

Ministry



Week Seven

inTro



Read This Week's Passage:
Leviticus 8

EVERYONE INVOLVED

Leviticus 8 reveals that God calls young and old alike to be active in His work. This chapter discusses Aaron, his sons, and their ordination for the priesthood, but it's still relevant today because all of God's people are now priests through the cross (Ex. 19:6; 1 Pet. 2:5, 9). Ministry may be one of the most exciting values in the book of Leviticus!

The priests were responsible for leading worship and interceding for the people in prayer during the sanctuary services (2 Chro. 30:27). They also taught God's Word and answered the people's spiritual questions (Lev. 10:10, 11). Some even wrote and performed music. Most importantly, the priests were examples of what it means to be holy in one's everyday life (Lev. 21:6–8).

According to the Bible, your pastor is supposed to help every member of their church get all the training they need to be effective ministers, servants, and priests (Eph. 4:11, 12), for we are to be “a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people” (1 Pet. 2:9). When pastors do their jobs well and the members cooperate, churches experience unity, maturity, and stability (Eph. 4:13–16). A church where most of the members are active in ministry and gospel mission is a church that experiences far less internal conflict and far more of Christ's unifying presence!

What a wonderful opportunity God has given us to be trained by our pastors to effectively meet people's spiritual needs not only in our local church but also in our local community! Let's dive into Leviticus 8 and learn how to be an effective minister for God.



inScribe

Write out Leviticus 8:6–13, 23, 24 from the translation of your choice. If you're pressed for time, write out Leviticus 8:6–10. You may also rewrite the passage in your own words, or outline or mind-map it.



Go back to your scribed text and study the passage.

Circle repeated words/phrases/ideas

Underline words/phrases that are important and have meaning to you

Draw **Arrows** to connect words/phrases to other associated or related words/phrases

What special insights do your marks seem overall to point to?

Memorize your favorite verse. Write it out multiple times to help with memorization.

What steps can we take to begin learning how to live in total dependence on God?

Who is mentoring you in ministry?

Whom can you mentor in ministry?



Read more at
www.inversebible.org/stw07-3

CONSECRATED FOR MINISTRY

I attended a church not long ago that conducted a special service during which several members were publicly consecrated for ministry. Some were becoming elders, others deacons or deaconesses, and some were being set apart for various ministries. The entire congregation participated in prayers of blessing and thanks, and I heard many praising the Lord, especially when young people were being called. We see something similar happening to Aaron and his three sons in Leviticus 8. They were brought before the entire congregation and “consecrated” for ministry in a special service (vv. 2–5, 15, 30).

It’s interesting that Leviticus 8 sets such a high standard for God’s priests. They were supposed to be holy, or set apart from the world as living and breathing representations of God. Although Aaron was an older man at the time, his sons were young adults, so this is an appeal to both young and old. Paul put it like this in a letter to the young man Timothy, whom he was mentoring in ministry: “Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity” (1 Tim. 4:12). Like Paul and Moses, we need to raise the standard for excellence and holiness in youth ministry, not lower it!

This whole concept of being holy priests in every way is dramatically illustrated in Leviticus 8:22–25. Moses placed the blood of a sacrificed ram on the right ear, thumb, and toe of each of the priests. This signified that God wanted them to guard what they listened to and daily listen to His words (the ear), do what is right, living obediently to Him (the thumb), and go on His errands and engage in His work—to stand for what’s right even if that meant standing counterculturally (the toe). All these things were also yet another way of pointing forward to Jesus, who lived out each of these divine desires beautifully and perfectly.

Before you get discouraged and wonder how you could ever hope to reach this standard and be a holy priest in God’s church, notice what happens in Leviticus 8: Aaron and his sons are given every gift they need to be effective priests for God. They had to learn an incredible lesson that pastors today must learn as well: ministry is about humility. It’s about depending on God to give you the strength, gifts, wisdom, and character you need to rise to the challenge. Look at the following:

- The priests had to be washed; they could not wash themselves (v. 6).
- The priests had to be clothed; they could not clothe themselves (vv. 8, 9).
- The priests had to be anointed with oil; they could not anoint themselves (v. 12).
- The priests had to have the blood applied to them; they could not apply it themselves (vv. 22–25).

All this was to teach them their great dependence on God for effective ministry. Only God could wash and revive them (Titus 3:5), and only God could clothe them with His righteousness (Ps. 132:9). Only God could fill them with the oil of the Holy Spirit (Luke 4:18), and only God could provide His blood for their forgiveness and atonement.

SUPERNATURAL

In Revelation 1:5, 6 and 5:9, 10, we learn that the blood of Christ purchased not only our salvation but also our restoration as priests of God. We see an amazing connection between the cross and our calling to ministry. On Calvary what was taken from Adam and Eve in the Garden—namely, their priestly connection with God—was wonderfully and eternally restored! This is also a great reminder that as His priests, we must guard our ears, take care when and what we speak, and go only where His sandals lead. Ellen White put it like this: “As the Son of man, He gave us an example of obedience; as the Son of God, He gives us power to obey” (*The Desire of Ages* [Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1898, 1940], p. 24).

Notice again that the priests were anointed with oil (Lev. 8:12, 30). Oil often symbolizes the Holy Spirit, who is an essential person in the Godhead. Yes, you read that right—a person. Jesus referred to the Holy Spirit using a personal pronoun many times in His ministry. Take some time to read John 14–16 this week and count how many times Jesus uses a personal pronoun (e.g., He, Him, His) to describe the Holy Spirit. When Jesus went to heaven, He did not leave us with a vague, mystical force, but with a divine and loving Person: the Holy Spirit!

It is the Holy Spirit who empowers our ministries and makes our efforts to glorify God fruitful (Acts 1:8; 10:38). It is also the Holy Spirit who gives us gifts to use in His service. These gifts are the very abilities of Jesus Himself. There are more than 20 different kinds of spiritual gifts in the New Testament, and you can read about them in several places in Scripture (Rom. 12; 1 Cor. 12; Eph. 4; 1 Pet. 4).

Every Christian has one or more of these supernatural endowments. The best way to discover your divine gift is to study the spiritual gifts in the Bible, get involved in various ministries in your local church and community (especially ones you have a passion for), and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal what your gifts are. He will show you! He often speaks through those who have observed you in action for Jesus. Another way to tell is to try different ministries and see if you grow and excel in that particular area. If it’s your gift, you will! By the way, it’s perfectly fine if you try something and it doesn’t end up fitting your gift. The key is to get active in your local church and community for Jesus. You can be sure that your gift as God’s minister and priest will become clear in time!

It is so important that we affirm people in ministry, especially our young people. This is the responsibility of not only the older generation but the younger generation as well. Be sure to give your peers a word of encouragement and appreciation, especially when you see them trying a new ministry that they seem particularly well equipped for. Better yet, get involved with them in ministry and affirm them by your actions.



inTerpret

After looking at your scribed and annotated text, what special insights do your marks seem to point to overall?



What questions emerge after studying this passage? What parts are difficult?

What other principles and conclusions do you find?

What are some spiritual gifts you would like to try pursuing? What steps do you need to take to begin?



Read more at www.inverseible.org/stw07-4



What relationship do the following verses have with the primary passage?

John 14:26

John 16:5-15

1 Corinthians 12

Ephesians 4:11-13

1 Peter 4:10, 11

Romans 12

What other verses/promises come to mind in connection with Leviticus 8?

Review your memorized verse from Leviticus 8.

PAST THE PASTOR

When studying the history of the Adventist Church, it quickly becomes apparent that we did not originally have settled, paid pastors as churches do today. Instead, paid pastors functioned as evangelists and church planters, such as the apostle Paul, moving freely through their designated areas, preaching and teaching the three angels' messages and establishing new congregations (Russell Burrill, *Revolution in the Church* [Washington, D.C.: Hart Research Center, 1993], pp. 39–41). Since there were no settled pastors, the elders and deacons led the church. When reading about these two leadership positions as defined in the Bible, you will discover that in many ways, they had identical responsibilities to our modern paid pastors even though they were volunteer positions.

The awesome truth is that since pastoral ministry is described as a gift in the Bible and every member of the church is already a minister, there were already people within the congregation who had the gifts necessary to lead, evangelize, and provide nurture and care to others in the congregation. This freed up funds for the rapid expansion of the Adventist Church around the world. To put it simply, Jesus pastored the early Adventist churches through the gifts of the individual members! They were dependent not on a paid pastor who ministered to them, but on Jesus, who ministered mightily and effectively through them!

Perhaps you are in a church now where there is no pastor, or the pastor can come only occasionally. If this is your situation, your church is in a perfect place for Jesus, through the Holy Spirit, to use you and your fellow members to provide everything the church needs to care for one another and reach the local community with the gospel. In fact, your church may be very close to God's original intent for the body of Christ. The Adventist Church has never grown faster than it did in the days when the members cared for the spiritual needs of the local church and community while the pastors trained the members for ministry, preached the three angels' messages in unreached cities, and raised up new Adventist congregations.

After Aaron and his sons were anointed as God's priests, they were given seven days to contemplate the great responsibility they were given. This was a time of self-reflection and prayer for God's blessing on their ministry (Lev. 8:33–36). It is a high honor when your church invites you to take up your responsibility as a priest in an area of interest and within the realm of your gifts, and it would be good for you to take some time for prayer and reflection as well. Are there some areas in your life that need to come under Jesus' lordship? Are there sins that need to be forsaken and forgiven? Is there training or are there resources you need to be effective? Take a week to get right with Jesus and remember that every priest needs to do this, not just you.



inVite

Meditate on Leviticus 8 again and look for where Jesus is.



What is He saying to you personally through these texts?

What are some ways we can start to readopt the evangelistic approach of how the early Christian and early Adventist churches operated? Do you think we should?

How do you see Jesus differently or see Him again?

Prayer Response:



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Review the memory verse.
How does it apply to your
life this week?

After this week's study of the
passage, what remained with
you personally?

What could be applied to
others?



Read more inSight from the
Spirit of Prophecy at
www.inverseible.org/stw07-7

MINISTRY UNLOCKED

“Every year millions upon millions of human souls are passing into eternity unwarned and unsaved. From hour to hour our varied life opportunities to reach and save souls are opened to us. These opportunities are continually coming and going. God desires us to make the most of them. . . . A few more years at the longest, and the voice which we cannot refuse to answer will be heard saying, ‘Give an account of thy stewardship’ ” (Ellen G. White, *Christ’s Object Lessons* [Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1900, 1941], pp. 373, 374).

“The work of God in the earth can never be finished until the men and women comprising our church membership rally to the work, and unite their efforts with those of ministers and church officers” (Ellen G. White, *Gospel Workers* [Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1915], p. 352).

“If the proper instruction were given, if the proper methods were followed, every church member would do his work as a member of the body. He would do Christian missionary work. But the churches are dying, and they want a minister to preach to them. . . . They should be brought into working order, that the breath of God may come to them. They should be taught that unless they can stand alone, without a minister, they need to be converted anew, and baptized anew. They need to be born again” (Ellen G. White, *Evangelism* [Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Pub. Assn, 1946], p. 381).

“Instead of keeping the ministers at work for the churches that already know the truth, let the members of the churches say to these laborers: ‘Go work for souls that are perishing in darkness. We ourselves will carry forward the services of the church. We will keep up the meetings, and, by abiding in Christ, will maintain spiritual life. We will work for souls that are about us, and we will send our prayers and our gifts to sustain the laborers in more needy and destitute fields’ ” (Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* [Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948], vol. 6, p. 30).



Share insights from this week's memory verse and Bible study as well as any discoveries, observations, and questions with your Sabbath School class (or Bible study group). Consider these discussion questions with the rest of the group.



How does the fact that you are a minister make you feel?

What ministry opportunities are available or need to be created in your church or community?

Has God been calling you to a particular ministry? If so, explain.

How high is God's standard for His priests and ministers?

In what ways does God empower us to be all that He wants us to be in ministry?

How might God be calling you to assist your pastor in local church ministry?

What kind of ministry training is offered at your church? What training do you wish you had?

What do you think would happen if every local church released all its pastors to go and raise up new congregations, as the Adventist Church used to do? How would your church fare? In that event, what responsibilities would you take on?