

Philosophy of Ministry

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Following is the long-form ministry philosophy that I have followed for 20+ years as a Christian and in my role as a pastor. It has been a joy to see each aspect materialize in churches that I have served, far beyond our imagination. While each context is unique, these are values I tend to carry into any context.

- Scott Sauls

Centered on Christ, the Gospel, and Scripture

The local church is a family united in Christ that aspires to be led by Scripture. Together, we look to God's perfect Word as given in the Old and New Testaments—and as interpreted by the historic ecumenical creeds and protestant reformed confessions—to form our spiritual life. We look to Jesus, the Son of God and Savior of sinners, to forgive our sins, refresh our spirits, ignite our worship, and transform our character. We prayerfully depend on the Holy Spirit, whose power raised Jesus from the dead, to also empower us to live resurrected lives, loving God with our whole selves and our neighbor as ourselves.

Church As Family

Because Christ's church is called to be a family, we share life with one another. In our beliefs and teaching, we unite around Scripture's essential truths, while promoting liberty around things about which Scripture is flexible or silent. In our worship, we seek to honor God, gather weekly around the Lord's Table, and create belonging for one another and our guests. In our life together, we seek to honor one another above ourselves as we pursue the God's vision for welcoming, listening to, loving, confessing, forgiving, serving, comforting, sharing burdens with, caring and praying for, remaining loyal to, and spurring on the best in one another. We celebrate our diversity in all its forms, opening our lives and hearts and homes to sinners and saints, doubters and believers, seekers and skeptics, prodigals and prudes, young and old, married and unmarried, leaders and followers, famous and infamous, our own and other ethnicities, nationalities, and cultures, happy and depressed, helpers and those who need help, creative and corporate, conservative and liberal, affluent and bankrupt, addicted and sober, public and private and home schooled, and all others who enter our doors. We aspire to expand our 'us' by listening to, learning from, and being shaped by one another's experiences and perspectives.

Loved By God to Enrich the City and World

As a family rooted in Jesus Christ—who taught that it is more blessed to give than it is to receive and that greatness is found through serving—we aspire to give ourselves away. Indeed, our 'conservative' belief that every word of Scripture is right and good and true, compels us toward 'liberal' lives of generosity and love. We aim to live not only for ourselves, but as welcome participants in a movement of God's Kingdom. God, because he loves us, sweeps us up and includes us—along with all of his children everywhere—in his mission of loving people, places, and things to life. As his beloved ambassadors, he sends us out to 'so love the world,' in hopes of leaving the world better than we found it. We hope to be part of adding such value to our city that if Christians and churches disappeared, the whole city would weep.

Taking Our Faith Public

Because Jesus called us to let our light shine before men that they may see our good deeds and glorify our Father in heaven, we endeavor to be public with our faith. We aspire to love and

serve all our neighbors in the places where we live, work, and play. We open our sanctuaries and homes to host and encourage civil conversations that unite believers, seekers, and non-believers around shared interests, in hopes that the truth, beauty, love, and justice of God will be brought to bear on the most central and pressing issues of our time. We host life-giving parties for our city and our neighbors as a sign of God's Kingdom, and of how heaven rejoices when prodigals come home and cynics lay down their defenses and join the laughter. Although Jesus reserves membership in His church and participation in his Table for those who trust him and align with Scripture, we want to join Jesus in befriending those who do not believe as we do. We welcome all people into our services, parties, conversations, homes and lives, including those who have misgivings or doubts about the beliefs, ethics, generosity, self-denial, and counter-cultural nature of historic Christianity.

Doing Justly and Loving Mercy

As Christ's ambassadors to our neighbors in need, we aspire to live lives of mercy and justice. We want to give special attention to, and generously channel our resources toward improving conditions and systems—whether spiritual, social, economic, or vocational—for the poor, immigrants and refugees, ethnic and other minorities, plus others who lack resources, opportunity, or advantage. We embrace that as conditions improve for those who have power, conditions must also improve for those who lack power, and never at their expense. For wealth, advantage, and power are given to be stewarded and shared for the benefit of all, versus protected and kept merely for the benefit of some.

Integrating Faith and Work

As those who are called into the world by Christ to serve him in our work, we aspire to eliminate the false dichotomy of sacred versus secular. We affirm that every good work—whether creative or restorative—is no less God's work than the work of pastors and missionaries. We want to commit our resources to train, equip, and empower Christians for the integration of faith and work, in hopes that people and institutions representing church, business, education, the social sector, arts and entertainment, government and media, and other channels of influence will engage their work with tenacity, purpose, and confidence that it contributes meaningfully to God's mission to heal and bless the world.

A Church for Others and Not Just Ourselves

Finally, because God's Kingdom is much greater than a single church, we pray and work for the flourishing of all people and not just our people; all churches and not just our church; all cities and not just our city; and all nations and not just our nation. We do this chiefly by making disciples, equipping and reproducing leaders, creating and sharing content, and starting new, like-minded congregations—including cross-denominational and multi-ethnic ones—throughout our city and across the globe. Because our city is a strategic hub for multiple spheres of impact, we expect any movement of God's Kingdom in our city to also extend beyond our city to the world. We commit to pursue and embrace opportunities to share our resources and capital—whether spoken, written, creative, financial, relational, professional, or otherwise—toward Jesus' vision to bless and heal the world. As we do this, we proactively celebrate wherever, whenever, and through whomever God chooses to grow his Kingdom. We do not concern ourselves with who gets the attention or the credit. Our task is to advance Christ's fame and glory, and not our own. For it is from him, and to him, and through him that are all things. Amen.