



DISCERNING YOUR CALL TO MINISTRY

by Jason K. Allen

Review by Tim Challies
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We know the concept and are well-familiar with the phrase: “called to ministry.” We know that some men are called in a special way to a special task—the task of gospel ministry. But exactly what constitutes the call, exactly how to understand it, exactly how to know we’ve experienced it—these are matters of more than a little confusion.

Thankfully we have been well-served in recent years with books attempting to bring clarity. New to the field is Jason Allen’s *Discerning Your Call to Ministry: How To Know For Sure And What To Do About It*. It is a short guide, but one that packs a punch.

ALL CHRISTIANS ARE CALLED TO MINISTER, AND CHURCH LEADERS ARE TO EQUIP THE SAINTS FOR THIS WORK—THIS WORK THAT IS CRUCIAL TO THE FUNCTIONING OF GOD’S CHURCH.

Allen begins by distinguishing between three related terms: called to minister, called to ministry, and called to the ministry. All Christians are called to minister, and church leaders are to equip the saints for this work—this work that is crucial to the functioning of God’s church. In this broad way every believer is a minister. Some Christians are called to ministry, to become involved in a vocation that has a significant ministry component. This might include counselors at Christian camps, coordinators of children’s ministries, or professors at seminaries. Then a few Christians are called to the ministry, the formal category defined in passages like Ephesians 4:11-16, 1 Timothy 3:1-7, and similar ones. The Bible refers to these people interchangeably as elders, pastors, overseers, or bishops. It is this final category that is the special concern of Allen’s book.

The Bible describes the function of these ministers and also describes the qualifications they must possess. Based on these, Allen frames his book around ten important questions. As a man prayerfully reads and considers these questions he will come to a deeper understanding of whether or not he is experiencing God’s call.

- *Do you desire the ministry?*
- *Does your character meet God’s expectations?*
- *Is your household in order?*
- *Has God gifted you to teach and preach his Word?*
- *Does your church affirm your calling?*
- *Do you love the people of God?*

- *Are you passionate about the gospel and the Great Commission?*
- *Are you engaged in fruitful ministry?*
- *Are you ready to defend the faith?*
- *Are you willing to surrender?*

THE CHURCH IS IN DESPERATE NEED OF MEN WHO ARE WILLING, WHO ARE SKILLED, WHO ARE CALLED. THIS BOOK MAY BE EXACTLY WHAT THEY NEED TO EVALUATE THEMSELVES, TO HEAR THE CALL, AND TO HEED THE CALL.

Within these ten questions is an examination of a man's character, knowledge, skill, and willingness to serve. Perhaps best of all is the constant call to seek and receive the affirmation of a local church, for the call to the ministry is not merely an internal call that a man feels but an external call he receives from those who have been called before him. This is an emphasis sorely lacking in too many similar books but present and repeated here. This is one of the most prominent strengths of Allen's work.

The church is in desperate need of men who are willing, who are skilled, who are called. This book may be exactly what they need to evaluate themselves, to hear the call, and to heed the call. *Discerning Your Call to Ministry* comes endorsed by quite a list of trusted Christian leaders, Al Mohler, John MacArthur, Steven Lawson, and David Dockery among them. The accolades are well-earned and I gladly add my commendation to theirs. This little book is an excellent primer on the what, why, and how of the call to ministry. It is a book for pastors to have on-hand and to distribute freely. Even better, it is for them to read with the men in their churches who ask, "What about me?"

Review by Tim Challies: <https://www.challies.com/book-reviews/discerning-your-call-to-ministry>

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