

Merimnao

PRINCIPLES OF OPERATION

The ministry of Merimnao is one of helping people who are having personal psychological and spiritual difficulties in their lives. As one might expect we will operate according to scriptural principles, being obedient to the Scriptures and the prompting of the Holy Spirit. There are some scriptural principles that are more significant than others in the work of this ministry. These are outlined here.

Principle One – Merimnao is a ministry of grace and truth.

Grace and truth are the two attributes of godly love that characterized the ministry of Jesus. They were present in all His interactions with people. These two attributes are so important to God that in the Gospel of John He has the Apostle speak to it as John introduced Jesus to the world:

John 1:14 - And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. NASU

Jesus ministry is the model for us here. People who lead in this ministry must operate with a fundamental understanding of grace and truth. There will be times when some individuals will need more grace than truth, and times when the opposite situation will occur. At all times and in all things leaders in this ministry will have to be able to sense the prompting of the Holy Spirit as to how much of each to use when helping or interacting with others.

Principle Two – Merimnao is a ministry of the called and equipped.

Much as Jesus was called and equipped by God, and the Apostle Paul was called and equipped by Jesus to serve as a missionary to the gentiles, the leaders of Merimnao need to be called and equipped to this ministry. These terms “called” and “equipped” are outlined below.

Equipped – This means that they must have experience and training, with a demonstrated level of expertise in the area they want to serve in. This proficiency must be in both biblical knowledge and in how to apply it to their field. Immature Christians are highly unlikely to qualify. This ministry will be working in personally sensitive situations where hurting people are coming for help and answers. We must take reasonable care to ensure that our leaders are proficient and careful.

2 Tim 3:16-17 - All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work. NASU

Called – This means that they will publicly state they believe God has told them personally through the Holy Spirit that they are to work in this area of ministry as their spiritual act of service to God. A called person is empowered by the Holy Spirit and will be able to balance the need for grace and truth in the caring ministries that we will operate.

Acts 13:2 - While they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." NASU

Principle Three – Merimnao will minister only where God provides people.

Merimnao is a “people” ministry. It is a ministry where people help people, face to face, one on one, person to person. We will rely on the provision of God to bring us called and equipped individuals to serve as leaders. These leaders will then lead by example, and by direction of others, in the serving of others through the ministry.

This means that even though there may be a perceived need for the provision of a service within the ministry, it will not be provided for unless and until God raises up a called and equipped person to fill the gap. The core of this is the understanding that we should only be doing what we see the Father doing. When He raises up a person in a certain ministry area, we know He is working through the ministry in filling that area.

John 5:19 - Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner. NASU

The words of Jesus tell us to do what God the Father does, as those things are all that can be done with and through the power of God. When God calls a person to a work of ministry, it is God calling them through the Holy Spirit. For the leadership of Merimnao, the provision of a called person will be taken as a signal that God is ready for us to work for Him in a certain area.

Principle Four – Merimnao is a ministry of carefulness.

In the caring for others the leaders of this ministry are to be mindful that there is nothing that God created that is more important than people. Most of the individuals who will come to Merimnao for help will be in a state of what Scripture calls “brokenheartedness.”

Ps 34:18 - The Lord is near to the brokenhearted, and saves those who are crushed in spirit. NASU

God is close to the very people we are to help and He is inviting us to join Him in the work of healing He wants to do.

In the mending of broken hearts great care must be taken to be sure we are treating the injured Soul with proficiency. For this reason we will apply reasonable standards of screening in determining how proficient a leader might be to work in certain functions. The basic question is this, “How equipped is this leader to perform this type of work?”

Principle Five – Merimnao is a ministry of growth.

All parties involved in this ministry can experience spiritual growth. This includes the people who are serving through leading and volunteering, and those who are being served. The following scripture speaks to this.

2 Peter 1:5-8 -Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge, and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness, and in your godliness,

brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. NASU

Leaders, volunteers and those interested in serving will be encouraged to attend training sessions. These sessions will be designed to deepen and broaden a person's level of equippedness for service in the ministry. Leaders will be expected to both attend and contribute to these growth opportunities at a reasonable level.

These "growth opportunities" will come in several forums. There will be conventional topical Bible studies on an ongoing basis on subjects related to ministry work. Conferences and seminars put on by outside agencies will be used when appropriate. Outside experts will be invited to lead sessions from time to time. Cooperative training between Merimnao and other local like-minded ministries will be also available.

Those who are being served will also have "growth opportunities". Their growth is going to come in two areas. They will grow spiritually by the receiving of grace and truth through the work of the ministry. They will also grow through the personal work they will be able to do with the guidance of the leaders of the ministry.

Principle Six – Merimnao is a ministry of fruits.

At the very end of the Scripture use in principle five we see this one verse.

2 Peter 1:8 - For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. NASU

The double negative language here disguises what God is telling us. We will become useful and fruitful to Him, to Jesus, as we add to the virtues listed in the prior verses. The question is what will those fruits be?

Gal 5:22-23 - But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. NASU

As we apply principle five (growth) in the work of the ministry we will see these nine “fruits of the Spirit” increase in the leaders, volunteers and most importantly, in the lives of those we are serving.

In practical terms we can expect many of the following list of outcomes to be seen as fruits of the ministry.

- Addictions overcome.
- Lives restored.
- Brokenness mended.
- Afflictions healed.
- Relationships reconciled.
- Prisoners freed.
- Individuals saved.

There is one word that can be used that would be a single description of what we might call this entire list of fruits: healing.

Principle Seven – Merimnao is a ministry of inclusion.

It is expected that the people who choose to come and serve in the ministry will come from all parts of the church, from every cultural background and from all socioeconomic groups. All those whom God brings will be included.

1 Cor 12:12 - For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. NASU

The Apostle Paul states it quite clearly, we all part of the body. This applies not only to the church in the global sense and in the local sense, it also applies to Merimnao. There are many needs to be addressed and Merimnao will have people who serve that come from many perspectives, all will be welcome, subject only to being called and equipped.

Principle Eight – Merimnao is a ministry of unity.

The Apostle Paul, notably in the book of Ephesians, would often talk about unity. Here is an example:

Eph 4:1-6 - Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all. NASU

Merimnao, as a ministry, will strive to point people toward Jesus, who is our unifier through the Holy Spirit. To move the leaders, volunteers and particularly those being served toward unity in Christ we have a three-fold approach.

- Meet their needs.
- Discipleship.
- Service.

In brief, the meeting of needs will deal with helping people get through their current life difficulties such as trauma, addiction or losses. Discipleship will reveal what the word has to say about dealing with these issues and moving out of them into a fuller life. Service will challenge participants to live out their gratefulness and demonstrate their improving faith by serving the church somehow.

It is the end point of giving back through service within the framework of the local church that will demonstrate that a person assisted through the ministry has come to unity of purpose with us.

Principle Nine - Merimnao is a ministry of acceptance.

This is an important attitude that will be a sustaining principle throughout the work of the ministry. Scripture is clear on this issue.

Rom 14:1 – Now accept the one who is weak in faith, but not for the purpose of passing judgment on his opinions. NASU

Rom 15:7 - Therefore, accept one another, just as Christ also accepted us to the glory of God. NASU

People will come to the ministry from all parts of our society. While they all have their own personal story and situation, they all have one need in common. They need to be accepted for who they are.

This is critical in the helping of others. The message of each of the leaders and volunteers of the ministry has to be one of acceptance. We must accept others the way they are and where they are. They might be deep in sin, they may need to change some of their ways or friends, and there will be many things we will see that are not godly. We are not to attempt to do the work of the Holy Spirit, work of conviction and change. We are to accept them where they are, representing Christ in their lives by accepting them as Christ accepted us.

Principle Ten – Merimnao is a ministry of restoration, renewal and reconciliation.

The people who come to Merimnao for help all need to be healed in some way. Some might need to heal from their addictions, some from their grief and some from their abandonment or abuse. There are a myriad of reasons for their need of healing, but there is only one healer. We find this declared right after God delivers the Israelites from the Egyptians where God says this:

Ex 15:26 - For I, the Lord, am your healer. NASU

God has reserved the right to heal for himself, this knowledge is fundamental to understanding the role of the ministry in the work of healing that God desires to do in people's lives. There are three basic objectives that we have in all the work we perform. These are:

- Restoration of a soul to right living before God.
- Renewal of a person's soul, a work of sanctification.
- Reconciliation of relationships.

Any one person seeking help may need all or just one aspect of these three. Our role is one of pointing them to Jesus as the person who provides healing. Jesus, in His grace, allows us to come alongside those who are suffering and facilitate their restoration, their renewal or their reconciliation so that they are prepared to go to Him for healing.