**3 Things Successful Ministries Realize**

In church life and ministry, there are many things that factor into a ministry being overall successful.

* The right leader.
* Faithful and dedicated team players. (volunteers)
* Following the leading of the Holy Spirit.

However, there are a few things that over the years that I have come to realize help me to be more successful and effective in ministry. When I recognize the reality of these things and take on the proper mindset, I find myself less discouraged, and more motivated for ministry.

**1. There will be problems (hindrances). I Thess. 2:18**

\* We have an enemy who’s real and alive and well…

 \* You can’t operate a weekly ministry with 100+ kids not your own and not expect to have some problems (whether big or small).

 \* People in successful ministries aren’t caught off guard by problems, but rather learn to anticipate then – crying kids, fighting kids, misbehaving kids.

 \* People who understand this principle:

 **1. Don’t make big things out of little things.**

 \* When problems arise on your route, are you thinking, “I can’t believe this is happening!” or “No biggie, we know how to deal with this.”

 \* Does every little thing kids do wrong rub you the wrong way or do you have patience and understanding that “they are kids”?

 **2. Respond appropriately rather than angrily.**

 \* If your apple cart gets tipped over every time a rider does something they shouldn’t, you’re going to have one very banged up apple cart. The point – Don’t let problems ruin your day or your attitude. Anticipate them, appropriately respond to them, and move on.

 \* Successful and smooth operation of ministry takes place when workers know what to do when the problems arise and how to do it by responding appropriately!

 Illus. – Johnny won’t sit down… “I said SIT DOWN!!!!!!!!!!”

 - Don’t yell at Johnny… move Johnny, sit Johnny by a worker, talk to Johnny’s parents…

 **3. Don’t let the devil get the best of them.**

 \* The devil wants nothing more than to defeat you with discouragement and render you ineffective. He wants to ruin your day – don’t give him the pleasure!

 \* Times when we’re up and times we’re down… good days and bad days…

 \* On the days when nothing makes sense, I’ve learned to say, “Thank you, Lord for the ones we ***Do*** have today… the ones who ***Did*** behave on the bus… the ones that ***Did*** listen…”

**2. They can’t reach everyone. Acts 28:24**

 \* Being honest, this was a difficult biblical principle for me to accept early on in my ministry.

 \* “Not everyone is reachable and not everyone wants to be reached.”

 \* Our job is to put forth the effort to reach them and leave the rest up to God. There are kids who are now grown that in my flesh, I struggle with the fact that we are no longer reaching them. I have to ask myself, “Did we do everything we could to reach them?” If the answer is yes, leave it with God, if no, make changes.

 IIlus. – We lost some good kids this past year due to a situation that I had absolutely no control over, and it hurts, but I have to trust God.

 \* Sometimes, being successful in ministry by realizing we can’t reach everyone means that we have to make the tough calls, and cut off our efforts to reach certain kids. (problem kids, fighters, scorners) We cannot sacrifice effectiveness with the whole for the sake of one or a few. (Jesse)

 \* Satan wants us to focus the most on the ones we can reach the least, because we then neglect the truly reachable ones.

 \* Learn to accept the people God has given you to reach and learn to let go of the ones He hasn’t.

**3. God’s Word doesn’t return void (even when results can’t be seen). Isaiah 55:11**

 \* Every worker whose honest has had the days when you’ve asked yourself, is what we’re doing really making a difference? Are we just spinning our wheels, burning rubber, but not going anywhere? Is this whole bus ministry thing really worth it?

 \* Sometimes we get frustrated in ministry when we don’t see the results we want to see.

 \* God has called us to be faithful, believing the promise that His word will not return void. (notice in the verse that is accomplishes what HE pleases and prospers according to HIS plan.)

 \* Every week, we are planting seeds in the hearts of people.

 - Some of those seeds will grow and spring up immediately…

 - Some of them may never grow…

 - Some of them will grow only in God’s time…

 \* I’ve learned that when I start serving God based upon His terms and not mine, I’m going to serve Him faithfully regardless of the results.

 \* If you are serving God out of a “result’s based” motivation, you may be sorely disappointed in ministry.

I want to be successful in ministry, and I believe that these three simple principles can help us to do just that.