

Why do you do what you do? Developing a Philosophy of Ministry

By Gregory A. Wiens

"Everybody has a philosophy. I mean everybody. Even if you don't know what it is you have one." Unknown blogger

When it comes to your work for the church, do you know why you do what you do? And how you do it? The answers may seem rather obvious, but if the day comes when you are challenged to answer the questions with pen and paper, do you know where you would start?

Perhaps you've heard the commonly used quote by Zig Ziglar, *"If you aim at nothing, you will hit it every time."* Understanding one's ministry philosophy keeps the work focused on the right target for the right reasons.

Over recent years, I've wrestled with this question, and through the struggling, I've settled on an answer in four parts: my assumptions of ministry; my gifts; my leadership style; and my calling.

Because I know of the value this exercise was to me, I want to encourage you to take time to forge your own Philosophy of Ministry. This week, I'll start by sharing my assumptions of ministry with you. The next three weeks will cover the other sections I mentioned above. Please hear me -- your philosophy doesn't have to mimic mine. I'm only sharing so you know I actually went through this process.

During assessment debriefs, I tell people that they are wonderfully and fearfully made. Because of this Biblical truth, I want you to resist the urge to Google "Philosophies of Ministry" and instead seek guidance from the Holy Spirit. Ask Him to guide you as you develop your philosophy. Do you believe that we are each uniquely made for His glory?

While my philosophy has four parts, yours may have more or less. You may use Scripture verses. You may have one paragraph. It's your story to write.

Even if you've done this in years past, is it time to take it out of the folder and revisit your thoughts? How often do you evaluate your ministry?

As we share this journey over the next four weeks, I hope you'll share with me how it's going. What is foundational to your philosophy? What has God been teaching you? Enough questions for now.

Here's my first part of Greg Wiens' Philosophy of Ministry.

1. God has called us to produce disciples, not reshuffle the deck. God has left each of us on this earth to reach those who do not know Him and then build them up toward fully devoted followers of Christ. We don't expect redemptive behavior from unredeemed people.
2. God has given every pastor his/her own vision; one cannot effectively steal another's vision. We must spend time with God and get feedback from His body to clarify God vision for each of us. This vision will be different from others.
3. God produces growth. We simply help create healthy environments where growth can occur. Growth is not up to us, creating a healthy environment is.
4. Our battle is with satan, not pagans. We must take spiritual warfare seriously and pray accordingly. The enemy would love to get us quarreling with other followers of Christ.
5. God has called us to build His Kingdom, not an empire. Most churches can grow effectively to 150-200 and multiply. Some will grow larger, but all can multiply.
6. God calls teams of people who are gifted in very different ways to work together to accomplish His unique vision through them. Because we are all gifted in different ways, we need each other, but at times will find it difficult to work with each others.

Until next week.