry to be birthed in worship and prayer. He is the source of ministry. Not our own zeal.

### **The Age-Old Pattern Must Continue**

Back in the day, God appointed a special tribe, Levi to bear His Presence and minister to Him, blessing His name. Today every believer is called to be a kingdom of priests and offer the sacrifice of praise continually.

*At that time the LORD separated the tribe of Levi to bear the ark of the covenant of the LORD, to stand before the LORD to minister to Him and to bless in His name,... Deuteronomy 10:8*

*...by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name. Hebrews 13:15*

Elsewhere, we see even the young Samuel developing his relationship with the Lord by ministering to Him. He did so in the face of wickedness all around, and his devotion sustained and kept him pure for later ministry.

*But Samuel ministered before the LORD, even as a child, wearing a linen ephod. 1 Samuel 2:18*

When Solomon's temple was dedicated we see the pattern continue as the singing Levites ministered to the Lord in praise and thanksgiving.

*the Levites who were the singers, all those of Asaph and Heman and Jeduthun, with their sons and their brethren, stood at the east end of the altar, clothed in white linen, having cymbals, stringed instruments and harps, and with them one hundred and twenty priests sounding with trumpets--indeed it came to pass, when the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the LORD, and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised the LORD, saying:*

*"For He is good,  
For His mercy endures forever,"*

*that the house, the house of the LORD, was filled with a cloud, so that the priests could not continue ministering because of the cloud; for the glory of the LORD filled the house of God.*

**2 Chronicles 5:12-14**

When we saturate the house with praise, God will saturate the house with His presence and manifest His glory. It is our responsibility to establish and maintain a lifestyle of devotion to the Lord first.

Anna the prophetess, who spoke for God in her time, served or ministered to the Lord night and day in the temple. It was out of her ministry to the Lord that she spoke to the people.

*Now there was one, Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, and had lived with a husband seven years from her virginity; and this woman was a widow of about eighty-four years, who did not depart from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day. And coming in that instant she gave thanks to the Lord, and spoke of Him to all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem.*

**Luke 2:36-38**

She was faithful for eighty-four years and was rewarded with a face to face encounter with Israel's redeemer, the baby Jesus. God rewards those that diligently seek Him. She was in tune with the Spirit of God, prompting her to keep focused on her first ministry: prayer and worship. She spoke out of the freshness of this communion.

God's eternal purpose is highlighted with a dramatic scene in heaven given to us in the book of Revelations. Every living creature in heaven and on earth, including the elders, is found worshipping God. Worship is therefore the cornerstone of all ministry.

*Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice:*

*"Worthy is the Lamb who was slain  
To receive power and riches and wisdom,  
And strength and honor and glory and blessing!"*

*And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying:*

*"Blessing and honor and glory and power  
Be to Him who sits on the throne,  
And to the Lamb, forever and ever!"*

*Then the four living creatures said, "Amen!" And the twenty-four elders fell down and worshiped Him who lives forever and ever. **Revelation 5:11-14***

## God's Eternal Purpose: 'Presence'

God created us for His pleasure and saved us for Himself because He loves us. Sure we get to share in His ministry of reaching the world, but this involvement with men follows our involvement with God. He sought us out, in the same way He approached Adam in the garden, Abraham in the Chaldees, and Moses at the bush in the wilderness. The whole plan of salvation involves restoring us back to close intimate fellowship with Him. When Jesus died and rose again, He gave us the promised Spirit to indwell us, not just to visit with us on occasion. His desire is to walk and talk with us once again in the cool of the garden, unhindered by sin. We are now God's temple, or place of dwelling, and like the priests before us His presence is to be honored at all times in a lifestyle of worship and ministry to Him.

*This people I have formed for Myself;  
They shall declare My praise. **Isaiah 43:21***

Who shall declare God's praise? The people He formed for Himself. We love Him for who He is. That is the highest form of love. When we approach Him to tell Him simply that we love Him, it touches His heart. Yes, He desires to bless us with what we need to sustain us on earth, and will, but He longs to hear us love Him for who He is. It is reported that President Lincoln was moved to tears when an old lady simply brought him some cookies to bless him, not asking for any favors like almost all his other visitors who sought an appointment with him.

## Already In Motion

Our service for God is but part of what is already in motion. Jesus is already building His church, and it's all going to work out. Yet God chooses us to work with Him in what He has already set in motion. Really there ought to be no sweat and striving to achieve something that He has not already mapped out. All things are of Him, through Him and to Him. Romans 11:36 teaches us that. We have to guard against ministry to others becoming an idol that stands between us and God. We can be so busy with the Lord's work, that we forget that God wants our hearts before He wants our hands! The wonderful thing is that when you go deeper into the Lord, He will send you out further.

Jesus did that with His disciples. He called them to Himself first in relationship, and then began to make them into close followers, equipping them for service. Not only did he teach them by precept and example how to meet the needs of the people but He also taught them to pray and worship. At the last supper before He went to the cross, he led in a moment of intimacy and sang a hymn with them. Worship was part of the group's lifestyle.

*And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. **Matthew 26:30***

Any battle needs preparation. He was about to face His fiercest moment of temptation yet, so He prepared His heart with worship and prayer. A ministry of excellence will be characterized by spiritual preparation. God will exchange His strength for ours when we 'wait' on Him and receive His refreshing.

*But those who wait on the LORD  
Shall renew their strength;  
They shall mount up with wings like eagles,  
They shall run and not be weary,  
They shall walk and not faint. **Isaiah 40:31***

Take time to be still. Still deep pools of water reflect the scenery better. When we become still in the Lord's presence, we better reflect His glory.

*Be still, and know that I am God; **Psalm 46:10***

Things are revealed in an atmosphere of reverence and worship. The apostle John experienced a new dimension to his ministry when he was 'in the Spirit on the Lord's Day.'

*I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet, saying,  
"I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last,"*

**Revelation 1:10-11**

Although exiled for his faith on the Island of Patmos, he maintained spiritual discipline and continued to worship God, honoring the Lord's Day. His ears were opened to hear the Lord's voice, and later saw wondrous things in his heavenly vision of the throne room. (Rev 4) John's devotion positioned him for receiving revelation of what was normally hidden. Your ministry to the Lord will do the same for you.

### **Maintaining Spiritual Passion**

In time, even the best motivated minister can become drained of spiritual passion. The mere fact of living in a fallen world with its negativity can work against spiritual vitality. That is why we are encouraged to live life each day with the necessary fresh bread for that day only. If you allow the memories of yesterday's shortcomings, and the anxieties of tomorrow's uncertainties to crowd your todays, ministry passion will be difficult to sustain. Like anything, passion must be maintained and protected.

Let's now look into some elements of ministry that need to be managed to avoid the danger of becoming spiritually 'drained' of passion.

### **Commitment To Good Works Ordained For You**

There is a limit to what any ministry can or should be committed to. People around you through conversation or books or media communications will show what works well for them. Because some project is a good idea, does not necessarily make it a 'God idea' for your ministry. We know, prophesy and perform only in part, and if we do not know the boundaries and limitations of our call, we can burn out trying to do good works ordained for someone else. Humbly seek the Lord for His wisdom and perspective on what you are doing, and run your race in your lane, not someone else's.

## Hyperactivity

Some people's lives are filled with places to go, conferences, seminars and conventions to attend, banquets and retreats to officiate at. The list can go on. Being over stimulated can be as draining as being under stimulated. When the good shepherd wants you to drink, it should be from still waters not from rushing Niagara Falls water. You can get blown away when you drink from a fire hydrant instead of a faucet. When devotion suffers at the expense of activity, burnout is on the way.

Preserve a calmness of spirit. There is work to do, effort to be expended, but not in a blind haste where God's peace is left behind. Hyperactivity can lead to mental and spiritual fatigue.

After intense spiritual effort, realize that the enemy crouches at the door waiting to take advantage of you if you do not allow time for rest, reflection and recharging. Remember Elijah came down from the high of the Mt. Carmel confrontation with the false prophets and fell into a depression. He was drained and needed time with God to regain perspective. Recognize and cooperate with the seasons of activity and rest.

Ministry must have a rhythm to it dictated to by God, not by demands. There will always be more and more demands if we open ourselves to them. Be led by the Spirit to enable times of rest, remembrance and recollection where you renounce things that will drain your effectiveness.

Realize too, that just as you need special times to maintain spiritual passion, you need special friends that feed your fire! Honestly some folk when you are around them have a 'draining' effect on your passion. They soak it up through their negativity, critical spirit, hidden agendas and slowness. They may not be negative, but they are not positive either. When you need recharging, you need special friends who bring something to you, share your passion and stand with you. Trusted intercessors can help you carry a load that threatens to unduly weigh you down. Also, be open to be such a one for your peers when they are in need.