

**FLORIDA CHURCH OF GOD MINISTERS MEETING  
OCTOBER 22-23, 2018**



**Presented by  
Bishop Timothy E. Brown**

**BEGIN**

No inspiring story ever started with the character staying at home. Beginning takes faith and courage, but it promises a chance to change and be changed. And it doesn't take having all the answers, either. We only need to look to Scripture to find people invited to participate in the kingdom who continue to fail, learn, be forgiven, fail *again*, grow, and be used. But we must, first of all, begin.

Our answer to the invitation quickens others to begin, as well. We can all take a moment and name at least one person in our life whose story of faithfulness marked a new chapter of growth in our spiritual journey.

And, as we continue along, we are sure to meet and be ministered to by other men and women of faith who teach us what it looks like to be the hands and feet of Christ. We are challenged, inspired, encouraged, stretched, and taught. But it only begins with our response to God's call.

**EXPECT**

Our expectation is an expression of our hope—hope in a God who saves. One who is expecting guests goes to work in order to prepare their home for the guests' arrival. In the same way, when we are hopeful and expectant, we are compelled to eagerly act and serve. Our work in building and growing God's kingdom is fueled by our belief in its arrival.

“Truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you” (Matt 17:20). Our expectation and faith allows us to speak and act with authority, because we aren't simply relying on our own strength.

Expectation connotes a sense of response—response to God's call. When God gave a word to the people of Israel that they would be freed out of Egypt, the people responded with a sense of expectancy that God's promise would be fulfilled. They were faithful in the face of their circumstances, believing God would make a way.

**LOVE IT**

The moment our primary motivation shifts to a sense of compulsion rather than joy, we're in big trouble. It can be easy to lose our broader vision and love for what we have the honor of doing amidst the day-to-day stream of phone calls, facility maintenance, and everything else we might not have pictured when we first entered the ministry.

That's why it's all the more important we remember (1) to keep our eyes open for “celebration-worthy” moments will keep our tank full. Celebrate milestones in the lives of our members and our

broader church community. We're many members, one body! (2) Our ministry will be the most successful when we are our authentic selves. If I try to mirror my ministry after the strengths of someone else, it's like waking up each day and putting on clothes that don't fit. Wear your gifts with joy and gratitude—it'll serve you and your church best.

### **INCLUDE**

“Jesus said to them, ‘It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners’” (Mark 2:17). Jesus’ ministry was marked by one of including others, especially those who’d been left out—the sick, the hopeless, the “lost causes.” How will we invite those who have nowhere else to turn into God’s community? Will our ministry look like Jesus’ ministry? Are we building a secret club or opening our doors?

Our ministry is built off our overall character. In our daily life, are we looking for opportunities to make others feel known and loved? Start there, and the DNA of our churches will follow.

### **EXCEL**

Be humble, but be excellent. We enter into our calling realizing that we are imperfect but have been given real gifts. We have talents that we should neither hide nor “hype up.” We all should be open to finding opportunities to use our gifts, as well as surrounding ourselves with mentors and community who will lovingly show us our areas where growth is still possible and important. Striving to be great and striving to grow are not mutually exclusive.

### **VALUE**

“By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another” (John 13:35). There’s something quite incredible about love—when we show love to others, it changes our posture, turning us out toward the world to see the way God sees. You can’t love someone and watch them hurt.

Like the Good Samaritan in the Gospel of Luke who was moved with compassion to acknowledge the inherent value of the vulnerable traveler on the roadside, orienting our priorities in such a way that seeks to, above all, show love to our neighbors helps make apparent the kingdom of God.

### **ENGAGE**

The life of faith is not meant to be lived on the sidelines. Just as Christ took on flesh and dwelt among us, teaching, ministering, eating with others, traveling from place to place, so should we seek to take our faith beyond the pulpit and pew and out into the world.

It can be done in a variety of ways—big and small—and according to our gifts, talents, and passions. During times of joy and pain, we are called to offer the ministry of presence and action to and for others.

**Timothy E. Brown**  
**State Administrative Bishop**

Florida Church of God  
State Executive Offices  
813.620.3366 office  
813.620.1897 facsimile  
[www.flcog.cc](http://www.flcog.cc)