

ELISHA: ISRAEL'S ASSOCIATE MINISTER

Associate Minister's Class

9-28-13

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INTRODUCTION – in many ways, the role and work of the Associate Minister, is one of the most precarious and “dicey” roles in the church.

There is no clear, single definition of the role of an Associate Minister. Certainly, we understand that the associate serves under the leadership, and at the pleasure of the Pastor. However, unlike other positions in the church, those roles can vary greatly – depending on the church, the particular Pastor, and the particular Associate.

As we have done in the past, if I were to go around the room and poll the class, there would be many different duties and responsibilities represented.

This sometimes becomes challenging for the congregation. They are often unsure of the role of each Associate – or even what it really means to be an Associate Minister.

Yet, as varied as the role of an Associate can be, there are some fundamentals, which are common to all who are in ministry; and it is some of these fundamentals that we will explore today.

Please turn with me to the Old Testament – I Kings 19:15-21.

We are going to analyze the call and ministry of Elisha – not in his office as prophet – but in his office of *Associate Minister*.

- 1. We begin, not with Elisha, but with the great prophet, Elijah. Who can give us a little background on Elijah?**
- 2. What are the circumstances surrounding Elijah, found in beginning of I Kings 19? (Jezebel has him hiding in a wilderness cave)**
- 3. V. 15-16 – Elijah's ministry is not over. God has three men for him to anoint/ordain. Who are they?**
- 4. As we focus on Elisha, it is important to note something very important. Elijah did not choose Elisha; Elisha did not choose Elisha. Who chose Elisha? (God)**
- 5. Let's look at one NT scripture that offers powerful encouragement for we who are in ministry – 2 Peter 1:10,**
- 6. If we are *called* by God, we are assured to be *kept* by God!**
- 7. V. 17 – In verse 17, God provides more instruction to Elijah. What is it?**

8. Not only is Elisha called by God, but also his specific ministry is assigned by God.
9. If we were to examine the life and ministry of Elisha, we would find many things that he said and did. However, there was one singular, primary focus for his ministry.
10. As Associates, you do many and various things in the church; but do you know the singular and primary focus of ministry, for which you have been called? (*survey the class*)
11. Let's move now to Elijah's encounter with Elisha.
12. V. 19a – What was Elisha doing, when Elijah first encountered him?
13. This is so interesting. Elisha was not found where you would think you would find the next great prophet Israel. He was not:
- A. In the school of the prophets
 - B. Reading the Scriptures
 - C. Studying
 - D. Praying
 - E. ...*but plowing*
14. Has anyone ever plowed behind a mule/other animal? (I've seen it done) It is hard work!
15. Ministry is not a lazy man/woman's game! Too many Associate Minister's want to do nothing more than sit in pulpit. However, *if you are ever going to fulfill the calling god has for your life it will take intense work, prayer, study, reading, learning!*
16. V. 19b – What happened next in this verse? Who can tell us the significance of this action by Elijah?
17. Each of you has been through some ceremony/rite whereby your calling was officially recognized (initial sermon/ordination). You received a certificate, or some other formal recognition. However, that was just the beginning – not the end!
18. The one thing that is very important to see in this text is that Elisha clearly understood the *solemnity* and the *severity* of this moment. *He understood that from that moment on, his life would never be the same.*
19. Life is never the same once you take on the mantle of “minister.” Even if you quit ministry today, people will forever see you as “*that person who called themselves a minister*”.
20. V. 20a – Elisha knowing this; ran after Elijah. What was his request?

21. Now, the text begins to unfold key details of the call of ministry. Elisha understood that earthly relationships could not come before the calling of ministry. (give great caution against disrespecting and neglecting family relationships in the “name of ministry”)

22. V. 20b – What charge does Elisha give Elijah? (go, and think about what has happened to you)

23. In this encounter, this is the first word spoken by the prophet Elijah. Elijah tells him to go and consider/meditate on this change in your life. There are only so many answers you Pastor can give you...*you are going to have to learn to seek the lord for yourself!*

24. V. 21a – Elisha did something that was very significant. What was it?

25. These oxen represented his livelihood; his career - his security. Yet, he roasted the oxen, and used the wood from the plow to build the fire. There was nothing left, of which to go back!

26. Elisha redefined family ties, and career ties, in the pursuit of his calling. What does all this mean/say to you?

27. V. 21b – Elisha has gone through an amazing experience. His life has been turned upside down by this calling on his life. He has gone through the ceremony. He has dedicated himself solely to God’s will - no turning back – he’s raring to go – on fire to serve the lord! What does the text say Elisha did next?

28. Here is where Associate Ministers are tested. Here is where the game is won, or lost. *It will be 7-8 years from the time of I Kings 19 and II Kings 2:1, when Elisha is heard from again!*

29. For the coming 7-8 years, Elisha would simply serve in obscurity, as the servant of Elijah. What do you think was the value for Elisha in these 7-8 years? What can be the value for such a time in your ministry?