



Christian Mentoring

JOHN MALLISON MINISTRIES

THE ONE MINUTE MINISTRY

John Planner: *Making the most of opportunities in our busy schedules*

A few years ago I was introduced to a little book with the title '*The One Minute Manager*' written by Kenneth Blanchard and Spencer Johnson. The One Minute Manager asks his staff to write brief concise details of their job objectives in a document that can be read in one minute.

The One Minute Manager also tries to catch his staff doing something right, following which he proceeds to give them a one minute praising. If he finds a staff member doing something wrong, the One Minute Manager issues a one minute reprimand during which he instructs the staff member on what he is doing wrong, but ends the reprimand by affirming the value of the person.

This management technique is very similar to the management philosophy I have adopted ever since I established a consulting engineering practice in my home office. Both God and our clients must have caught us doing something right, because the practice grew to having six partners and one hundred staff.

In addition to being blessed by God's praisings, we were also blessed by His reprimands, that came through the periods of adversity, failure and disappointment that occur in a competitive business environment.

Having experienced retrenchment before founding my consulting business, I put in place management systems that enabled us to avoid retrenching a single permanent staff member, in spite of fluctuations in the economy. One of the outcomes of our concern for the welfare of every staff member was a great team relationship, which contributed to our success.

After 23 challenging and successful years, we merged with a practice five times our size. This not only provided continuing security and greater opportunities for our staff, but it also provided me with a broader base in which to implement the One Minute Manager style of administration. In a very real sense this approach offers opportunities for One Minute Ministry.

Recently during a business meeting, a client's senior executive expressed feelings of depression because of his insecurity within the firm. This gave me the opportunity to state that, although he could not rely on the firm's long term plan for his future, that God had a long term plan for his life, a plan that included other issues, including his family, which were important to him. The next time we met I gave him a Max Lucado book which dealt with God's plan for our life, a plan which secures us through periods of adversity to a fuller, more meaningful future.

The One Minute Manager should also be a good time manager, ensuring that our time commitment to work should be balanced by an appropriate time commitment to the family, to the church and to the community.

One Minute Ministry can be effective at work, at home, at church, at leisure and in any environment. It is interesting to note that some of Jesus' most profound statements were uttered during a period of one minute. His example also encourages us to be prepared for opportunities that may arise for us to exercise our One Minute Ministry through the positive support of other people.



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REFLECTION:

1) Consider Jesus' example of dealing with people. Note John 3:1-21 and John 4:3-30. Although these two incidents occupied more than one minute, note the manner in which Jesus' perception allows Him to deal with the person's real problem.

2) What similar factor is at play in the ministry of Jesus in these very different events? Discuss your answer in the light of Henri Nouwen's conviction that effective ministry requires the minister to be the 'articulator of inner events', "...able to sensitively articulate what is happening...so that others will say, 'You say what I suspected, you express what I vaguely felt, you bring to the fore what I fearfully kept in the back of my mind'..."in such a way that the ground is then broken to receive the Word of God.

3) Reflect on the disappointment you may have felt when you realised that you had missed an opportunity for one minute ministry. How did you feel? How would you seek to respond in a similar situation in the future?

4) How important is it then to "know yourself deeply" in order to minister to others? See pages 30-33 of *Mentoring to Develop Disciples and Leaders* by John Mallison. In what ways would this make your One Minute Ministry more effective?

(John Planner is an active Christian, a family man and a member of the West Epping Uniting Church in Sydney. He is also a semi-retired consulting engineer, and a director of The Adcafe advertising and marketing consultancy.)