

MINISTRY

Jesus insisted on the support and assistance of his disciples throughout his ministry. From the miracle of the loaves and fish, to raising Lazarus from the dead, those around him were pressed into service to help him. They were expected to assist.

Consistently, he would do his part only *after* the disciples did what *they* could do. Ministry is supposed to be a team sport. The same thing was true in the early church – the apostles filled their role and looked to the church members to take an active part of their own. In fact, they were adamant about it. Paul says, “See that you fulfil the ministry that you received in the Lord” (Colossians 4:17)

The eventual centralisation of the roles of bishop and presbyter, and the expansion of consecrated religious life, seems to have absorbed much of the ministry in a way that was not seen in the New Testament Church.

Indeed, “the more the lay apostolate develops, the more strongly is perceived the need to have well formed holy priests. Thus the very life of the People of God manifests the teaching of the Second Vatican council concerning the relationship between common priesthood and the ministerial or hierarchical priesthood. For within the mystery of the Church the hierarchy has a ministerial character. (cf. Lumen Gentium, 10). The more the laity’s own sense of vocation is deepened, the more what is proper to the priest stands out.”

St. Pope John Paul II
