

Eph 4:11-12 Equipping for Ministry

And He gave

Jesus is the One who equips the church with Spiritual gifts through the power of the Holy Spirit, so that we can magnify Him and increase the Kingdom of God, by serving Him, and our Brothers and Sisters in Christ, so that they are equipped to serve God themselves, and strengthen and edify the Church. Paul lists 5 groups of persons with specific ministries to serve the Kingdom in the Church.

Apostles

The apostles are described as both “holy” and as Christ’s apostles. They hold this place of greatest foundational importance because of their connection with the historical Jesus Paul numbers himself among the apostles, although he considers himself to be the last and least of them (1 Cor. 15:8–9).

Apostles are official delegates of Jesus Christ, commissioned for the specific tasks of proclaiming authoritatively the message of the Gospel, and of establishing and building up the churches. The gift of apostle was accompanied by miraculous signs. The apostles also gave miraculous signs and wonders to confirm their unique position.

Prophets

Second, Christ has given prophets. Prophets are also listed among the gifts in 1 Cor 12:28 and Rom 12:6. A prophet is one who was endowed by the Holy Spirit with the gift of prophecy. The mission statement is in 1 Cor 14:3 **3 But the one who prophesies speaks to people for edification, exhortation, and consolation.** They speak truth directly from God. And the truth of what those who are speaking on behalf of God is established by comparing to God’s Word, and by those who have dedicated themselves to the Truth from God, so that no-one is misled. Prophets clarify and communicate God’s intention, and reveal God more fully to the Church. In 1 Cor 13:2 **2 If I have the gift of prophecy and know all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.** So, we see that there is a requirement to be motivated by love to explain God’s will and truth, and to prophecy by faith, knowing that it’s coming directly from God, not one’s own will. 1 Peter 1:19-21 **19 And so we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts. 20 But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture becomes a matter of someone’s own interpretation, 21 for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.** The prophetic gift may include a predictive element (1 Thess 3:4, 1 Thess 4 13-18 ,2 Thess 2:2-4)

Evangelists

Third, Christ has given others to be evangelists. The general meaning of the term refers to one who brings good news, the Christian gospel of peace with God through Christ’s crucifixion, atoning sacrifice for sin, justification by His Blood, and stamp of approval from God on all of the above by the resurrection. The good news that people can have peace with God through what Jesus has accomplished on the cross is called good news, because it’s just like the Imperial messengers that used to travel to bring news of military victory, or triumph. Evangelists are those whom God has especially equipped to bring the Good News of salvation to those who have never heard it, or who have never understood it, so that they come to a saving knowledge of Jesus

Pastor

The fourth and fifth gifts that Christ gives his church body, unlike the first three, are linked together, not identical, but overlapping. These gifts often occur together, with one often predominating in a particular person. The word “shepherd” was often used metaphorically for a political or religious leader in the ancient Near East. In the OT, too, God is often portrayed as a shepherd who tends his sheep, the people of Israel (e.g., Gen. 48:15; Pss. 23:1–4; 80:1; Isa. 40:11; 49:9–10; Jer. 50:19; Zech. 10:8–9;). When Moses prays for a man to lead Israel so that they “may not be like sheep without a shepherd” (NRSV), the Lord answers the prayer with Joshua (Num. 27:16–18). King David is said to “shepherd” Israel (2

Sam. 5:2 [1 Chron. 11:2]; Ps. 78:70–72. The Gospels sometimes picture Jesus as a shepherd who has compassion on the wandering flock of God’s people (Matt. 10:6; 15:24; Luke 15:4–7; John 10:3, 11–14, 27; cf. Ezek. 34:11–16), Pastors are those who care for the flock as a shepherd cares for his or her sheep. This would include ministering to troubled saints, exhorting and comforting all believers, and administering the activities in the local assembly.

Teacher

Our first and primary teacher is the Holy Spirit. And, in a sense, all Christians were to teach each other (Col. 3:16; Heb. 5:12). It is instruction, in the Word of God, and the moral implications, and life application that it entails. Teaching should have authority when based on the Scriptures. While the prophet spoke “under the immediate impulse and influence of the Holy Spirit” (cf. 1 Cor 14:30), the teacher would give instruction on that which was already revealed by the prophet or from Scripture. So, it’s a team effort. The evangelists would win converts to the faith, the apostles would establish churches, the prophets would fill in needed revelation for the perfection of the saints, and the pastor-teachers would water and grow people up in the Lord through the Word, and by guiding them as a shepherd.

12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry,

In context, the verses of Ephesians, 4:7–16 are concerned with the role of all believers in the unity of the church. In verse 7 at the beginning of the passage, “each one” receives grace “according to the measure that Christ decides. This matches the focus of verse 16 at the end of the passage when it says that “each single part” assists the body in its growth “in the measure” for which it has been empowered. All believers should speak the truth in love, and this refers primarily to speaking to others “the word of truth, the gospel of ... salvation” (1:13).

We are “equipping” believers for the particular work that God has for them to do. In ancient Greek, it was used in medical texts to mean the straightening or setting of a joint or broken bone. It also appears where it refers to “outfitting” a guest room with furniture, the “equipment” that goes along with a couple of beds. Also, it occurs as the “preparation” of woof and warp necessary for weaving a garment. The saints are prepared for the work of ministry.

Building up of the Body

The ultimate goal of the preparation of the saints and the work of their ministry is the, the building up of the body of Christ. The “building” under construction is the “dwelling place” of God. Its foundation is the apostles and prophets, Christ is its guiding and crowning stone, and its building blocks are believers. Grow in Christ!