Dear Emmanuel,

Here are some thoughts concerning ministry at EBC.

1 Corinthians 12:12-26 — “For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

“14 For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot says, “Because I am not a hand, I am not a part of the body,” it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. And if the ear says, “Because I am not an eye, I am not a part of the body,” it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired. If they were all one member, where would the body be? But now there are many members, but one body. And the eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you”; or again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you.” On the contrary, it is much truer that the members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary; and those members of the body which we deem less honorable, on these we bestow more abundant honor, and our less presentable members become much more presentable, whereas our more presentable members have no need of it. But God has so composed the body, giving more abundant honor to that member which lacked, so that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.”

Ministry is about flexibility. It is about working together, not as a team, but as a body. Some parts of the body are stronger than others. For this reason, some parts of the body are expected to perform more often and with greater intensity than others. But, there must always be time for rest—for the strong and the weak.

One of the ways the local body is to rest, is by others stepping in to aid whenever needed. Watch this short video, not necessarily the entire thing, you’ll get the idea in the first couple of seconds, but it is an interesting six minutes. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AfiO5vJzglA

Cashmere is an encouraging, inspiring woman. If you read some of the comments, you saw that there were many people ashamed of griping about one thing or another. It certainly caused me to think about how easy it is for me to clean dishes, brush my hair, or do any of the menial tasks that I do from day to day.

So, what has this lady to do with Paul’s letter to Corinth?

She has no arms—never has. Her body cannot function the way it is intended to function, so, there are other parts of her body that step up to help. What we see helping are the feet—but what else is going on? Her toes are doing the work of fingers, her hips are doing the work of shoulders, her ankles are contorting to match that of the wrist. Her body does all these things, without losing its identity, nor do the feet do this without losing their identity as feet—she still walks on them!

We are the body of Christ. We all have different gifts and abilities. Some are stronger than others. Some are envious of others. Some love to work with others, while others like to work alone. Still, others are very encouraging and outgoing with every aspect of just being a part of the body. Paul addresses these issues in 1 Corinthians 12. But there is something missing from the above passage, that I intentionally
left out. Paul goes on to write about spiritual gifts and that it is good to desire certain gifts and in verse 31 he writes, “And I show you a still more excellent way.” The more excellent way is found in 1 Corinthians 13, what is deemed by many “the love chapter of the Bible.” Do you see it? The body of Christ can never be what it was meant to be without love. It is like Cashmere’s body—it can function, and function quite well, but it can never be what it was meant to be (reference Revelation 2:1-7).

In other words, whether it’s AWANA, Sunday School, women’s ministry, men’s ministry, or anything else under the sun, our ministry at EBC will always be inferior to what it could be if not rooted in love.

Why do we do what we do? The answer should be “because God loves us, therefore we love Him, and we love others.” Be honest with yourself—are you operating life with this attitude? And then—are you operating at EBC with this attitude as well?

One of my primary roles at EBC (at least from my perspective, and, I think, Biblically) is to help facilitate people within different ministries of the church. Paul wrote to the church at Ephesus these words, “15 but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love” (emphasis mine).

I do not want people to get burned out. I don’t want people to feel as though they have to do something because “no one else will.” I also don’t want people to feel as though they must be in a position until “death do us part.” I do want people to be involved. I do want people to want to be involved. I do want people to “do” because of love, not because of have to. I know we have families, work, extracurricular activities, and more that demand our attention. We are limited on time, money, and resources—but God is never limited…by anything.

So, will you join me in praying for the ministries of EBC? Will you pray about ways in which you can help? Our mission field is here, it is now, and we are the ones who must be ready and willing. I can help. I want to help. So please, reach out to me, so that I can help you in any way I can.

One area of specific prayer is AWANA. The Awana ministry has been a staple of EBC for many years and it is time to consider the future of this ministry. Are you in? Or, are you out? I have a list of key roles of Awana. Some of them are already filled. Some of them are vacant. Still, there may be other areas that I have not included because of ignorance, not negligence (I’m still learning the ropes of AWANA).

Please pray about an area in which you are willing to serve. Then, consider how long you want to serve—1 month? 6 months? —you decide, and I will work with you. Is there something you would like to do, but don’t see it on the list? Let me know, and I will work with you. The biggest thing I ask, is that you be willing to serve where needed, with a heart of love.

AWANA Roles

- Awana Ministry Director (AMD, aka, overseer)—Daniel Thompson
  - Description: The AMD is someone who loves the Lord, loves kids and has good administrative abilities. He encourages spiritual growth in club directors and helps them shepherd their volunteers who, in turn, shepherd the kids. She is also responsible for maintaining her own growing personal walk with Christ. Other tasks include recruiting new volunteers, equipping leaders by providing training opportunities and communicating with the pastor and church staff.
- **Club Directors (e.g., Cubbies, Sparks, etc.)**
  - Club directors oversee one age specific club or youth program. The director has the unique opportunity to guide and shepherd the leaders who work directly with the kids. One of a director’s main responsibilities is to equip others to serve as he casts the vision for the ministry year.

- **Recreational Leader**
  - The recreational leader plans and coordinates different games to engage the kids in physical activity (Weekly, bi-weekly, or once monthly).

- **Worship Leader**
  - A worship leader chooses and leads the kids in worship and engages them creatively through song (Weekly, bi-weekly, or once monthly).

- **Skit Leader**
  - A skit leader will design fun skits for the kids to learn and perform throughout the year (Weekly, bi-weekly, or once monthly).

- **Activity Director**
  - The activity director will decide the calendar events for recreation, worship, and skits along with any other activities to be done. This person is the coordinator/facilitator for all AWANA activities.

- **Listener**
  - A listener’s main responsibility is listening to children recite their verses and work through their handbook sections or Bible studies.

- **Secretary—Jackie Payne**
  - Records and details to help keep Awana ministries operating smoothly. The secretary provides much-needed organization to the Christ-centered fun of a church’s ministry. Some churches have one secretary for all clubs and youth ministries. Others have separate secretaries for the separate programs.

- **Student Leader (Youth)**
  - A student leader is a teen who desires to be an Awana leader. The student leader must have a strong personal relationship with Christ and actively participate in church. Many student leaders have Awana experience.

You will notice some “new” roles. This will be discussed later in a seminar for AWANA volunteers. For now, please pray about how, when, and where to serve. Also, many of the positions are available for multiple people to hold. In some cases, a volunteer may want to serve in two, or more, different roles. This is possible in some cases.
Thank you for your time. Thank you for your encouragement to me and Holly over the last couple of months. Thank you for being who you are in Christ. And, please, take time for yourself (Philippians 2:4) and rest in the Lord that He may strengthen you for what is to come.

By grace,

Daniel Thompson

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