



FBC, Fairdale

Ministry Apprenticeship Program

Introduction/Purpose

Welcome to FBC, Fairdale's Ministry Apprenticeship Program!

We started this program in 2021, and we are excited that many have agreed to participate over the past 4 years! We are amazed at the people God has brought together to FBCF that He is using in different ways to serve the rest of the church and our community. It is the conviction of all four of our pastors that the work of the church should be done by the members of the church and not just those called to vocational ministry. God calls and prepares individuals to serve his church in specific ways.

In Ephesians, we see several characteristics that describe a healthy church. One of these marks is that the leaders of the church recognize those that God is calling from within the church and help them to prepare for what God has called them to—whatever that may be.

Specific members of the church are invited to participate each year because church leaders have recognized in them a giftedness and calling to serve in different ways. Our pastors want to be good pastors to all members of our church by helping them to develop the gifting and calling that God has given them and also by helping them discern what other ways God may be calling them to serve.

The program lasts nine months, and during that time, the participants read and study specific passages of scripture together, read four books together, and have in depth discussions about nine carefully chosen topics. The group thinks carefully together about what it means to be called by God and how to most faithfully fulfill that calling.

The Ministry Apprenticeship Program is organized around three goals—character development/personal growth, ministry leadership, and understanding and teaching the Bible.

Character Development/Personal Growth

Some of the things the group thinks through are what it means to be called by God, how they individually should think about their specific callings by God, and what it means to be qualified for these callings. As mentioned above, everyone is called to ministry in some sense. Callings come in many different forms and degrees. The pastors want to help church members think through what this means in their own life and the lives of their families.

This may look a little different for each individual, and that is ok. The pastors want to help each of each person individually to develop into even more faithful servants of God as they answer the specific callings God has given them. Some of them may already have a deep sense of what God has called them to do. Others may not have a full understanding yet. Some of them may already be serving in their calling regularly. Others may be in more of a preparation stage and anticipating a more full exercising of their calling in the future. Whatever their situation might be, the pastors want to help them. We hope that this group develops into a community where we all feel comfortable and free helping each other and receiving help from each other.

Under this category, we will talk about things like calling, qualifications, ordination, abuse within the church, and family.

Ministry Leadership

A second category they consider is how each participant may fulfill their callings in very practical ways. Again, the specifics of how each person fulfills the callings that God has given them may look a little different, but many of the principles behind what it means to be a servant of God and his church will be common among everyone.

Under this category, the group focuses on things like evangelism and leading people to Christ, discipleship and helping people grow and mature in Christ, prayer (privately in our own lives, publicly leading groups in prayer, and publicly/privately with individuals or small groups of people about specific things happening in their lives), missions (participation in missions, leading others to participate in missions, and leading others to care about and prioritize missions), visiting people, counseling with people, and serving people during specific life events (joyous occasions like marriages, child births, and ordinations and sad situations like deaths and funerals).

Understanding/Teaching the Bible

Finally, they spend some time together thinking about how to serve the church through teaching and/or preaching. Of course, not every participant in these groups will be called to pastoral ministry, but each of them is involved in some type of teaching ministry. This may be what is considered traditional formal teaching in a corporate Sunday School class type setting, or it may be more focused on teaching individuals or groups in informal settings. Either way, everyone should want to help people in the church (and outside) to understand the bible better, to answer specific questions they may have about God, to understand the

gospel fully, and to come to maturity in Christ through knowing and understanding him better through his revelation to us about himself.

Discussions in this category are centered on topics like hermeneutics (how to understand and interpret the bible rightly), Biblical theology (how the different parts of the bible fit together and tell the one big story of who God is and what God has done), sermon or bible study preparation, and bible study or sermon delivery

Conclusion

The last thing this program should be is a burden to any of the participants. People are so busy these days in their personal and family lives and in actively serving the church already. We do not want this to be one more thing that overloads those participating. However, we do want them to take this seriously, make it the best it can be, and get the most out of it possible. During the nine months, the participants will be expected to read four books and several scripture passages. We don't think this is too much, and hope and expect that everyone will come to the meetings having read and thought through what has been asked and ready to contribute to the discussions.