

# Ten Ways

## TO EQUIP THE ROYAL PRIESTHOOD – CORPORATE RHYTHMS



1 Peter 2:9 highlights that Christians have been made *kings* and *priests* – a royal priesthood – so that “we may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness,” with is the work of a *prophet*. The Holy Spirit equips every believer to be prophet, priest, and king – even if he or she lacks any specialized title as pastor, elder, or deacon. This is not to undermine the service of office-bearers. It is a proper elevation of the royal priesthood for the full functioning of the body of Christ.

Below are just ten simple ways congregations can, as a corporate body of Christ (on Sundays or otherwise), remind believers of their baptismal identity as the royal priesthood, commissioned into loving service to God and humanity. Each idea has practical examples available for you to explore. **In order to access these resources, email: [justin.g.carruthers@gmail.com](mailto:justin.g.carruthers@gmail.com).**

### 1 PREACHING, TEACHING, & VISION CASTING

Pastors and ministry leaders can explain the various ways in which God calls the royal priesthood to use their gifts, talents, influence, position, authority, creative capacities, and labors to take part in God’s work in the world. This is not an exclusive function of ecclesiastical office holders, rather it is the privilege and responsibility of the royal priesthood. All good work is holy work and all Christian workers are holy workers. Pastors and ministry workers can inspire the royal priesthood to live out their baptismal identity in and through their work in the world. Allow the Word of God to inform His people on how vocation is essential, not incidental, to the mission of God. Check out examples of a [sample sermon](#), [Vision Frame video](#), [three ways to open the preaching ministry](#), [a customizable PowerPoint presentation](#) to teach your congregation about the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers, and more.

### 2 SMALL GROUPS

Acts 2:42 says, “And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.” What we see in scripture is that the most regular, ordinary and mundane act of the church was also the most beautifully profound – a devotion to one another and to God’s Word and prayer, often centered around a meal with sacramental overtones. As the royal priesthood broke bread together, they were reminded of the body and blood of their Lord and Savior, their deep-rooted assurance, and the joy that they have found in Christ. In the same way, they were reminded that they were not only united with Christ, but also with one another. Living with this sacramental vision made the royal priesthood attentive to the God-sightings in daily life and this, in turn, inspired them to tell others of the Good News of the Gospel. Whether your congregation has a midweek ministry or small groups that meet in homes, pastors and ministry leaders ought to teach congregation to live out the “one-another’s” of scripture where real ministry can take place. Explore an example of a [sermon-based home group ministry](#).

### 3 THE SACRAMENTS – BAPTISM & THE LORD’S SUPPER

As you celebrate the sacrament of **baptism**, those moments can serve as inauguration ceremonies for those being baptized, as well as a reminder for the community of believers witnessing the precise nature of their baptismal identity as a royal priesthood, unleashed by the Holy Spirit and equipped to use their gifts in the world. Pastors can start by making the meaning of their baptism clear! Let them vividly see their ordination into the royal priesthood clearly through their baptism!

Likewise, pastors and ministry leaders can allow God’s people to make the connection that the **Lord’s Supper** is a meal for the royal priesthood, nourishing them with faith, hope, love and courage, it is a means of assurance that the Holy Spirit is present as they are called to serve others, and it is a reminder that in the same way God has reconciled us to Himself, we too are engaged in the priestly ministry of offering the ministry of peace and reconciliation to others. Explore a few [example liturgical forms](#) that help the royal priesthood see their baptismal identity through the sacraments.

### 4 ART & ARCHITECTURE IN CORPORATE WORSHIP

A way to help people remember their baptismal identity as a royal priesthood is with the simple use of design and architecture within the building where the church [ekklesia] meets for corporate worship. A few examples:

**Baptismal Font** – A very practical way to remind the ekklesia of their baptismal identity is to place the baptismal font in a prominent place in the worship center. Perhaps at the central door where people enter to worship. Or in a social gathering place.

**Artwork** – Use images, artwork, architectural designs, and dedicated spaces within the corporate worship and social spaces that communicates our identity as a royal priesthood.

**Vocational Mission Wall** – Many congregations have “Missionary” walls. Still others have “Members” walls. Consider implementing a “Vocational Mission Wall” which highlights the various vocations members are part of and how their vocation is tied to God’s mission.

Want to see with your own eyes what this could look like? Check out a few [visual examples of art & architecture in worship](#).

## 5 SHOWCASE MODELS OF VOCATIONAL STEWARDSHIP

Christian men and women can be the living, breathing models of vocational stewardship to others. By telling their stories, they can help their peers in the congregation gain a vision for what is possible. Serving as a model is important also because publically celebrated actions are often duplicated. They can educate others by modeling an integration of their faith into their vocational lives. They can equip others by giving examples of how this is played out in the real world. In so doing, they can inspire others to take on the mantle of faith and to have the courage to follow suit, all by simply showcasing what the Lord has done in their life. See an [example "God's Story, Our Story" vocational stewardship video testimonial](#).

## 6 WEDDINGS & FUNERALS

If you are a pastor or ministry leader, chances are you have the privilege of conducting marriage ceremonies and funerals from time to time. Perhaps you have never considered these ceremonies to be an opportunity to celebrate and affirm the royal priesthood. Well, it is! A biblical model for **marriage** is informed by this radical thought that a couple can live out their commissioning as the royal priesthood better together than they could apart. Their marriage is a choice to live out their baptismal identity together. Likewise, as families mourn the loss of loved ones, a **funeral** may be an appropriate time to reflect on all that God has done through the life and ministry of the loved one who has *"fought the good fight"* and is now with the Lord hearing, *"Well done, good and faithful servant."*

## 7 COMMISSIONING SERVICES FOR GOD'S PEOPLE IN THEIR VARIOUS VOCATIONS

The only commissioning service we typically witness in the CRCNA is the ordination and or commissioning of an ecclesiastical office position – a pastor, elder, deacon, commissioned pastor, or a missionary. Could it be that this conveys the singular message to our congregation that the only ordained priestly ministry is that of those offices? Consider commissioning members of your congregation, in their various vocations, to function as the royal priesthood. Consider developing [special liturgies for commissioning members](#) for their work within society – believers, in their various vocations, called by God to promulgate His Kingdom in the world that He loves. CEO's, Farmers, Doctors, Retired/Unpaid Servants, Nurses, Pastors, Teachers, and Stay-at-Home Parents (and spiritual parents), and more, all called to do the work of ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ, until we all reach until in the faith.

## 8 PUBLIC PRAYERS FOR THE ROYAL PRIESTHOOD / VOCATION-BASED PRAYERS

Pastors and ministry leaders can affirm the commissioning's of God's people by praying for the royal priesthood regularly during public worship. Such prayers both encourage and challenge members as they offer their lives as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God. Men and women are in need of constant reminders for how their *faith* and *life* intersect. Consider employing the following practices: [Congregational Prayers](#) – During the weekly Sunday service, consider praying specifically for a handful of members, by name and vocation, asking God to empower them as they seek to live out their commissioned contribution to God's Kingdom. [Vocation-Based Prayers](#) – If you are part of a larger congregation, consider composing prayers that focus on specific vocational groups. Some congregations have been known to bring a symbolic object from that career on the stage (such as a tool for the trade of carpenters and plumbers, a hair dryer for beauticians, or a textbook for educators and students).

## 9 EQUIP STAFF & KEY LEADERS TO EQUIP OTHERS

If you want to have a compounding effect upon equipping your congregation to connect vocational stewardship to their baptismal identity, choose to start by equipping yourself, your council, staff, and key volunteer leaders within your congregation. Amy Sherman goes as far to say that *"...any church serious about vocational stewardship needs to designate a specific individual or team, paid or unpaid, that devotes time and energy to the work of equipping [the priesthood]."* So choose to equip and empower your key leaders to lead the charge in equipping the congregation for vocational stewardship through [training & adult education, coaching and customized vocational development](#), gifts assessments and inventories, and more.

## 10 ASSIGNMENT – DEVELOP A CUSTOMIZED ACTION PLAN

Above are just nine practical ideas to use in seeking to equip the royal priesthood. But truth be told the single most effective process you can engage in with your team is to consider developing your own action plan. There are no "silver bullet" strategies. Imagine following this assignment: Gather together a team of key ministry leaders to [create an action plan](#) that would result in meeting the challenge of equipping and developing the royal priesthood. It is inspiring. It is challenging. And it is a lot of fun!

**Special Note:** If your team does come up with more ideas for equipping the royal priesthood and you are willing to share them, please email [justin.g.carruthers@gmail.com](mailto:justin.g.carruthers@gmail.com) and they will be added to the database.

All resources mentioned above and more are available upon request by emailing: [justin.g.carruthers@gmail.com](mailto:justin.g.carruthers@gmail.com)

We would also love to hear stories from you about practical ways you have equipped the royal priesthood within the corporate worship setting so that we can share those with others.

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