



Equipping and Caring Ministry of Lay Pastors

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The Korean churches are faced with a great paradigm shift of the pastoral ministry. Here the key issue is whether lay people should be viewed as a mere object of the pastoral ministry or as a subject of and pastor's partner for it. In many of the Korean churches the pastoral ministry have been considered as a 'restricted' are for pastors where layman are prohibited from getting access. But now pastors should open the 'restricted' are to lay people and build the church, the body of Christ together with them.

Why then should lay people be considered as a partner for the pastoral ministry? There are some clear biblical and theological reasons for this. Besides these, the tradition of pastoral ministry and the reality of the Korean churches also seem to point to the same direction. How could the Korean churches experience such an explosive growth despite considerably short of history of mission? No one can deny that lay people played a large role for pastoral ministry and church growth. The lay leaders led worship service in small groups, taught the Bible, and often prayed pastoral visits to their fellow church members, took care of the poor family in the church and prayed for them, and provided them counsels regarding various difficult problems. All these can be described in today's terms as pastoral ministry or pastoral caring. Furthermore, lay ministry was at the very core of the discipleship training movement in the Korean churches which began in the late 1970s, the cell church movement which began to emerge in the mid-1990s, the praise and worship movement, and evangelism ministry. Hallelujah Church established an institute for lay ministry in the early 1990s and developed various lay ministries in the church.

To put it short, the Korean churches have been experiencing a paradigm shift in the pastoral ministry. Lay people are no longer viewed as a mere object of the pastoral caring. They are now recognized as good partners of pastors for the pastoral ministry. If the Reformation of the 16th century gave the Bible back to the hands of lay people, the reformation of today gives the pastoral ministry back to them. This is the time for lay people to respond carefully to the paradigm shift of the pastoral ministry.

Church is an eschatological, organic, and covenantal community. As the members of the eschatological community all the believers have already foretasted the Kingdom of Gd. There is no difference between pastors and lay people in their status. As the members of the organic community they constitute one body of Christ. Pastors and lay people are forming equal parts of it. As the members of the covenantal community they have received Jesus as the Mediator of the new covenant (Luke 22:20; I Cor. 11:25; Heb. 9:15; 12:24) and have experienced his self-giving love for us on the cross. And

they have the co-responsibility to love and take care of each other. Therefore in the church community every member is expected to participate in pastoral caring ministry.

And the church should have the pastoral caring structure which reflects the organic characteristics of the human body since it is the body of Christ (Eph. 1:23; Co. 1:18, 24). The body always moves in one and the same direction even though it has many parts with different functions. Likewise the church as a whole has one and the same goal although its individual members may have many distinct goals. Accordingly the church needs a systematic organization which reflects the organic nature of the human body.

The church is not only the body of Christ but also a family of God. Therefore the church member's pastoral caring for each other can be the most important ministry in the church. This constitutes the infrastructure of pastoral ministry. Only when this ministry is successfully done, the church will be able to develop the culture of loving each other. And when this culture is well developed, the church will have revivals and become most influential in the world. Therefore the church should exert every effort to prepare the 'lay ministers' and support their pastoral caring ministry.

"God-world-church" can be three focal points to characterize the pastoral ministry. God loved the world so much that he gave his one and the only son. And he called the chosen people out of the world and made them as his church. But it should be also noted that the risen Christ said to his disciples, "As the Father has sent me, I am sending you" (John 20:21). Therefore the church should be characterized both by its gathering from and being sent to the world. In other words, the people of God not only gather in church buildings but also are being dispatched with missions to the world. This perspective makes the church dynamics.

The 'lay ministers' should give pastoral cares not only to their believing brothers and sisters in the church but also to the people in the world around them. Only when they do this, they will be able to sow the love of Jesus who as the Son of Man came to serve their world and prove themselves to be true lay ministers.