

TO THE GROUP LEADER: This resource is designed to help you lead others to better understand one of the “Basics of the Faith” booklets published by P&R. The numbers in brackets indicate the page number in the booklet. Below each question is an answer based on what the author presents, or advice on how to discuss the question. You have the freedom to adapt the questions to best fit your group.

A good teaching technique is to distribute the questions to the group and have them write down how they would answer BEFORE reading the booklet. After reading, members can refine their answers based on their reading. As a group, members can discuss their views to affirm or modify what they wrote.

1. Define what you think it means to be “called to the ministry.” (5)
See what answers the members of the group wrote before they read the booklet and what they answer now.
2. What does it take to be called into the ministry? (5-8)
The call must initially be from God and later affirmed by the people of God. A call also comes with suffering of all kinds. It has been said: “God will not use you greatly until He has hurt you deeply.” One who ministers is going to be seen as an example to the flock of what it looks like to be a Christian. They will watch the ups and they will want to see how he handles the downs.
3. All preaching must be “Christ-centered.” What does that mean, and why is it so important? (8-11)
Christ is the center-piece not only of the Bible but all of life. The first commandment is to have Christ (God) as the center of your life. He will not take second place in anything – He is God! John Piper puts it well when he says: “God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him.” All preaching and teaching must keep Christ in focus and bring us to the point of asking, “What must I do as a result of what I have just heard?”
4. What are some of the duties of pastoring? (11-16)
 - *Preaching and teaching*
 - *Shepherding the people of God (he must be a willing servant)*
 - *Leading in public worship in a way the people know they have been in the presence of God*
 - *Knowing the people personally, which must include the children so they grow up feeling the pastor believes they are a vital part of the church*
 - *Knowing the people well enough to be able to pray for their needs and address what he knows the people need to hear in his sermons*
5. How can an individual know he is called to the gospel ministry? (16-22)
The basic answer is “by the Word and prayer in the context of a worshiping community.” (19) There must be the willingness to be the servant of the people and not their lord (sheep need to be led and not driven). Some might receive a direct call from God while others might have this call confirmed by spiritually mature believers in his church.
6. Read James 3:1. Why is it wise not to jump too quickly into believing you are called? (22)

James' warning is not to be taken lightly. One who is called to the gospel ministry will be required to be growing constantly in God's Word. This means he will always be growing in his awareness of his sin and vulnerability, and therefore, will be held more accountable by God.

7. List your strengths and weaknesses ranking them from 1-10 with one being you have no ability or desire to minister in this area and 10 being the area where you feel most comfortable. (22-26)

<u>Strengths</u>	<u>Weaknesses</u>

As the group shares these strengths and weaknesses, have the others in the group rank them as *they* see this individual's strengths and weaknesses. Keep everything positive.

8. Should the call to the gospel ministry be an internal call or external? (26-30)
It must be both! The internal call must be from the Holy Spirit Who gifts him and makes it clear he is being called by Him into service. The external call is God's way of confirming a man's call through the leaders and other spiritually mature believers in His church.

After going through these questions, read the text and fill in the answers in preparation for class, noting other questions you might have. [By the way, if you do have any other questions about what you read, write them down here so you remember them at class time.]

APPLICATION

As a group:

If the group feels there is one among them who might have this kind of call on his life, let it be known to him. Let them pray for him, and let them do whatever they can to find areas of service where his gifts might be tested and confirmed.

For an individual

If you think you might be called by God to serve Him in this way, make it known to the elders of your church. Ask them to pray for you, and ask them to help confirm if you have what it takes to exercise such a call.

For Further Study

Called to the Ministry, Edmund P. Clowney. P&R, 1976.

Dangerous Calling: Confronting the Unique Challenges of Pastoral Ministry, Paul David Tripp. Crossway, 2015.

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