

ENCOURAGING PASTORS AND CONGREGATIONS OF THE OGBOMOSO  
BAPTIST CONFERENCE TO EMBRACE THE MULTI-STAFF MINISTRY  
AS A MEANS OF CHURCH GROWTH

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## ABSTRACT

This study set out to develop and teach a manual on the subject of multi-staff ministry. The contents of the manual aimed at educating pastors and the members of their churches on the importance, the advantages and disadvantages of multi-staff ministry as well as its relevance to church growth. Through the studies the need to embrace multi-staff ministry was projected to the pastors who would in turn educate their members. The instruments used to carry out the project were two sets of questionnaire. The first set was a pre-test questionnaire which was administered to determine the previous knowledge of the respondents on the subject of the multi-staff ministry. The second set of questionnaire was equally administered to test the new understanding gained by the respondents after they were taken through the studies in the manual. A total of fifty two (52) senior pastors took part in the pre-test, the teaching as well as the post-test exercise. Issues relating to multi-staff ministry which the studies addressed include *The Need for Multi-Staff Ministry, What Multi-Staff Ministry Is, and Some of Its Benefits, Some Factors Militating Against Multi-Staff Ministry, How to Overcome Some of the Problems Confronting the Practice of Multi-Staff Ministry and Some Hints for a Successful Take-Off and Sustenance of Multi-Staff Ministry*. The project revealed that many of those who claimed to be practicing multi-staff ministry were not really doing so in the right and true sense of the practice. Some are not practicing multi-staff ministry yet but hope to start some day especially after they had gained better and richer understanding of the concept. Still, some others would not want to venture into multi-staff ministry because they do not think they can cope with the challenges that come with the practice. Two challenges came up strongly as major obstacles to multi-staff ministry in practice. The challenges were relationship and finance. These were thoroughly discussed and practical solutions to the problems were proffered. This served as a great encouragement to the participants which made them to show willingness to go and begin the process of starting a multi-staff ministry. It is, therefore, considered profitable to senior pastors and so it is recommended that they make use of the contents of the manual to teach their congregations to become open to multi-staff ministry. The pastors themselves should be willing to embrace multi-staff ministry despite the challenges involved so as to carry their churches along and successfully persuade them to embrace multi-staff ministry. It is also recommended that the grey areas of relationships and financing of the multi-staff ministry be given adequate attention before the take off and in the course of practicing multi-staff ministry. Also, it is recommended that the Seminaries where pastors are trained should do more in preparing the students for the multi-staff ministry while in training. In addition it is recommended that the manual be used as a reference material by all those who desire to practice the multi-staff ministry in the right way and successfully too.

## Conclusion

From the theological basis for the project, it was concluded that the idea, the spirit and or the actual practice of multi-staff ministry is an age long practice. God himself initiated it by being involved in a kind of multi-staff ministry when he invited a company to join him in the work of creation. In addition, God made sure

that everyone He enlisted or gave an assignment to did not do such assignments alone. It therefore would remain absurd and inconceivable if God's people – the church and the pastor would attempt to do God's work single handedly. One of the participants at the teaching sessions noted and the researcher concurred that "it would amount to sin against God if any pastor or church would not practice multi-staff Ministry." Though this may amount to an overstatement but there is an element of truth in it.

Furthermore, from the review of related literature, it was concluded that the best thing that could happen to the affairs of the church is to handle them through the multi-staff ministry. This is because of the complex and highly demanding nature of the church life. When various gifts that are present in the experience of the multi-staff ministry are combined and deployed for ministry in the church, it would lead to effectiveness. When there is effectiveness, healthy all round growth become guaranteed. Also through literature review, it was concluded that the multi-staff ministry is like any other human endeavours. It is full of challenges but the challenges are not insurmountable. The multi-staff ministry has a lot of positive things to offer the church and the pastors who get involved in the practice.

In addition, from the entire study, it was concluded that the senior pastors and their associates have a lot to do in order to make the multi-staff ministry work. Multi-staff ministry is the need of the hour in the life of the church. So, no effort should be spared to make a reality. There are many grey areas in the practice of multi-staff ministry which must be given attention by all parties involved. Some of those areas include the relationship between senior pastor and the associate pastors, the relationship between the pastors' families, the relationship between the pastoral team and the whole church. Other areas in need of urgent attention include job

description as well as job performance, communication that is effective and the art of handling conflicts with maturity and Christian attitude.

Also during the study, it was concluded that Ogbomoso Baptist Conference needs a paradigm shift concerning the multi-staff ministry. This is necessary because there is a prevailing attitude that a full blown multi-staff ministry as an ideal is too good to be true and practicable. There is also the problem of fear of how to finance the multi-staff ministry sweeping through the entire Ogbomoso Baptist Conference. If the multi-staff ministry would be made to work in this kind of atmosphere, there must be a change of attitude. It was also concluded that the multi-staff ministry can work in any church setting, if it is given the chance to thrive. In addition, there is readiness on the part of the pastors and their churches to make it work.

Part of the objectives of this study was to establish the importance and relevance of the multi-staff ministry as a means of becoming more effective in the ministries of the church. This is necessary to raise the awareness of pastors that are believed to be in the right position to take the lead when it comes to multi-staff ministry. The multi-staff ministry is shrouded in many fears. If the fears are not removed, it would remain difficult to want to venture into multi-staff ministry. However, pastors must become convinced that the multi-staff ministry is needed by the church and that it works, though the challenges could be enormous. This position would help them to embrace and promote multi-staff ministry in their various churches. Also, it would become easy to convince and persuade their congregations to open up. All these are expected to be done with readiness to make things work between the senior pastors, their associates and their churches.

The results obtained from the analysis of the pre-test and post-test showed that the objectives of the project were achieved. Through the teaching of the studies contained in the manual, the pastors became more aware of what the multi-staff ministry is and what its true and right practice entails. They were able to see the relevance as well as importance of the multi-staff ministry to the health, growth and success of the church in general. The advantages inherent in the right practice of multi-staff ministry became more appreciated by the pastors. Examination of problems and ways out of the problems were equally not left out. After being exposed to the truth that the multi-staff ministry is not necessarily a monster to run away from permanently; but rather a veritable tool for ministry, many of the participants who had been practicing multi-staff ministry made up their minds to keep it up. Others yet to start began to demonstrate some signs of willingness to give it a trial. The basic things to put into consideration for the effective take off and sustenance of multi-staff ministry also were highlighted during the teaching. This gave courage to others who were yet to start to make up their minds to fully embrace multi-staff ministry by taking off as soon as possible after the programme.

### Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the observations made in the course of carrying out the research and the results obtained from the same experience:

1. It has been revealed through this study that the work of ministry is not meant to be done single handedly by any individual. It would always end up in spiritual as well as growth catastrophe both for the pastor and the church. Therefore, it is recommended that senior pastors should know and accept that they would have to work with others as associates at a point in time.

