



# Church ON Purpose

## Sermon Growth Guide

**February 11, 2024**

**What's Your Ministry?**



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**Church On Purpose – What’s Your Ministry?**

**1 Corinthians 4:1-7**

**Key Verse:** 1 Corinthians 4:1

“This, then, is how you ought to regard us: as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the mysteries God has revealed.”

**Big Idea:** God has given a ministry to every member of His body. What ministry has God entrusted to you?

## Foundations

This week we conclude our series, ***Church on Purpose***.

We’ve been looking at our Discipleship Pathway here at First Pres. The Spirit is moving us forward into deeper intimacy with the Lord and the Spirit entrusts each of us with ministry. Wow! We are servants of the Lord, and He calls us to be faithful with what we have been given.

What does it look like to be an *Activated Disciple*? It means we are being faithful in *acting* on the gifts God has given us to minister to others. That action looks different, perhaps, from person to person depending on the person. For some of us, it might mean, “get busy!” For others it might mean, “slow down!”

Paul indicates that it is the Lord who is evaluating our faithfulness. We don’t worry about what others think, but we care deeply about what the Lord thinks! So, how do we hear from the Lord? How is the Lord inviting you into deeper trust of Him to use you to minister to others? Where do you struggle to trust Him?

We wait on the Lord.

We ask the Lord to reveal our motives. We help each other to discern how the Lord is leading us!

## Understanding God’s Word

Together, read 1 Corinthians 4:1-7.

What do you hear, observe, notice about this passage?

What does it mean to be a “servant of the Lord.”

## Applying God’s Word

Read 1 Corinthians 4:1-2 again.

Share what ministry (or ministry gift) you believe God has entrusted to you. Ask others what they see in you? How is God calling you to be faithful with what He has given you and how are you doing at that?

## Witnessing God’s Word

As you look at the “discipleship pathway,” where would you place yourself on the path? Think about your neighbors, and those around you who might not know the Lord. Pick two people who are on your heart and note where you think they might be on the pathway.

It is not your job to convert them (thankfully!), but it is your work to love them well in Jesus’ name right where they are. What might that look like this week? Will you commit to praying for them and being open to God using you in their lives? Pray together!

Let's be a church. That's the idea. **Church on Purpose.** Is your life in Christian community accidental or intentional? What if we were planting this church new right now? How committed, how intentional would you be? How would we reach Colorado Springs for Christ? We are postured for great impact. We would start by looking at our city and its people with the eyes of Jesus. God looks down from heaven and sees two groups, two races of humanity, those in Adam and those in Christ. If you are in Adam, you are still in the sin and disobedience of Adam and Eve, separated from God and walking the path of destruction. But whoever puts their faith in Christ, whoever calls on His name, trusts in Him, is saved and transferred from the kingdom of darkness into the light of life.

So, as we have arranged our thinking together, we have Community Members, strangers whose lives we seek to understand. We have Participants, people we know and keep in friendship watching for an opportunity to love and serve, and to offer Jesus to them with every hope that they give their life to Christ and become a Worshiper—a person who knows Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, who is no longer headed toward eternal death but is with Jesus on a path to eternal life. Hell is robbed for heaven's gain. There is nothing more important than this. This is eternity. To be Light and Life for the City is to be engaged in reaching the lost for Christ, in seeing souls saved, in seeing people who didn't know Jesus come to know Him and His saving power. What is more important than this?

But many who are in Christ just stop there. Maybe that's some of you this morning, or people you know. Sometimes we carry our salvation around in our back pocket like a fire insurance policy. "I know I'm not going to hell, so let's party! Let's live it up." And we live just like the world around us swallowing all the empty promises of the worldly life when Christ invites us to be Disciples, followers of His way, living new life in Him, rewarding life, full life, happy life. But we remain infants, as Paul wrote, only able to take milk, not solid food. We are meant to be growing in this stage, and many people try to build into us. "I planted

the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow." (1 Corinthians 3:6) We learn to build our lives on Christ, our foundation. "For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ." (1 Corinthians 3:11) In this stage, the follower of Christ comes under attack.

"Little pig, little pig, let me in." Who knew there was so much depth to the Three Little Pigs as Pastor Greg showed us last week? Sin is crouching at the door waiting to devour. How many ways do we open that door? As followers of Christ, as those who are being saved, still we open the door. "I think I'll just let in a little of that." In it comes and devours us. There are things we think we consume, but they consume us. You don't consume drugs, marijuana; marijuana consumes you. You don't consume a little pornography; pornography consumes you. You don't consume social media; social media consumes you, especially the young Christians. Saved. Still, we open the door. Consume outrage news; it eats you up. Just a taste of greed for material wealth, just a pinch of pride, just an ounce of sloth, a little lust. Eaten. If the devil can't keep you from heaven, he sure wants to block you from bringing any heaven down on earth. If he can't kill you, he sure wants to distract you. And we let him in. But even then, we can turn and flee. We can run to the safety of our Savior. "The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous run into it and are safe." (Proverbs 18:10) We are safe in the name of Jesus. Satan can huff and puff all he likes. My life belongs to Jesus Christ and in His name, you cannot knock it down.

We get attacked, but we also just stall out here. We get wrapped up in learning and never doing. We have milk, and milk and milk. We have access, spoon-fed, to more information about the Bible, about God, about history...Oh! There is so much great stuff! We start to see Christianity as a cruise ship with a full schedule of fascinating lectures to keep our minds titillated until the next buffet. We sit and we soak, and we sour in the pools of information. I like lectures. We have some great lectures around here, and some coming up I hope you attend.

But it doesn't end there. We are meant to serve, to be doers of the word, not just hearers only. "But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves." (James 1:22) Jesus said at the end of the Sermon on the Mount, the one who hears and applies finds their way. "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock." (Matthew 7:24) There's no prize for listening; there is no spiritual gift of knowing a lot. There's a ministry of teaching. But there are no ribbons for the know-it-all. Do! Knowing what I know, what now must I do?

That's where we are today, finally. Activated Disciples. Have you found your ministry? Have you found your place to serve? **What's Your Ministry?** This is the language we need up and down the halls of this church. This is not a cruise ship; this is a battleship. If you are on board, you need to know where you need to be to serve. On the back of your card is our First Pres Way Seven Values. See the challenge questions? "Where are you serving? Where are you giving? Are you invested in someone else knowing Jesus?" We are not running a museum here, or a monument to past glory. This is a movement to reach this city today with the good news of Jesus. What's your ministry? Do you know? Last Sunday afternoon, we announced a change to our session and staff structures to lead to a lot more involvement from the congregation in the responsibilities of ministry. What's your ministry? Because if you are a believer, if you are in Christ, you have been entrusted with a deposit.

"This, then, is how you ought to regard us: as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the mysteries God has revealed." (1 Corinthians 4:1) Now, in the context of this letter, Paul is defending his apostolic authority here, but this is for all of us who are in Christ. This is what we grow up into. You are a servant of Christ. You have been entrusted. This word "servant" means a steward or manager. Stewards entrusted. Entrusted with what? With the mysteries of God. What's that? Do you remember, from up the page? The greatest revealed mystery, the greatest

revealed wisdom, the wisdom beyond all human wisdom, what is it? Jesus Christ and what He did for us on the cross. "For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified." (1 Corinthians 2:2) The gospel. The good news that Jesus came, and Jesus died, and the debt of our sins has been paid, and we can be forgiven, and Jesus rose from the dead, and we can be raised, and follow Him into new life, eternal life with God. The shame of sin is removed and new life rises like dawn. That is the mystery of God, and you have been entrusted with that information. You know! Will the world know? "Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful." (1 Corinthians 4:2) You have been entrusted. Prove faithful.

What's your ministry? Every believer is given a gift by the Holy Spirit. Did you know that? You have been entrusted with the mysteries of God, the deposit of the gospel, and you are commissioned to share that, but you also have a particular, unique gift from the Spirit of God that you are meant to use for this mission. Paul gets to this later in the letter: "There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them...Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good...All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines. Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ." (1 Corinthians 12:4,7,11-12) We are the body of Christ, the manifestation of His character in the world right now. You have a gift to bring to that body. Did you know if you are a member here you have access to a personalized page on the website? You can take a Spiritual Gifts Assessment to find what God has given you. Also, every year we host My Part Sunday to encourage you to find a place to serve, but you don't have to wait for Pentecost. Right here on the website you can jump in. This isn't a museum. This isn't a cruise ship. This is a movement and the battle is real and we need an "every member a minister" attitude. Don't go to church; be the church. We aren't spiritual consumers, we exist to seek and to save the lost. What's your ministry? What are you willing to try?

My wife Abigail is wrapping up seven years in leadership with a microlending ministry that was started by an elder here in our church, Eddie Yassa. It's called Touch of Love International, or TOLI, and Abigail became the first Executive Director when it was a small seed. They have hired a new Executive Director this month to lead what is now a growing staff of dozens around the world. It has caused us to look back in gratitude at all Abigail has done in missions. In 2001, Abigail said yes to joining me on a trip to Kenya. We stood in front of First Pres, Moorestown, to get commissioned. Abigail was nervous, and she remembers the Bible on the table was opened to Psalm 16. "Keep me safe, my God, for in you I take refuge." (Psalms 16:1) Abigail thought, "What am I doing? I'm not a pastor. I'm not a missionary. What will I possibly have to offer?" But she said yes to Jesus and went.

In Kikuyu, Kenya, sits the Church of the Torch, planted by Scottish Presbyterians in 1910. Now it's a stone cathedral that can seat 1500 or so, and nearby is a school, and a hospital, and a rehab center, and an elderly care facility, and all those things that naturally grow from a healthy, worshipping church. The women of the church also started a street kids feeding ministry. Kids came for food each day and a short lesson. We brought storage tubs full of shoes and socks to give these kids who went barefoot. Suddenly, Abigail thought, "Oh. Putting socks and shoes on kids. This I can do!" Each child came up and she put the fresh socks on, then found a pair of shoes to match, and tenderly laced up these new shoes on those little feet with a smile and a tear. "Oh. I can serve." Now, imagine five tubs of random shoes behind us and lines and lines of over 100 kids. It was down to the last few. And there was no planning to match kids to shoes, see. There was no way to plan. Would we have enough? Would we have the right sizes? Abigail and the others were praying and praying. The final boy came up to her, and she turned and pulled out the final pair of shoes, and it fit. Is that a small thing? God meets us. God has entrusted us, but He does not leave us to do it alone. He is with us!

Fast forward 23 years, and here Abigail and I were sitting in Greenville last week at the ECO National Gathering with her coming to the close of a season as the Executive Director of a global missions ministry operating in five nations with dozens of staff around the world to the glory of Jesus. All because she said yes and went. The final speaker at the gathering preached on Psalm 16. The same Psalm she remembered looking down on as we were commissioned for that first trip to Kenya. Small thing? Well, that's a lot about my sweet wife. But do you see the point? You don't know what God is going to do with your yes to move out and serve, to try it. Take the chance and find your gift, and activate your discipleship, and be a doer of the Word. What is God calling you to do? Take that step. Let's be the church on mission. The key isn't that you do what I want you to do; the key is that you do what Christ wants you to do. Let's reach this city for Christ under His direction.