

Defining Moments in Ministry

Written by Ken Gosnell

For those of us that have been in ministry for awhile, it can seem that one Sunday runs into the next and that every Sunday becomes like the Sunday before it. However, as I look back over the landscape of ministry I find that there are some defining moments that have shaped me as a Christian leader.

As you read these, **think about your own defining moments** and write about them in your journal. You may also wish to sign in and add one or more of your defining moments as comments to this article.

Defining Moment #1 - The Day that I Embraced my Calling.

Ministry leaders all receive a call from God to do the work that they do. I knew that I was called but after going through the bumps of ministry and thinking about giving up I finally embraced Romans 11:29, “since God’s gracious gifts and calling are irrevocable.” (HCSB)

Defining Moment #2 – The Day I Resigned My First Ministry.

This was the day that I became keenly aware that the Kingdom of God was bigger than my efforts or my abilities. This is the day that I realized that my work would have to be continued by someone else. This is the day that I fully understood what Paul said in 1 Corinthians 3:6 when he stated, “I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth.” (HCSB).

Defining Moment #3 – The Day I Preached My First Funeral.

It is easy for ministry to engulf our time energy, and our focus. The day I preached my first funeral was the day that I realized that all of my days would end. I realized that no matter how hard I tried that I would leave some things undone. I also realized in that defining moment that some of the struggles and trials that I faced on that day would someday prove to be insignificant.

Defining Moment #4 – The Day I Quit Comparing Myself to Others.

It is so tempting in ministry to compare ourselves to someone else and focus on where we lack or fall short. I believe that this is one of the most damaging points of ministry. God never calls us to be someone else or even like someone else. God is the God of individuality. In fact Jesus states in Luke 12:7 "Indeed, the hairs of your head are all counted. Don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows!" (HCSB). God knows me and created me just as I am. He does not want me to compare myself to someone else.

Defining Moment #5 – The Day I learned to Forgive Those Who Had Hurt Me.

One aspect that makes ministry tough is the fact that we see the same people over and over again. When we have a disagreement or a difference that pops up it is something that plays itself over a period of months or even years. One aspect of ministry that was never taught to me in seminary was how to forgive others. It is something that we preach about but not something that is easy to practice. I have come to believe that an essential part of ministry is to forgive others. The day that I realized that was the day my ministry changed.

Ministry in the 21st Century can be difficult and exhausting. I am thankful for the days of ministry when I see lives transformed because of people developing a relationship with God. I am thankful for days when I see families transformed because they have learned about grace, love, and acceptance. But most of all I am thankful for the God who has revealed defining moments of my ministry that have shaped me as a minister and transformed the type of ministry I would perform.

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