

Core Value 4: Priesthood of All Believers

Between God & people

Core Value 4. Priesthood of All Believers Page 1 of 2

Doctrine (truth) We believe that God equips all of His people in various ways to lead and/or to serve in the church, *to prepare & enable* *Ephesians 4:7-13; 1 Peter 2:9-10*

Devotion (relationship) including

- men and women
- the older and the younger
- all people irrespective of their experience with English and the length of staying in the US.

Duty (action) *With reference to*

We're now looking at our fourth core value. The title is "Priesthood of All Believers." A priest is somebody who is between God and people. So a priest is somebody who prays for other people and also expresses God's will, God's communication to people.

In the Old Testament, only a small fraction of the population had the opportunity to be priests. But in the New Testament, we recognize that now all believers are a part of this priesthood.

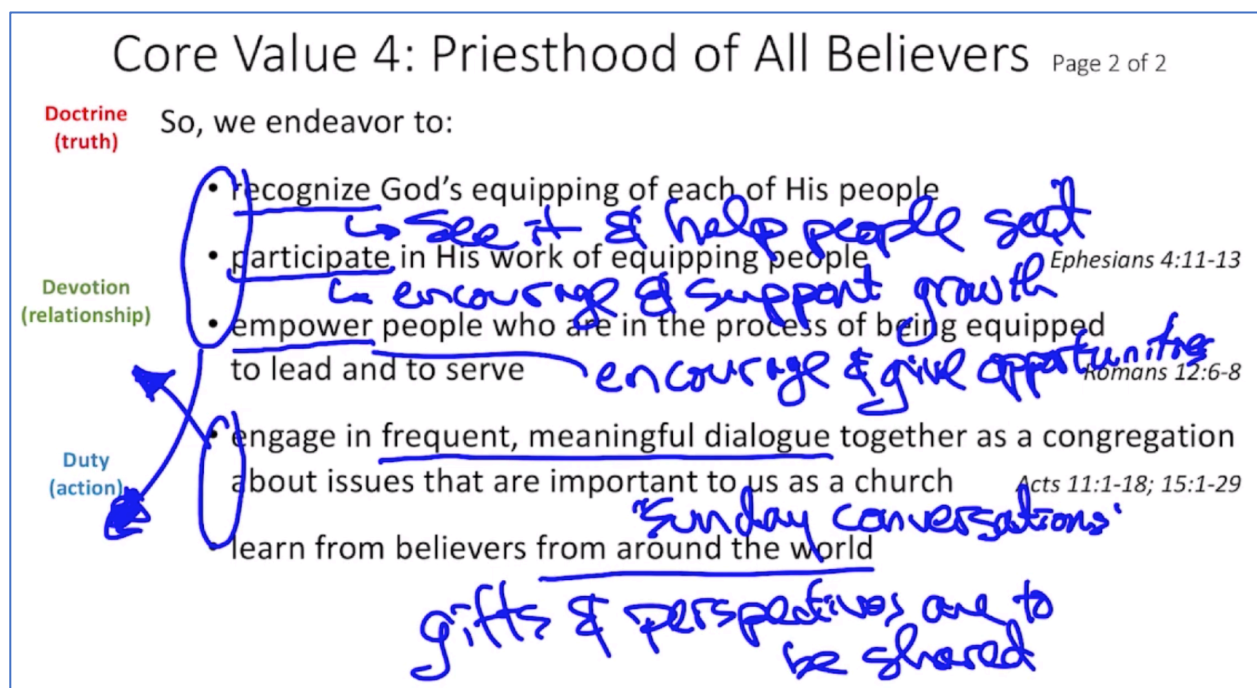
So here's what we believe: we believe that God equips all of his people in various ways to lead and/or to serve the church. So what we mean by "God equips", that means he prepares and he enables. So God is at work in people to give them the ability and the opportunity to lead and to serve. And this is where it's important to us, that this is ALL of God's people, not just a small set, not just the special ones, not just those with special training. All of God's people are called to lead and/or to serve.

And then we say "in various ways" because we're different people with different roles and different gifts and different passions. And that's intentional. So we don't all look the same, but we are all called to lead and/or serve. And so I highlight we highlight that, that we're called to lead and/or to serve. It doesn't mean that everybody's to be a leader or the most mature. Certainly those who are leaders are expected to be mature Christians. But just because somebody is not a leader doesn't mean that they're not mature as a Christian. So we believe that there is a mixture of the ways in which people are called and equipped and expected to lead and to serve in the church.

So we say explicitly that this includes both men and women. We do believe that women as well as men are to be in positions of leadership and of service. We as a church believe that women should be involved in leading and teaching others, including men and women, adults and children. We do have some differences in the roles, yet we believe that women and men are among those who are priests that God has called.

The same is true for the older and the younger. We believe that those who are getting along in years continue to be priests. We look to them. And those are younger, we are thrilled for the ways, in our church in which children are serving and at times leading as well.

We also believe that all people, we say "irrespective" to say "is without reference to", so without reference to their experience with English. So whether someone is a native English speaker or is just learning English, that doesn't change whether or not they are (as a believer) a priest. We expect that that's the case and whether or not somebody is just brand new in the United States or has been in the United States their entire lives. That doesn't change our expectation of them being priests, being equipped by God to lead and to serve in his body and in our church.



So what does this mean? Well we endeavor, we do our best to do a number of things. First of all, we want to recognize God's equipping, and so this is that we want: to see it and we want to help people see it. So what we mean by that is that we want to be able to see the work that God is doing and equipping each of us people. We want to look for that, and sometimes some of us need help in seeing it in ourselves as well. And we want to be a part of that as a church, to help people see the ways in which God is equipping them for leadership and for service.

We want to participate in his work of equipping people. So we want to encourage and support growth. It does seem that, in some ways there are times when this equipping is kind of all at once, and somebody seems to have always had this ability or inclination. And other times it seems like a long journey. We want to be a part of that, to encourage and support the growth of things.

And then we want to empower people. So we want to encourage and give opportunity. We want to do this for everybody, for the people who are in the process of being equipped. We want to give people opportunity to lead and to serve.

And all three of these things, in some sense, are an important part of our duty. Now this is an action that we take. These are ways in which we want to be a part of God's work in equipping people as priests for his body.

Another direction that we go with this is the expectation for a frequent meaningful dialogue. One way that we do this is through what we call our "Sunday Conversations". The idea is that we want to find times to gather together on a regular basis to talk through important things for us as a church. We believe that God doesn't just speak through people in formal leadership. He also is at work through each believer in the congregation. So we want to create opportunity for those interactions.

And we also want to learn from believers from around the world. We believe that the gifts and perspectives of various people are to be shared, that God has given gifts to one group of people that He wants another group of people to benefit from. And part of that is learning from people who are other parts of the world as His children, because we believe that they also are priests of our God.

In some sense, these two are a duty. They're also very relational. So it is a part of what we want to do as a church, is to be involved in dialogue together, listening well, and listening to people from every corner of the earth, that we would learn and gain from what they have experienced and seen and learned from God.

So this is our belief that God is equipping all of his people in various ways, to lead and to serve in the church.

Reflection Questions

1. One of the dangers in churches is the assumption that some people are to lead and serve, while the rest are just to show up. Given this core value, what is a good response to this assumption?
2. How would you answer the objection by someone who believes that they actually don't have much of value (time, ability, or money) to give to the church?
3. What is an area where God has equipped and is equipping you to lead and/or to serve?

4. What is one step you could take to begin or to continue to serve in this area?