

An Introduction To: BIBLICAL GIFTS

by Frank R. Parrish

In-Depth Study

In this teaching, we will do an in-depth examination of the various gifts listed in Scripture. We do not have space to include *everything* that could be said. However, if you will study thoroughly what *is* in this material, you will have enough information to:

- discover your *own* gifts, and
- help the members of your church discover *their gifts*, too.

The Whole Trinity

There are three basic groupings of gifts in the New Testament. All three groupings are referred to in 1 Corinthians 12:4-6:

"There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all."

- 1) "*Diversities of gifts but the same Spirit*" (v.4). These are the **Manifestation Gifts** given and operated by the **Holy Spirit** that are listed in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10.
- 2) "*Differences of ministries but the same Lord*" (v.5). These are the **Ministry Gifts** given by **Jesus Christ** the Son listed in Ephesians 4:11.
- 3) "*Diversities of activities, but it is the same God*" (v. 6). These are the **Motivational Gifts** given by **God the Father** listed in Romans 12:6-8.

So we can see that the whole Trinity -- Father, Son and Holy Spirit -- are involved in the giving of gifts to the Church in order for the Body of Christ to function as it was designed to.

Foundational Gifts

The seven **Motivational Gifts** given by **God the Father** seem to characterize a person's **basic life purpose** -- in other words, what **motivates** that person. These in-built tendencies, given to each person by the Creator's unique workmanship, are part of each person's **initial gifting**.

Most of us display a "mix", with characteristics from several of the motivational gifts. However, there is usually a **single strong trait** that reveals our **primary gifting**. (See Chapter 1 for a more detailed explanation.)

Leadership Gifts

The five **Ministry Gifts** given by **God the Son** are essential for the proper growth and development of the Church. The ministry of these five kinds of leaders is to equip the Body to:

- 1) minister to **God** in **worship**,
- 2) minister to its various **members** through **edification**,
- 3) minister to **the world** around them through **evangelism** and **good works**.

These gifts are covered in Chapter 2 of this teaching.

Gifts Available To Any Believer

The nine **Manifestation Gifts** given by **God the Holy Spirit** are meant to "*profit*" the Church (1Cor 12:7). The Greek word *sumphero* translated as "profit" means "to bring together, to benefit, to be advantageous". This is experienced by the Church as they submit with sensitivity to the leading of the Holy Spirit, and to one another in love.

All nine of these gifts are **available to any believer in Jesus Christ**. So it is important that all nine gifts are *welcomed* and *sought after* by *all* the members of the Body. (These gifts are covered in Chapter 3.)

Some Basic Principles To Keep In Mind

A. The Ministry Of Every Believer

All believers in Jesus Christ have been given spiritual gifts. They are expected by God to use them. These gifts are to be used under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and in submission to the God-given structure of the authority in the local church. The believers' gifts will be used in three general areas of ministry:

- 1) **UPWARD** - *Worship* = **Ministry to the LORD.**
- 2) **INWARD** - *Nurture* = **Ministry to the BODY of Christ.**
- 3) **OUTWARD** - *Witness* = **Ministry to the WORLD.**

All believers can, and should, **grow** in the following areas: their **ability** to use their gifts; their **depth of understanding** in how to use their gifts; and their **yieldedness to God** when using their gifts. We as leaders should **model** for our church the **teachable spirit** and the attitude of a **submitted heart** that is necessary for growth.

Leaders must also encourage believers in the church to use their gifts. Our church body needs what **each person** can supply. That is how churches do good works and grow (Eph 4:16).

Leaders should also be aware of both the insecurity and the pride that would tempt us to try to be a "one-man show" and do all the ministry by ourselves. **Nothing** quenches the anointing and presence of God's Spirit more than leaders who let their **pride** or their **fears** get in the way of what He wants to do.

B. The Problem Of Confusing Your Nose With Your Kidneys

That may sound like a funny title, but it illustrates a common and devastating problem in the Body of Christ.

Let's put it this way: your nose is **prominent**. It can be easily seen and admired (or made fun of!). Your kidneys are **important**. Yet they **cannot** be seen (unless you are in surgery!). The question becomes: "Which of these -- your nose or your kidneys -- could you live without?" Obviously we can live without our nose; but we cannot survive without our kidneys!

What does this have to do with the Body of Christ and spiritual gifts?

Simply put, too many believers (including leaders) seem to think "more **prominent**" means "more **important**", and "**less prominent**" means "**less important**." Yet, as we have seen, this is **not** true of the human body: the kidneys are less **prominent** than the nose, but they are certainly no less **important** than the nose!

It is the same in the Body of Christ.

The less prominent, less noticeable "behind the scenes" gifts -- such as serving, showing mercy, giving, administrating -- are certainly no less important, in God's sight, than the more prominent, visible, "public" gifts such as Apostle, Prophet or Evangelist.

We, as leaders, must teach the people of our churches that the most **important** thing they can do -- whether or not they have a "prominent" gift -- is to **obey** what the Spirit of God leads them to do in terms of ministry. No gift given by God is unimportant. **All** are necessary for a healthy church (see 1 Corinthians 12:14-27).

C. Character Or (Spiritual) Gifting?

It has been rightly said that spiritual gifts are like two-edged swords. These two-edged "swords" can cut both ways. They can and should be used in a good way (1Cor 12:7). But they can also be used in negative, disorderly and harmful ways (the reason for Paul writing 1 Corinthians Chapters 12-14).

Which way (positive or negative) that "sword" (gift) cuts is determined by the **character** and **heart** of the individual more than anything else.

A Christ-like Character

God has given gifts to His Church. Yet His **greatest priority** for us is that each one of us be **conformed to the "image" (character, moral and spiritual likeness) of Christ** (Rom 8:28,29; 12:1,2; 2Cor 3:18).

Too often, in the Body of Christ, believers (including leaders) pursue the exercise of their gifts (**charismata**) without regard to the development of character. It must be said, however, that from God's perspective, **NO GIFT CAN REPLACE A CHRIST-LIKE CHARACTER. GOD'S WILL IS THAT WE HAVE BOTH THE GIFTS AND A CHRIST-LIKE CHARACTER!**

If we have a Christ-like character, we will discover that the spiritual gifts function better. They will also bear more fruit in the lives of others, because there is a greater anointing on our lives.

A Lifelong Pursuit

How can we grow in Christ-like character, having balance, integrity, and the fruit of

the Spirit? Here are some simple suggestions to start with:

- 1) **submit your heart** to God and other Christians;
- 2) develop a humble, teachable spirit;
- 3) **pursue the development of the fruit of the Spirit** in your life (Gal 5:16-26);
- 4) **study the Word continually**, always applying it to your personal life;
- 5) allow the Holy Spirit to reveal the “fleshly” attitudes in your own heart. Repent of these attitudes when they are revealed and make **a fresh surrender to Christ often** (Rom 13:14).

There is more that can be done. Meet regularly for prayer with other Christian leaders in an atmosphere of openness and **mutual accountability**. If you are not meeting with such a group, then attempt to organize such a regular meeting. The most dangerous thing a leader can do is to isolate himself. That is where pride, sin and deception can come in.

Surround yourself with other Christian leaders, and bear each others' burdens (Gal 6:1-3).

We hope you will use these suggestions as an encouragement to be more diligent in your **lifelong pursuit** of being **conformed to the image of Christ**.

Chapter 1

THE MOTIVATIONAL GIFTS

The Gifts Of The Father

(Romans 12:3-8)

by Frank R. Parrish

Our Basic Motivations

There are seven motivational gifts listed in Romans 12:3-8. Very few of us are characterized by only one of these gifts. Most often, each of us has a combination of several of them. However, there will usually be one of these gifts that is more pronounced.

When we closely examine the Greek text itself, we see that the list of gifts in Romans 12 has to do with how each of us is made. These gifts portray, or characterize, our **basic motivations**; that is, **how we perceive, understand, and approach life and ministry**.

These basic characteristics are built into our personalities, **placed there by our Creator**.

But they are more than just personality traits. **They are gifts that our Heavenly Father has sovereignly given to each of us.**

Given For God's Service

We can attempt to resist these God-given motivations within us; or we can cooperate by **putting them to service for the One Who gave them to us.**

It is also possible for us to **grow** and **strengthen** these gifts. This will help us to fulfill **all** of God's purposes for our lives. We can do this by *continually surrendering to the Lordship of Christ* in our lives and *submitting our whole being to His use*. We should walk in faith and obedience to the Holy Spirit's leading, allowing our Lord to stretch us, discipline us, and mature us.

In this way, we can discover all that God has made us to **be today**; and, with His help, we can **become all that He intends for us to become** into the future.

The Seven Gifts

Let us look together at Romans 12:3-8:

v.3: *"For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to **think soberly**, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.*

vs.4-5: *"For as we have **many members in one body**, but **all the members do not have the same function**, so we, **being many**, are **one body in Christ**, and individually **members of one another**.*

v.6a: *"Having then **gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us**, let us use them:*

vs.6b-8: *"if **prophecy**, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; or **ministry**, let us use it in our ministering; he who **teaches**, in teaching; he who **exhorts**, in exhortation; he who **gives**, with liberality; he who **leads**, with diligence; he who shows **mercy**, with cheerfulness."*

Before we look at the specifics of the gifts listed in verses 6b-8, there are some crucial principles to understand. These principles are presented to us in verses 3-6a.

Understanding these principles will help us clearly grasp the importance of this list of gifts. We will also more thoroughly appreciate and understand each person's uniqueness -- **yet interdependency** -- within the Body of Christ.

I. Your "Measure of Faith" (v.3).

A. A Sober Mind

The Spirit of God, through Paul, begins this section by exhorting us to "right thinking" concerning ourselves.

Paul reminds the church at Rome that he is an apostle (*"For I say, through the grace given to me..."*) and, therefore, speaks with authority and Divine appointment. He then goes on to instruct the believers not to think more "highly" of themselves than they ought to.

This is more than just a warning against the subtlety of pride and selfishness. Yes, it *is* that; but when linked with the rest of verse 3, it takes on even more meaning.

First, we are told to "*think soberly*". This refers back to the preceding verse, 12:2: *"And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the **renewing of your minds**."* To think *soberly* (v.3) with a *renewed mind* (v.2) is to **think with a clear mind**.

The Greek word used in verse 3 is *sophroneo*. This word means "to be of sound (whole, unimpaired) mind or judgment, sane, self-controlled, serious, moderate, restrained, disciplined, able to reason." It comes from two Greek root-words: *sozo* ("to save" or "saved") and *phren* ("the mind").

The Holy Spirit is teaching us here that a redeemed believer is NOT to think **1)** with **self-conceit**, that he is **better** than others in the Body of Christ; or **2)** with **self-abasement**, that he is **less valuable** than others in the Body of Christ. BOTH ways of thinking are equally unsound and unscriptural.

Rather, we are to think with a **transformed mind** characterized by true **humility** and **gratitude** to God.

B. Why Humility And Gratitude?

Humility is best defined as **being exactly what you are; no more and no less**. We should be **grateful**, because both **the gifts and their proper and effective operation come from God through the power of the Holy Spirit**. Truly, we are only earthly vessels -- yet vessels of importance because of the priceless treasure we contain! (2Cor 4:7).

We could never acquire or obtain God's gifts by our own efforts or cleverness. And, no matter how much we desire them, **we cannot have gifts other than those God has given to us**. By walking in humility and gratitude, we become more balanced **and** more useable in the Master's hands.

Avoid Self-Deception

Competitive behavior among believers, especially leaders, usually comes from a lack of **sober thinking**. When we allow pride -- or insecurity -- to guide our thinking, we become susceptible to deception and sin.

Any person can be tempted to covet another person's gift, or to be insecure about his or her own gifts. Only constant vigilance over our hearts (Prov 4:23) -- and regular times of examination and cleansing by the Holy Spirit -- can keep us from falling victim to the self-deception of **pride** on the one hand, or **false modesty** on the other.

The basis for our transformed, sober, clear thinking is that each of us has been given a "measure of faith".

C. What Is A "Measure Of Faith"?

Let us define "**measure of faith**" -- what it **is** and what it is **not**:

1. This "**measure of faith**" is **NOT** "**saving faith**" (the kind of faith that is concerned with our salvation). No person can be "more saved" than another. You are either saved, or you are not. The presence of a gift, or its use, does NOT mean that one person has more saving faith than another.
2. This "**measure of faith**" is **NOT** an **amount** of faith. Faith is not divided into pieces by God and handed out in larger or smaller amounts to different people. It is also NOT about trying to become more "spiritual" so you can have a larger amount of faith, or more gifts.

3. This “**measure of faith**” **IS** that **type** of faith that is best suited for the operation of each particular gift in its area of service. In other words, someone who has the gift of giving needs the type of faith that will release him to give liberally, without holding back. A teacher needs the type of faith that will enable him to boldly stand before others and rightly present the truth.

Father God has made each of us in a certain way, with certain gifts. He has **also** given us the type of faith needed to best use our gifts.

D. Thinking Soberly

With that in mind, the exhortation regarding *sober thinking* takes on even greater impact.

If we think we possess gifts that we have not been given (or strive to get them!), we have an inflated notion of ourselves. We sin by thinking too highly (or just plain *wrongly*) about ourselves and what God has given to us.

But **if we underestimate what God has placed in our lives, we are enslaved to a false humility** that seems to be very spiritual but is not spiritual at all (Col 2:23). We will doubt or deny the gifts God has given us, and never rise up and fully use those gifts. Thus, all that God could accomplish through our lives will go unfulfilled, and the Body of Christ will never receive all that we could give.

E. Stay Within Your Gift

There is another important lesson to learn about **sober thinking**: When you have been given a certain Motivational Gift, be content to use that gift instead of longing for other gifts. It is a wise person who stays within the **sphere of service** that God has equipped him for, and **avoids doing something for which he is not equipped**.

The quickest way to become frustrated and hopeless in ministry is to try and function in an area of service where you are not **equipped** to function!

F. Uniqueness Of The Motivational Gifts

It is important to remember the uniqueness of the Motivational Gifts. They are not like the Manifestation Gifts of 1 Corinthians 12, where **any** believer can function in **any** of those gifts as the Holy Spirit leads. Nor are these gifts like the Ministry Gifts of Ephesians 4:11.

The Motivational Gifts (which will be discussed in detail further in this article) involve **who God has made us to be**. These gifts will influence how we perceive life, and how we respond to other people's needs in a given ministry situation.

Each of us, with our unique motivational gifts, will respond to a situation somewhat differently than others who have other gifts. The important thing is that **each** gift is **just as important** as the other gifts. And ALL the gifts are equally important for effective and **complete** ministry.

G. Our Value

The kinds of gifts we have do **not** determine our value to the Body of Christ, nor to God. For we all belong to one Body, and **need each other's different gifts to function correctly**.

We **all** belong to God because we have all been created in His image and purchased by the blood of His Son. These facts establish forever our personal worth and value.

Our worth is not based upon the kind of gifts we have, or the size of our ministry. Each person is valuable to God and to His Kingdom just as He has created him or her. Let us discard all prideful posturing and striving. Instead, let us with praise-filled hearts embrace all the Father has chosen to give to each one of us!

II. We Are One Body (Rom 12:4,5)

Paul's comments here are shorter than in 1 Corinthians 12, but the meaning is the same.

In verse 3 Paul writes, "*God has allotted to each a [different] measure of faith*". Here in verses 4,5 the Holy Spirit uses the illustration of the human body to recombine these different measures of faith. As each human body has many different members, each with its own particular function, so does the one Body of Christ.

Two important principles emerge from verses 4 and 5:

A. "We are ONE BODY in Christ."

We each belong to Christ's Body. We do not belong to just ourselves. Therefore to despise, criticize, or be judgmental of another part of the Body **denies** and **hinders** the different functions God intended for His Church. He made each of us unique and different! **There are no lesser gifts or persons!** Because we are **all** members of His Body, we should treat each other with the kind of care and respect that would please the Lord.

B. "We are members of one another."

Believers are members not only of One Body, but also of each other. This means we are **mutually inter-dependent**. The Body can function properly only when **each member does its part**. Therefore, it is very important for each member/gift/function to be recognized. Each one should be taught and encouraged to minister in the Body. The differences within the Body enrich all other members, as each member accepts the full expression of **each** gift God has given to the Body of Christ.

With these principles in mind, let us now examine in detail the seven Motivational Gifts listed in Romans 12:6-8. As we look at each gift, we will discuss:

- 1) **characteristics** of each gift, and
- 2) **scriptural examples** of each gift.

THE MOTIVATIONAL GIFT OF PROPHECY

v.6 - Perceiver

Ongoing Insight

A person with the Motivational Gift of Prophecy could also be called a "perceptive"

person. That is someone who sees and understands the deeper meaning of a situation. We are not talking about **revelation**, that is, seeing something never seen before. We are talking about having the light of the Word of God and the Spirit of God giving holy illumination to the mind of the person in order to reveal the truth of a situation. This Motivational Gift is characterized by the ability to:

- 1) see or perceive **beyond surface appearances**;
- 2) receive and declare **truth about a situation**;
- 3) receive and declare **insight** about people or programs.

This creative gift from our Heavenly Father gives a believer the ability to **see situations and people with ongoing prophetic insight**. This gift (like the rest of the gifts listed in Romans 12) functions **independent of any public ministry or position**. In other words, someone with the Motivational Gift of Prophecy is NOT the same as someone with the **Ministry Gift** of Prophet.

For The Church's Benefit

As with any gift, the Motivational Gift of Prophecy can be used in a helpful and beneficial way -- or it can be twisted and used to hurt. **It is given by God** and intended to be used **for His glory and the Church's benefit**.

This gift can motivate a person to want to:

- repair broken relationships in the Body of Christ;
- improve or build up a person's walk with God.

Persons with this gift will desire to "cut to the heart of a matter" -- whether it is a problem between people, or a spiritual challenge in the church. They will often desire to **speak out the truth** they perceive, whether it is to an individual or a whole congregation.

It is very important to remember, however, that **having the Motivational Gift of Prophecy does not necessarily make you a prophet**.

Sometimes a person motivated by this gift may also be a **teacher** with unusual insight in a local assembly. Or that person may be a good counselor. Yet it is possible, even likely, that a person with the Motivational Gift of Prophecy will often be used prophetically (1Cor 12:10) by the Spirit of God. He may even have the Ministry Gift of Prophet (Eph 4:11).

Persons with this Motivational Gift tend to be very "clear-cut" in their approach. To them, something is both **true** and **right** -- or it is **false** and **wrong**; there is no "middle ground", and there are no exceptions. Persons with this Motivational Gift need to seek the balance of **learning to be merciful and gentle as they seek to exhort, correct, instruct and warn others**.

Proper Use Of This Gift

Verse 6 uses the phrase "*in proportion to their faith*." This sounds like the "*measure of faith*" spoken of in verse 3, yet it is different. "*Measure of faith*" has to do with having *sober judgment* (v. 3) regarding the place or sphere of influence that our Motivational Gifts give to each of us.

“*In proportion to our faith*” refers to **the proper usage of the prophetic gifting.**

The Greek word for proportion is *analogi*, used to describe mathematical limits. In relation to this gift, *analogi* means two things:

- 1) The person who is prophetically gifted in speaking God’s word must **not go beyond that which God has given him to speak.**
- 2) This same person must **not withhold, or give less than, the full truth as God shows it to him.**

The proper use of every gift of God requires us to be responsible, and to use it correctly. Those who have the Motivational Gift of Prophecy must use their words very carefully. They should **not say more OR less** than God has given them to say.

It should be said as well that **EVERYTHING SPOKEN FROM A PROPHETIC BASIS MUST BE JUDGED AND COMPARED TO GOD’S WRITTEN WORD, THE BIBLE.** A prophetic word should *never* disagree with what is already in the Bible.

Both the person who hears the prophetic word, and the person who speaks with prophetic insight should do this comparison.

It is very important for a person with this gift to **make very certain that what he is perceiving is from God’s Spirit** -- not from his own spirit, or a demonic influence!

It is not always easy to distinguish between God’s Spirit speaking and our own spirit or even an evil spirit speaking to us. A person who is young in the Lord might become confused and make mistakes. One must humbly admit to those mistakes, and carefully submit to God in prayer and the study of His Word (2Pet 3:15-18).

Points Of Caution

This Motivational Gift most often focuses on things that are wrong. Therefore, if you have this gift, you must be careful to **not dwell on the negative.** You should also be careful to **judge the sin, NOT the person caught in the sin.**

One should speak with respect and sensitivity, so as not to offend people so badly that they miss what God wants to say to them.

A Scriptural Example Of Prophetic Gifting

John the Baptist was truly a man gifted with the **Ministry Gift** of Prophet. His gifting and ministry form a “bridge” between the ministries of the Old Testament prophets and those of the New Testament prophets.

John the Baptist’s primary calling was fulfilled through the Ministry Gift of a Prophet (Eph 4:11). However, his life and ministry can also give us some insight into the function of the Motivational Gift of the prophetic:

1. His unconventional dress (Matt 3:4) shows that **he was not concerned about external appearance.**
2. **He was aware of his personal unworthiness** (Luke 3:16). People with a prophetic gift tend to be hard on themselves.
3. **He knew he was only a voice for God.** His ministry was completely scripturally

based, as we can see in Luke 3:3-6.

4. **He was frank and direct** in confronting the crowd with their sin, warning them of judgment, and exhorting them to repent (Luke 3:7-9).
5. **He did not dwell on the negative.** When people from the crowd asked, “*What shall we do then?*” he told them the **positive steps** they could take to turn from their sin (Luke 3:10-14).
6. **He looked for repentance**, that is, a change in lifestyle in people (Luke 3:8).
7. **He placed great emphasis on right (good) and wrong (evil)** (Luke 3:10-14) and openly rebuked evil in those in authority (Luke 3:19).
8. **He discerned people’s motives** (Luke 3:7).

THE MOTIVATIONAL GIFT OF *MINISTRY* (Serving)

v.7 - *Server*

A Spirit Of Servanthood

The Greek word used here for “ministry” is *diakonia*. This is one of the Greek words used for “**servant**”. Some would limit the use of this word to only that ministry or service done by a **deacon** (which is derived from *diakonia*). This is not an unreasonable interpretation.

However, this word is used in Scripture in a much wider application. *Diakonia* almost always appears in the New Testament in connection with the service of, and in, the Christian Church.

It is used in the following ways in the New Testament:

- 1) **Service in general**, meaning all works of service and ministry done for the good of the Body of Christ (Eph 4:12).
- 2) **As the apostolic ministry** and the ministering of the Word (Acts 6:4; 20:24).
- 3) **In the office of deacon** and its areas of service and ministry (Acts 6:1-3).

Some are especially gifted in the area of service. They are fulfilled when they are serving the needs of others in practical ways.

But there is an important lesson to be learned here, regardless of your giftings. The above scriptures imply -- and many others specifically state -- that ***everything we do and are as Christians, and especially leaders, is to be marked by a spirit of servanthood.***

No matter what your God-given gifts are, or the extent of the ministry God has given you, ***you are not greater than the Lord of the Church*** (John 15:20). Everything we do is in service to Him, and to His Church.

If you desire to be conformed into His image -- He Who gave His life for us -- your life and ministry should be characterized by a Christ-like, servant’s heart (Matt 20:20-28).

Task-Oriented

Serving is one of the Motivational Gifts that God the Father gives to us at our creation, our birth. Serving focuses on the **giving of practical assistance and help**. Those who have the gift of Ministry (service) will often have the ability to identify an unmet need in the Body.

They will desire to move in and do what needs to be done to meet that need. They will demonstrate God's love by meeting practical needs and giving 'hands-on' service and assistance. You will often find these people helping the poor and infirm.

Those with the Gift of Ministry will often be gifted with their hands and have physical stamina. The Gift of Ministry is **task-oriented**.

The Honor Of Serving

This motivational gift of serving is often **underestimated** and regarded as "unspiritual". Because it is often focused on material and physical benefits, many look down upon those who minister in this way as less important. Thus, the gift of serving is often neglected and not honored in the Body of Christ.

But remember, it was Jesus Himself -- the ultimate Servant -- Who was humble enough to serve others by washing their feet (John 13:3-17).

Also, the qualifications for deacon in 1 Timothy 3:8-13 require these "servers" to be **people of Christ-like and worthy character**. And when the apostles first instituted the office of deacon, they specifically sought out people of "**good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom**" (Acts 6:1-7).

These verses prove that being a servant is NOT a lowly thing in God's Kingdom! Maybe the world of fleshly, unspiritual men sees a servant as "lowly", but a servant is most certainly NOT lowly in God's eyes (see Matthew 25:34-40).

From a wrong, fleshly human perspective, this gift can be viewed as not very important. If this wrong perspective is believed, the person with the motivational gift of service might view himself as unimportant and so deny the good gift God has given him for the Church. If service is not considered important, then the person will want to grab for other gifts that *appear* to be more "glorious" and more "important".

This wrong thinking and neglect of the gift of service leaves an empty place in what should be a well-rounded and balanced ministry in and to the Body. It will also leave the person with this gift both empty and frustrated, trying vainly to find a release of ministry **outside what God has gifted him for**.

If we leave ailing members of the Body uncared for because of a lack of this servant gift, our testimony in our local communities is damaged. It can even invalidate the Gospel message in the minds of unbelievers when they see us not serving and caring for our own members.

A Good Standing

The ministry of the Server is both valuable and truly spiritual, and an important part of the Church's witness. The Server should devote himself to this ministry with joy and confidence, for "**those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a good standing and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus**" (1 Tim 3:13).

A Scriptural Example Of Ministry (Serving) Gifting

Martha is an example of someone with the Motivational Gift of Ministry (service). Luke 10:38-42 and John 12:2 show both the positive and potential negative outcomes of this gift:

1. Servers find fulfillment through deeds rather than words.
2. "*Martha served.*" Servers have a tendency to prefer to do things themselves.
3. Servers are generally neither organizers nor facilitators. They are better at following directions.
4. "*Martha was distracted with much serving.*" Servers often get too involved and troubled about things. Also they find it hard to say "no" to new tasks (Luke 10:40-41).
5. Servers may get so busy serving that they could potentially neglect their spiritual life (Luke 10:42).
6. But... Servers are important, and are **required for any church to function!!!**

THE MOTIVATIONAL GIFT OF *TEACHING*

v.7 - Teacher

Imparters Of Truth

This creational gift focuses on the ***understanding***. Believers with this gift will seek to clarify truth and doctrine, expounding upon **the meaning and practical application of the truth**. They will desire **to impart knowledge and lead others into *understanding the truth***. To search out and validate truth will be as meaningful to those motivated by this gift as the actual imparting of it to others (1 Tim 5:17).

Needed In The Church -- And The World

Some believers feel that being a teacher is a lesser gift and not to be desired. Yet how many of us have learned something valuable from a teacher? You are able to read this magazine because someone taught you how!

It is seldom that the world notices who the teachers are; but often much of civilization depends on what teachers do and say.

Jesus Christ, the Lord of the Church and the greatest Teacher of all, has given this gift to us because the Church **needs** it -- you and I need it! In God's Kingdom, there are no *lesser* gifts or *little* people.

A Scriptural Example Of The Teaching Gift

Apollos is an excellent example of the motivational gift of teaching (Acts 18:24-28; 1 Cor 3:6):

1. The teacher "*waters*" (1 Cor 3:6) -- that is, helps the Church (believers) to grow.
2. Apollos was "*an eloquent man,*" that is, gifted as a speaker.

3. Apollos was "*mighty in the Scriptures.*" **Teachers should base their instruction on the Scriptures**, including their examples or illustrations.
4. Apollos "*spoke and **taught accurately** the things of the Lord.*" Teachers are generally objective, and will thoroughly research a subject before speaking on it.
5. Apollos was *instructed "more accurately"* by Aquila and Priscilla. Scripture says that **teachers should also be teachable.**
6. Apollos "*greatly helped those who had believed through grace.*" Teachers provide the substance (the foundational Scriptures) on which experience can be placed and made permanent. Experiences, by themselves, can pass away; experience *based in the Word* is permanent.

THE MOTIVATIONAL GIFT OF *EXHORTING*

v.8 - Exhorter

Sons Of Encouragement

As teaching is directed to the understanding, **exhortation is directed at the heart, conscience and will.** This gifting, working through a believer, will cause him to **urge others to their full spiritual maturity.** The operation of this gift is often directed toward those who are in difficult circumstances and suffering affliction.

The motivational gift of exhortation works well **in partnership with other gifts**, such as teaching, and the prophetic and apostolic ministry gifts (1Tim 4:13; Titus 1:9; 1Cor 14:3; Acts 4:36).

An exhorter will arouse and motivate both individual believers and the Church as a whole to **patient endurance, brotherly love, and good works** (Heb 3:13; 10:23-25). Exhorters will have a great ability to **stimulate the faith and personal growth of others.**

A Scriptural Example Of The Exhorting Gift

Barnabas is an outstanding portrayal of the exhorting gift, and of how that gift worked in partnership with his apostleship:

1. "Barnabas" means "*son of encouragement or consolation*" (Acts 4:36).
2. Exhorters have **an encouraging message**, that is, to follow the Lord purposefully (Acts 11:22-24).
3. The exhorter's message **strengthens the souls of the believers** and urges them to continue in the faith (Acts 14:20-22).
4. Exhorters are generally positive about people and **do not easily give up on them** - even when others have (Acts 9:26,27).
5. Exhorters have an ability to discern where people are in their spiritual growth and to speak to them on that level (Acts 11:22-24).
6. It is important for an exhorter to maintain **a positive attitude.**
7. If Barnabas had not exhorted the apostles to accept Saul (Paul), or exhorted Paul to accept Mark, **almost half of the New Testament - the Gospel of Mark and the Epistles of Paul - might never have been written!** (See Acts 15:37-39 and 2 Timothy 4:11).

THE MOTIVATIONAL GIFT OF *GIVING*

v.8 - The Giver

A Deep Desire

This gift involves a **special ability** -- and desire -- to share **material assistance**. The giving being discussed here is of **personal resource** -- NOT the distribution out of the treasury of the Church.

You do NOT have to be wealthy to have this gift. However, it does seem that those with this motivational gift have often been blessed with abundant resource. It seems the more they give, the more they have! They also seem to have the corresponding abilities to accumulate, handle and distribute assets.

They will give out of a deep desire to see the needs of God's work met and the ministry of others succeed.

All believers, especially the leaders of a church or ministry, should tithe and give offerings. But **those with the special gift of giving will give with extraordinary liberality -- even when in poverty and affliction** (Mark 12:41-44).

Purity Of Motive

The word "simplicity" (or "liberality" in some translations) comes from the Greek word *laplotetes*.

This term sometimes means "liberality" in Scripture. But here it means **single mindedness of heart, a purity of motive or purpose**.

Since the giving involves personal resource, the giver should NEVER have a selfish motive. Sometimes the wealthy will make a donation expecting to gain influence or advantage for himself or herself. **The ruling elders or senior pastor should never allow this** (see James Chapter 2).

If such a motive is suspected, those in leadership should make clear to the giver that there will be no advantage allowed him. **If the person giving the gift does not understand or agree, the gift should be refused**. God will provide for your needs another way. [For an example of how God feels about impure motives in giving, see Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5:1-11.]

A Scriptural Example Of The Giver

The life of Abraham provides us with some insights as to the functioning of this gift:

1. Givers may be entrusted by God with many assets (Gen 13:1,2).
2. Givers are of a generous and liberal spirit (Gen 13:9,10).
3. Givers can be very aggressive and resourceful in the protection of their assets (Gen 14:14-16).
4. Givers recognize God's work and causes, and are responsive (Gen 14:18-20 -- Melchizedek and tithing).
5. **Givers have a firm knowledge that God is the source of their wealth, and give Him the glory** (Gen 14:22-24).
6. God puts givers in the right place at the right time.

THE MOTIVATIONAL GIFT OF *LEADING*

v.8 - The Leader

Servant-Leadership

The Greek word for “rules” (or “leads”) is *ho proistemi*. It means literally “he that is placed in front,” indicating a position of both **authority** and **responsibility**. Both of these go hand-in-hand in God’s Kingdom and are **tempered by a servant’s heart**.

The “leading” described by this word is NOT to be mistaken for simple **management**. Nor does it describe a gift that puts the person into a prominent public ministry.

Rather, it **strongly indicates** a requirement to **lead for the good of the Body** with a sense of personal responsibility. Hence, the exhortation to “*lead with diligence*”.

The word translated as “diligence” means “prompt efficiency”, “without delay”, “a holy haste or zeal”. All of this requires **self-discipline** and **vigilance** as to the condition of the flock.

Partnering With Others

Paul’s description of the Gift of Leading seems most likely to refer to those who **hold** (1Thess 5:12) or **aspire to** (1Tim 3:1) the office of Elder. However, this Motivational Gift functions **in partnership with many of the other Ministry Gifts** -- such as apostle, prophet, pastor and teacher.

Those who have this gift will **lead by working with and through others**. They will often get the job done by organizing and delegating responsibilities and authority to others.

A leader will define the tasks and provide leadership support and guidance -- while **releasing others** to partner in accomplishing the goal.

A Scriptural Example Of The Gift Of Leader

Nehemiah serves as an example of superb leadership skills and heart motivation:

1. Leaders have a **special feel for the cause of God’s people** (Neh 1:1-4).
2. Leaders have the ability to survey and **define what needs to be done** (Neh 2:12-17).
3. Leaders have the ability to **break down major goals into smaller achievable tasks** (Neh 3:1-32).
4. Leaders can take pressure and opposition and still proceed (Neh 4:1-23).
5. Leaders make things “easy” for others and are not a personal burden (Neh 5:14-19).
6. Leaders know how to **delegate** the authority needed to accomplish the responsibility given (Neh 7:1-2).

THE MOTIVATIONAL GIFT OF *MERCY*

v.8 - *Mercy Show-er*

Compassion

This gift is similar in some ways to the Motivational Gift of Giver. However, the word “mercy” denotes a more direct, *personal* ministry to those in need.

Believers so gifted will have an ability to **identify with the needs and afflictions of those they come in contact with**. This gift will include a **practical, compassionate love**. They can make very good counselors if they will also use wisdom and discipline.

Uplifting Others

The Scripture exhorts those who have this gift of mercy to show it with “*cheerfulness*”. There is an important idea being put forth here.

Often the work of mercy can be difficult, even disagreeable, because the mercy-showers will minister to people in their worst condition. This can, over time, make the mercy-shower become grudging or even resentful in helping others.

This negative attitude defeats the very purpose of mercy. A **cheerful** mercy **uplifts** those that are sick, wounded of soul or discouraged. A grudging, reluctant mercy would make the afflicted person feel despised.

The best way to **stay** cheerful is to constantly be going to Him Whose mercies are “*new every morning*” (Lam 3:22-23) and be filled daily with His Spirit. Mercy-filled believers function best when they build **themselves** up through the Word and prayer on a daily basis.

A Scriptural Example Of The Gift Of Mercy

There could be no better example of mercy shown in Scripture (except for God Himself) than the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:29-37:

1. Mercy-showers have **great compassion for the hurting** (v. 33).
2. “*He went to him*” (v.34). Mercy-showers seem drawn to the broken and needy.
3. Mercy-showers participate in a **practical** way: they are ready to **do what needs to be done** and “get their hands dirty” if necessary -- as when the Samaritan bandaged the victim’s wounds and “*took care of him*” (v.34).
4. Mercy-showers are **sensitive to people’s practical needs**: The Samaritan paid the victim’s bill (v.35).

Showing mercy can lead to considerable personal inconvenience -- yet great fulfillment. Most importantly, **ACTS OF MERCY SHOW OTHERS THE TRUE HEART OF OUR MERCIFUL GOD**.

A Quick Comparison Of The Motivational Gifts

Having studied the unique characteristics of each of these **motivational gifts**, let us look at how these gifts might function in a hypothetical situation.

Seven people are sitting around a table having lunch. These seven people happen to be motivated by different gifts in their lives. One is inclined toward serving, another

toward giving, etc.

Someone bumps a glass with their elbow, causing it to fall from the edge of the table, shattering the glass.

The seven each react in a different way:

1. The **Perceiver** (prophetic person) says: "I knew that was going to happen."
2. The **Server** (ministry) says: "Here, I'll clean it up."
3. The **Teacher** says: "Now, there's a lesson we can learn from that. If you had placed the glass in a better spot..."
4. The **Exhorter** (encourager) turns to the person who dropped the glass and says: "Don't feel bad -- it probably won't happen again."
5. "And don't worry," the **Giver** adds, "I'll pay for the glass!"
6. Meanwhile the **Leader** quickly takes charge of the situation by asking the waiter for a broom and dustpan and another glass of water.
7. And the **Mercy** person says, "Oh, that's too bad. I hope you are all right now."

As this simple illustration shows, each person's **unique** motivational gifts will cause that person to:

- a) **see** a situation **from a different viewpoint** than others who have different motivational gifts, and
- b) **respond** to that situation **in a different way** than others who have other gifts.

The important thing to remember is this: **Though each gift is unique, all the gifts are designed to function together.** They are designed by God to be **mutually interdependent**. In other words, **they need each other** to accomplish all that Christ desires to do in His Body -- the Church!

Some Important Principles About Motivational Gifts

As we have studied this gift section together, it has probably become obvious to you that **the Person of Jesus Christ in His life and ministry is the perfect embodiment of each of these gifts** (see Colossians 1:19 & 2:9; Hebrews 1:3).

It is hoped that it is equally obvious from Scripture that **each believer has at least one gift** in which he or she is motivated (1Pet 4:10); and that the **purpose** of these gifts is **that each believer might benefit the Body of Christ** (see Ephesians 4:16; 1 Corinthians 12:7; 14:12).

In considering the motivational gifts, it is important to remember that **God builds those gifts into us**. But, as with all the gifts, the Lordship of Christ in our lives is necessary for them to function correctly.

We must not neglect these gifts (1Tim 4:14), but rather "*stir them up*" (2Tim 1:6) for God to use them for His glory.

Because the motivational gifts are **equal in stature and value**, we must always make room for other perspectives seen through the various gifts. We can be a balanced and healthy Body **only** when each of us does our part fully. Then we must fully allow every **other** part to contribute their portion, for the good of all.

Chapter 2

THE FIVE MINISTRY GIFTS:

The Gifts Of The Son

(Ephesians 4:7-11)

INTRODUCTION

by Frank R. Parrish

What The Church Needs

The Body of Christ, the Church, is a divinely ordained **organism** rather than a man-made **organization**. It is a living, functioning, growing spiritual Body.

Because this is true, the Church needs divinely-given abilities, imparted to divinely-appointed servant-leaders.

We can try to fulfill the needs of the Church using human strength and wisdom -- but we will fail! We can try to replace Holy Spirit anointing with our own knowledge, skills or cleverness. But these things will never be enough to establish God's will and effectively minister His life to His people.

Our Lord is not opposed to education or schooling (Prov 4:7); He just knows that academic achievement *by itself* is insufficient (Zech 4:6; 1Cor 8:1).

The pattern seen in the New Testament is that **God can powerfully use any man or woman**, whether they are educated (i.e., Paul, Apollos, Luke, Matthew) or not (i.e., Peter, James, John). If their hearts and lives are **fully surrendered** to Him and to the power of His Spirit, He will use them!

The Church in the first century and the Church today need the same thing. They both need **super-naturally chosen, divinely-equipped, servant-hearted leaders!**

A. Jesus Embodies The Ministry Gifts

Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church, has provided all that the Church needs. This servant-leader gifting that Christ has given to His Church is based upon the five ministry gifts. They are listed in Ephesians 4:11: "*And He Himself gave some to be **apostles**, some **prophets**, some **evangelists** and some **pastors and teachers**.*"

These five ministry gifts are supernaturally given by the Lord to certain persons. These gifts reflect the person and ministry of Christ Himself.

Consider that:

1. Jesus is the APOSTLE

"Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus" (Heb 3:1).

2. Jesus is the PROPHET

"Concerning Jesus of Nazareth...a Prophet mighty in deed and word" (Luke 24:19).

3. Jesus is the EVANGELIST

“And I, if I am lifted up from the earth [crucified], will draw all peoples to Myself” (John 12:32).

4. Jesus is the PASTOR

“I am the good Shepherd, the Good Shepherd gives His life for the sheep” (John 10:11).

5. Jesus is the TEACHER

“Rabbi, we know that you are a Teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with Him” (John 3:2).

Jesus is the fullness and embodiment of all these ministry gifts.

B. Five Ministry Gifts Given To The Church (Eph 4:7-11)

*"But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore He says: 'When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men'. (Now this, 'He ascended' - what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is also the One Who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.) **And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers.**"*

This passage makes it clear that after His ascension into heaven (Acts 1:9) to be enthroned at the right hand of the Father (Eph 1:20-23), **Jesus then distributed** these five ministry gifts to His Church.

Each of these ministry gifts is by itself only a partial expression of Christ's own complete ministry. **No single person could contain the entire ministry of Jesus.**

These five ministry gifts are like the fingers on the human hand. When any of them is missing or they won't work together, our abilities are weakened.

Three important truths emerge from this passage of Scripture:

1. The Five Ministry Gifts Are Given By Christ Alone

They cannot be given by human appointment or ability. They cannot be given or taken by any person who simply *wants* to have that particular gift. These five ministry gifts are bestowed by Christ alone. It is He Who gives and empowers these gifts.

2. The Five Ministry Gifts Function By Grace

These gifts will function properly only under the guidance, control, and empowerment of the Holy Spirit. It is the Spirit of God that applies God's grace to our lives and ministries. The Greek root-word for "gift" is **the same as grace** -- "charis". The gifts of God cannot operate fully or properly without the Spirit of God leading and guiding us as we seek to serve the Church.

3. The Five Ministry Gifts Require A Servant's Heart

These five gifts -- apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor and teacher -- **are not titles**. They were never used as titles in the New Testament. They were actually used as **job descriptions** to portray a functional service role in the Church.

Remember Christ's own words when He described His ministry: *“Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for*

many” (Matt 20:28).

Let us **not** be anxious to grab for titles or lofty positions. Instead, let us be of the same mind and heart that is in Christ (Phil 2:1-8), and desire to serve others.

The Purpose Of The Five Ministry Gifts

We know that all members of the Body of Christ have their part to play in edifying the Church and glorifying Christ.

However, the ascended Christ has given the five ministry gifts for a specific purpose described for us in Ephesians 4:12: *“For the equipping of the saints for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ.”*

The word “equipping” in this verse is translated from the Greek word *katartismos*, which means “to make complete”. It comes from the root-word *katartizo*, meaning “to repair or adjust; to make fit, mend; to perfect, prepare, restore”.

In other words, one could describe the purpose of the five ministry gifts this way: *“To prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up”*.

Christ gives ministry gifts to certain believers NOT to enable them to do the work of the ministry **by themselves** -- but to enable them to **prepare other believers** to do the work of the ministry also.

Even the Apostle Paul did not try to do the work of ministry by himself; in fact, he devoted three whole epistles to preparing Timothy and Titus to **a) do** the work of the ministry and **b) prepare still others** to carry on the work of the ministry (see 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus).

Certain believers have the **specific ministry gifts** of Apostle, Prophet, Evangelist, Pastor, Teacher; other believers do not. But ALL believers have **a ministry to perform** in **building up** the Church and **edifying** the people of God.

All believers should minister in **all** three of these areas: upward, inward, and outward.

1) Upward: Ministry to the Lord --

Worship (Psalm 150:6; Eph 5:19).

2) Inward: Ministry to the Body --

Nurture (Eph 4:16; Acts 2:42-46).

3) Outward: Ministry to the World --

Witness (Matt 5:13-16; Phil 2:15).

May each of us dedicate ourselves to walk in the power of the Holy Spirit, living daily to fulfill all of the ministry appointed for us.

A STUDY OF THE FIVE MINISTRY GIFTS

by **Dr. Robert Frost**

(Adapted by the World MAP Editorial Team)

Let us now take an in-depth look at each of the five ministry gifts of Ephesians 4:11.

THE MINISTRY GIFT OF *APOSTLE*

A. Definition Of The Term

The word “apostle” (Greek -- *apostolos*) actually means “**one who is sent forth.**” In the Greek culture of that time, the word was used in four different ways, referring to:

1. An ambassador -- someone who represents his government.
2. A fleet of ships sent to establish a new colony.
3. The admiral who commands such a fleet.
4. The colony which was founded by that admiral.

In all four cases, those who were “sent” were faithful to fulfill the will of the “sender”.

An apostle, then, is a man with a mission. His mission is **to represent and do the will of the one who sent him.** An apostle is someone who speaks and acts on behalf of another. He has been sent forth with that purpose in view.

The Relationship Between The Sender And The Sent One

This special tie between the “sender” and the “sent one” is clearly seen in the earthly ministry of Jesus, the Great Apostle. He was aware that His mission in this world was to represent His Father and do His will.

“For I [Jesus] have come down from Heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him Who sent Me...I have not spoken on My own authority; but the Father Who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say...Therefore, whatever I speak, just as the Father has told Me, so I speak” (John 6:38; 12:49,50).

It is interesting to note that Jesus chose to call His twelve disciples “apostles”. They were going to be His ambassadors -- to represent Him here on earth.

They would found or establish a new “colony” -- the Church. It would be a royal colony backed by the authority of God’s kingdom. Through the Church, God’s will would be done here on earth as it is in heaven.

“As the Father has sent Me, I also send you” (John 20:21). *“He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him Who sent Me”* (Matt 10:40).

“...And upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it...” (Matt 16:18). *“[You are] built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone”* (Eph 2:20).

The Levels Of Apostles In The New Testament

There are four main levels of apostolic ministry in the New Testament. Of these four groups, two are no longer active. However, these two form a basis for the present-day apostolic functions.

The four main levels or groups of apostolic ministry are as follows:

1. Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ was and is the chief Apostle: *“Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the*

heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus” (Heb 3:1).

He was sent from heaven to do His Father’s will on earth (see John 3:16,20,21).

He came to represent His Father to us. He spoke and acted on His Father's behalf. He was a true and faithful “Ambassador” to the whole world (See John 4:34; 5:19; 5:30; 6:38; 8:28,29,42; 12:44,45.)

2. The Twelve Apostles Of The Lamb

The twelve disciples were chosen by Jesus after a night of prayer. They served Jesus and were taught by Him during His earthly ministry.

They are called the "Apostles of the Lamb" and have a special place in heaven -- and in eternity. Their names are recorded in the twelve foundations of the Holy City (Rev 21:14).

These twelve men marked the beginning of a new age in God’s dealing with mankind. The prophetic age closed as the Church age opened (Matt 19:28).

In the Old Testament, it was the prophets who wrote Scripture. In the New Testament, Scripture was written by the apostles.

3. The Post-Ascension Apostles

(Also known as Ascension Apostles)

As we have seen in Ephesians 4:10-11, after Jesus ascended and returned to heaven, He gave another group of apostles. This group will function throughout the Church age until “*we all come to the unity of faith and the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ*” (Eph 4:13).

These apostles are an important part of the Body of Christ. When this ministry is missing, the Church will suffer from a lack of overall leadership (1Cor 12:26-28).

The New Testament reveals a number of people who fall into this class of apostles. Our list would include:

Andronicus (Rom 16:7)

Junia (Rom 16:7)

Barnabas (Acts 14:14)

Titus (2Cor 8:23) -- The English language version of the Bible uses “messenger” not “apostle” even though the original Greek does use the word for “apostle”.

James (Gal 1:19)

Epaphroditus (Phil 2:25) - The English version uses “messenger”, even though the Greek used “apostle”.

Timotheus (1Thess 1:1; 2:6)

Silvanus (1Thess 1:1; 2:6)

Apollos (1Cor 4:6,9)

4. Those With An Apostolic-Type Ministry

Besides those in the first three classes above, there is another apostolic group. These are ministering people who at times fulfill certain apostolic functions. They may not

necessarily be called apostles, but they often minister as such.

A good example would be the “seventy” disciples whom Jesus sent forth to minister (Luke 10:1-17). They had, for a time, the same power and duties that were given to the twelve disciples. But they were not necessarily called “apostles.”

Unfortunately, many people in today’s Church do not believe there are modern-day apostles (or even prophets). They admit only to the gifts of evangelist, pastor and teacher as operating in the current Church.

Their reasoning is that once the Church was established in the first century we no longer have need of apostles and prophets. But does this agree with Scripture?

The Bible makes clear the *purpose* and *reason* for the five ministry gifts in Ephesians 4:11-13.

This passage plainly states that these five ministry gifts are to remain in function until (“till”, v.13) we all come to **1)** the unity of the faith, **2)** the unity of the knowledge of the Son of God, and **3)** the measure and the stature (maturity) of the fullness of Christ.

A simple and non-judgmental examination of today’s Church will quickly reveal that we have not “attained” yet -- far from it! So there is still a **need** for the gift of apostle. But are there apostles today?

First of all, it is important to understand that the Church is, and should be, a living, growing “organism” -- not a lifeless organization. It continues to grow.

New frontiers for the Church are being pushed to the ends of the earth. There are still unreached peoples “*sitting in darkness*” who are still waiting to “*see a great light*”.

Jesus is still sending out those who are called and commissioned by Him in the power of His Holy Spirit and authority. They are to bind and loose, preach the Gospel, heal the sick, and raise the dead -- all through the power of the Risen Christ.

The answer to the question from Scripture, Church history, and modern example is: YES -- there is, and should be, **apostolic ministry** today!

The title “apostle” is not necessary. That is because the proof of apostolic ministry is seen in the fruit produced by an apostle’s labor -- in other words, the work he leaves behind. Paul understood this when he wrote to the Corinthians “*You are the seal [certification, undeniable proof] of my apostleship in the Lord*” (1Cor 9:1,2).

C. Preparation Of Apostles

The work of building His Church is very important to God. He desires that His workers be fully equipped and prepared.

Sometimes believers are so eager to minister to others, they set out before they are ready. This can bring much harm to every one concerned.

God is not in a hurry when it comes to making His ministers. It takes time to build **character**. It takes time to be trained in the school of God’s Spirit for our calling.

The preparation for apostolic ministry takes much time, training and testing. The making of an apostle requires maturity and experience. It will involve both success and failure.

Our failures can become blessings if we learn how to face and accept our weaknesses.

From our failures we find how little we can do apart from God's wisdom, grace and power. Our failures are the ground from which the fragrant flower of **humility** can sweetly bloom. Humility produces compassion and understanding. And both are needed to wisely lead in love.

Moses had been highly trained in the wisdom of this world. However, it took forty years to get Moses out of Egypt -- and another forty years to get Egypt out of Moses! Only then was he ready for the great responsibility of leading God's people to the Promised Land.

The same was true for the Apostle Paul. By nature and training he was a proud and zealous Pharisee. He was eager to do God's will -- as **he** saw it, and as **he** thought it should be done.

God had to strike him down on the Damascus road to bring him to a place of humility. Then he was ready to receive his apostolic calling through the prophetic word of Ananias.

But Paul was not ready yet. It took more than a prophetic word to prepare him to fulfill that calling. He was to spend many years being schooled by the Spirit and practical experience before he was ready to begin his apostolic ministry (see Acts 8; 9; 11; 13).

Barnabas was a man who was converted shortly after Pentecost. He was a humble, obedient, selfless servant of the Lord in the church at Jerusalem. It was some seven years later, however, that he was sent to Antioch to strengthen the work there.

He and the Apostle Paul became the first "missionaries" (sent-ones) to go forth to the Gentile world (see Acts 4:36,37; 11:22-30; 13:1-3).

Important Part Of An Apostle's Training

The background of the above apostles reveals a number of important facts. Certain important things seem to be a part of every apostle's training:

1. An apostle will have a **definite call** to this ministry.
2. An apostle will be **well-trained in Scripture**.
3. An apostle will be **prepared over a period of several years**. He will prove himself and his ministry at the local level. It is here that he will grow in God's grace, wisdom and experience.
4. An apostle will usually have been trained for a time **under the ministry of other apostles**.
5. The apostle will not be sent forth **until his preparation is complete**.
6. The apostle will often be used of God **in one of the other five-fold ministries** -- prophet, teacher, pastor or evangelist -- before being sent out, and while functioning in apostolic ministry.
7. The sending church will identify with the apostle by **the laying on of hands**.

D. The Qualifications For An Apostle

The standards for elders would apply to all leaders in high levels of authority (1Tim

3:7; Titus 1:5-9). Therefore, they would apply to the ministry of the apostle.

Besides the general standards above, there are special qualities or traits that every apostle should have:

1. An apostle must have the heart of a father (1Cor 4:15; Phil 2:22). Like a father, he will guide, provide, correct and protect God's people. He will minister wisdom with love, power and patience (Eph 6:4; 1Thess 2:6-8,11).

2. An apostle must be loving and loyal to the Church of God (1Cor 13). His love for the Church must be greater than his love for his own ministry.

3. An apostle must have patience (2Cor 12:12). He is a man of maturity and revelation. Therefore, he must be patient with those who are only "babies" in Christ.

4. An apostle must not be given to self-glory (1Cor 4:9; 2Cor 10:8; 1Thess 2:6). He must lead people **to the Lord** rather than to himself.

5. An apostle must have a servant's heart (Eph 3:7; Phil 1:1). His concern and desire must be for the welfare of others. He should be humble, self-giving and faithful (1Cor 4:9; 2Cor 10:18; 11:22-23).

6. An apostle must be willing to suffer (Acts 20:17-24; 1Cor 4:7-12; 11:18-30). He must have a willingness to endure persecution, hardships, rejection -- even death -- while still maintaining the goal of the spread of the Gospel and the founding of new stable churches.

E. The Ministry Of An Apostle

A study of the apostles named in the Bible reveals that they served in many different ways. Some of the functions, which many of them shared in common, are listed below:

1. An apostle starts new churches and sets them on a proper foundation (1Cor 3:9-14; 9:12; 11:34; Eph 2:2-4). He also serves to strengthen and advise older fellowships (Rom 1:11; Col 2:5-7).

2. An apostle is very concerned about sound doctrine and teaching (Acts 2:42; 15:1-31). He will be quick to bring correction whenever error arises.

3. An apostle will often have a ministry of miracles (Rom 15:18,19; 2Cor 12:12).

Such signs and wonders show that the power and authority of God rest upon his life. Such a ministry is needed in founding new works.

4. An apostle may be involved in church discipline when needed (Acts 5:1-11; 1Cor 5).

Such correction most often involves churches that he has founded.

5. An apostle ordains the leadership in new churches (Acts 6:1-6; 14:23; Titus 1:5).

This is true of elders, deacons and other ministries.

6. An apostle often teaches and trains new workers himself (2Tim 2:2).

This may involve special tasks and trips to other churches and places (Acts 16:1-4; Phil 2:19-25; Col 4:7-12).

7. An apostle is involved in the care of the churches that he has begun (2Cor 11:28).

Such ministry also serves to relate the local church to the Body of Christ at large.

8. An apostle often ministers with the local elders in ordaining new workers (Rom 1:11; 1Tim 1:18; 4:14; 2Tim 1:6).

This involves fasting, prayer and the laying on of hands for the spiritual gifts and graces.

9. An apostle is a “father-figure” in the overall family of God (1Cor 4:15).

He does not act as dictator, but as a *faithful shepherd* who oversees the flock of God (1Cor 16:12; 1Pet 5:2).

10. An apostle may include elements of the other four ministry gifts.

In its church-pioneering, foundation-laying, overseeing function, the apostolic ministry gift will require some elements of the prophetic, evangelistic, pastoral and teaching ministries.

- An apostle must be an **evangelist** to make new believers.
 - He must be a **teacher** to instruct them in sound doctrine.
 - He must be a **prophet** to bring direction and correction with divine power and authority.
 - He must be a **pastor** who will oversee the work of the newly ordained leaders.
- The five-fold ministries are like the human hand. There are four fingers and a thumb. An apostle is like the thumb -- it can easily touch the other four! Yet the apostolic ministry gift remains distinct and apart from the others (see the Book of Acts for examples).

F. The Calling Of An Apostle

How is an apostle called? First of all, **an apostle is called of God**. No person can simply decide on their own that they are now an apostle (or a prophet, evangelist, pastor or teacher for that matter!). It is God Who decides where, when and how the apostle will minister.

How will his calling be known? Who will recognize and approve of his ministry? An apostle should be known and recognized in at least four ways:

1. He should know, and be **certain** of, his own calling.
2. The leaders of his local church should know that he is an apostle by **what they see in his life and work for God**.
3. The people in his home church will also **recognize the apostolic quality** of his ministry.
4. The people in the churches he has founded will speak of God's special favor on the fruit of his labors. In short, **his work as an apostle will speak for itself**.

This does not mean he will be known or received as an apostle by the Church worldwide. Paul was not (1Cor 9:1-3). However, Paul did know where he was accepted as an apostle. And the people knew it too. **The fruit of Paul's ministry was proof of his apostolic calling**.

There is more apostolic ministry in the Body of Christ than many may realize. Truly, it is a vital, needed ministry in the Church today.

THE MINISTRY GIFT OF *PROPHET*

The second of the five-fold ministries is that of the prophet. It too is one of the ministries that are necessary to bring a church to maturity.

Sadly, the ministry of prophecy is not well understood in our day. Some believe it is nothing more than powerful preaching. It is clear from Scriptures, however, that prophets are more than good preachers. They have a very special place and purpose in the Body of Christ.

The Definition Of Terms

The Old Testament

The ministry of the prophet has its roots in the Old Testament. There are two main Hebrew words for “prophet”:

1. *Nabi*: This is the basic word for “prophet” in the Old Testament. It means “spokesman” or “speaker.”

Basically, it means that a prophet is a person who is authorized to speak for another. In the case of the Old Testament prophets, they were to speak for God.

2. *Hoze* (sometimes *roeh*): These words mean “seer,” which is derived from the words “to see.”

Prophets were also called “*messengers*”, “*servants of God*” and “*men of God*”. The message of the prophet is usually called a “prophecy.” But it has also been called a *vision*, *burden*, *oracle*, or “***the word of the Lord***”.

The New Testament

The Greek word *prophetes* is the only word for "prophet" in the New Testament. This word comes from two Greek words: *pro*, meaning “before” or "in front of"; and *phemi*, meaning “to show or make known one’s thoughts.” When these two words are brought together, they tell us of the two-fold operation of the ministry gift of prophet:

1. *Forthtelling*: speaking forth a message from God (Heb 1:1).

2. *Foretelling*: a predictive revealing of God’s thoughts.

Foretelling can come in two ways:

a) a prediction of future events that usually only God is aware of (Acts 21:10-14).

b) a revealing of the thoughts, motives and intents of the human heart (Acts 5:3).

Both *forthtelling* and *foretelling* must be **Holy Spirit-led** to be biblical prophecy.

The word *prophetes* can also mean “an inspired speaker”. However, the New Testament record seems to indicate that the ministry of the prophet is more than eloquent preaching.

However, sometimes preaching *becomes* prophetic, when an unpremeditated truth or

application is brought forth spontaneously by the Holy Spirit through a chosen vessel. This can also happen to a pastor, teacher or elder who does not have the ministry gift of prophet.

A good working definition for "prophet" might be: **A prophet will reveal and declare the heart or mind of God to people, and he/she will expose the heart and thoughts of people before God when he/she ministers.**

The Levels Of Prophecy

There are at least three levels of prophecy in Scripture. Each level has a special place and purpose.

1. The prophecy of Scripture (2Pet 1:19,20).

The Scripture is the highest form of prophecy. It is "*given by inspiration of God*" (2Tim 3:16). It is **without error** in the original records, and is **absolute or final in authority. This level of prophecy is no longer given today** (Rev 22:18,19). The Bible is complete, and is the standard against which all other prophecies must be tested.

2. The gift of prophecy (1Cor 2:10).

This is one of the nine gifts of the Spirit. It operates or functions under the general guidelines for all of the gifts. It is a gift in which any believer may function from time to time (Acts 2:18). [See Chapter 3 in this teaching for more details.]

In general use, it is for **building up, stirring up and comforting** the Body of Christ (2Cor 14:3). Anything beyond this should be limited to the prophets. Operation or use of this gift does not make one a prophet, as we shall see (Num 11:29; 2Cor 14:24,31).

3. The ministry of the prophet (Rom 12:6; 2Cor 12:29; Eph 4:11).

The ministry of a prophet has to do with one's calling. Its purpose goes beyond the limitations of the general gift of prophecy. The prophet may function in the realms of: confirming, guidance, rebuke, judgment, correction, warning, and revelation. (We will say more about revelations later.)

The Origin Of The Prophetic Ministry

God, as always, had a prophetic voice upon the earth. He chose to speak through godly leaders even before the ministry of the prophet had been given:

- 1. Abel** (Luke 11:50,51)
- 2. Enoch** (Jude 14)
- 3. Noah** (Heb 11:7; 2Pet 2:5)
- 4. Abraham** (Gen 20:7)
- 5. Isaac** (Ps 105:9-15)
- 6. Joseph** (Gen 50:24)
- 7. Moses** (Deut 34:10)
- 8. Miriam** (Ex 15:20)

9. Aaron (Ex 7:1)

10. Deborah (Judg 4:4)

God gave to Moses the guidelines by which all future prophets should be judged (Num 12:6; Deut 18:15-22; Isa 8:19,20; Luke 16:29).

The **specific ministry** of the prophet was first given, however, through Samuel. He was the last of the judges and first of the prophets (Acts 3:24,25; 13:20; Heb 11:32).

It was Samuel who started the schools of the prophets (2Kings 2:3-15). He created a new prophetic order of men. They were taught in the Word. They were sensitive to the Spirit of God. And they worshipped the Lord in Spirit and in truth. Every prophet shares in that spiritual heritage.

During the reign of nearly every king in Israel, a prophet was raised up to keep him on the right path. In the 400 years before the coming of Christ, the prophetic voice was silent. Then the voice of a prophet was again heard -- through the lips of John the Baptist.

Once the New Testament church was born, there was a flood of prophets on the scene. Many of them are recorded in the Book of Acts:

1. Judas and Silas (Acts 15:32)

2. Agabus (Acts 21:10-13)

3. Ananias (Acts 22:12-15)

4. At Antioch (Acts 13:1)

5. At Tyre (Acts 21:3,4)

6. At Jerusalem (Acts 11:27)

7. At Corinth (1 Cor 14:29)

God was restoring a ministry that had been silent for a long time.

Christ: The Pattern Prophet

Christ was called a prophet by God (Deut 18:15; Acts 3:22). Many people saw Him as a prophet (John 4:19; 6:14; 7:40; 9:17).

Truly Christ was God's chosen Prophet while here on earth (Heb 1:1,2). He spoke only those things which He heard the Father speak (John 12:49; 14:10,24; 17:8). He also prophesied of things to come (Matt 24:3-51; Luke 11:49).

Indeed, Christ was **THE** great Prophet. This ministry of Christ was given to His Church in the form of New Testament prophets (Eph 4:11-13). He is the model or pattern for us all.

The Function Of The Prophet

We must turn to the Scriptures to find the different functions of the New Testament prophet. We will discover that there are at least seven main things about a prophet's ministry:

1. A prophet's ministry will vary from prophet to prophet.

No two ministries are exactly the same. This is seen in the various names or titles given to prophets: “*seers*” (1Sam 9:9); “*messengers*” (2Chr 36:16); “*men of God*” (1Kings 12:22); “*servants*” (Amos 3:7; Zech 1:6).

They also received their “revelations” in different ways. Some **saw** things in the Spirit. Ezekiel, Daniel and Zechariah were prophets who had **visions**.

Others were **taken up into trances** -- almost as if out of their bodies. Daniel, Paul and John had experiences like this.

Some **heard** things in the Spirit. Micah, Isaiah and others were prophets of hearing.

Prophets also gave their message to the people in different ways. Some **spoke** (Isa 21:6) or **wrote** (Jer 30:2) God’s words to His people. Others **acted out** God’s words as a drama or living story (Ezek 4:1-3; Acts 21:11). Hosea’s and Joel’s entire lives were parables or stories that were used to bring God’s message to His people.

From all of this, we clearly see that there will be a great many differences in the prophetic ministry. Truly, no two prophets will be the same.

2. A New Testament prophet’s ministry will involve *revelation*.

Revelation comes in several forms:

a) Supernatural insight into God’s mind or Word. Before the New Testament was written, many of the apostles and prophets were used by the Holy Spirit to establish the Church (Eph 2:20).

As part of this establishing process, God used the apostles and prophets to reveal the Gospel plan of salvation and other doctrines, which are foundational to the Church. These prophetic revelations, **which were part of the letters written by these apostles and prophets**, were later incorporated (canonized) **as** the New Testament Epistles.

This is the meaning of Ephesians 3:4,5: “*by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ, which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets*”.

However, **SINCE THE BIBLE IS A FINISHED WORK, NOTHING MORE CAN BE ADDED TO IT OR TAKEN FROM IT**. It is important to remember that the writer’s of the New Testament had first-hand experiences with Jesus when He was ministering on earth (see 1John 1:1-4). Paul was an exception to this first-hand experience, but he had a direct encounter with the Risen Lord (Acts 9) as He first established the Church.

Even though God leads us by His Spirit in knowing how to live and continue building His Church in the day, **the foundational principles as outlined in the New Testament are unchanging**.

In 1 Corinthians 3:10,11, Paul declares that through the grace of God he has laid the foundation and others will build on it. But they must do so carefully because that “foundation” is Jesus Christ. A good foundation need be laid only once (Eph 2:20-22).

The Book of Revelation ends with a clear warning not to alter its contents (Rev 22:18,19). It is God’s holy, inspired Word and is complete as it is. This same warning should be used in relation to **all** the books of the Bible as **all** of them are God-

breathed (inspired) and complete.

There are still apostolic and prophetic ministry gifts functioning today. However, what is said or done in the proper Holy Spirit-directed functioning of those gifts will NEVER conflict with or attempt to override the written Word of God (the Bible).

Anything that does conflict with, or attempt to override or add to, the Bible is NOT from the Spirit of God and must be rejected.

b) Special insight into people's lives. Facts will be revealed which are hidden to others (Acts 5:1-11; 1Cor 14:25). This revealing of the hidden thoughts, intents and motivations of a person's heart is **for the purpose of ministry to that person**. This ministry may be gentle or it might be a rebuke. But it is NOT intended to give the prophet a reason for pride, nor should it allow the prophet to tell others what they should do.

c) Special insight into future events (Acts 11:27-28; 21:10-14).

Agabus prophesied to Paul in Acts 21 about what awaited Paul in Jerusalem. However, Paul did not change his plans as a result of that prophetic word.

Paul did not alter what he understood to be God's will for his future. Agabus' prophecy merely confirmed what Paul already knew, that the Jews would cause him trouble in Jerusalem.

This teaches us that **a prophet should not exercise control (governance) over leaders or churches**. The words of a prophet should confirm what God has already spoken or placed in a person's heart.

3. A prophet's ministry will involve *exhortation*.

To "exhort" means to urge, excite and motivate action. The Old Testament prophets Haggai and Zechariah exhorted the people to rebuild the broken place and restore the temple (Ezra 5:1,2; 6:14). New Testament prophets need to exhort God's people to build His Church (1 Cor 14:3,4; Eph 4:11,12).

4. A prophet's ministry will involve *warning*.

Oftentimes God will reveal something to His prophets so they can warn His people of coming danger. The warning allows the people to wisely prepare themselves for the future event (Acts 11:27-30; 21:8-11).

5. A prophet's ministry will impart a *vision* to the people of God.

As God prepares to move upon and through His people, He will give direction through His prophets. The prophet informs and inspires the people of God about His will and way for them (Prov 29:18; Amos 3:7; Eph 3:5).

6. A prophet's ministry plays a role in *the forming of new churches*.

The apostles and prophets both have a function in the founding of new fellowships (Eph 2:20; 3:5).

They also travel to local churches to strengthen and support them (Acts 15:32,41). They play a part in sending forth other ministries for missionary purposes (Acts 13:1-3).

7. A prophet often ministers with other prophets (and apostles) as a *team*.

Many counselors bring safety (Prov 11:14). The ministry of a team of prophets brings

balance to God's message (Acts 11:27-30; Acts 13:1). It is also a safeguard against human error, for the prophets would judge each other's word (1Cor 14:29).

F. Warnings About The Prophetic Ministry

The Scripture gives two kinds of warnings about the prophetic ministry. One is to the people, and the other is to the prophets.

1. God's warnings to His *people*:

a) Receive the ministry of the prophet (Matt 10:41).

Sometimes a prophet is not well received by his own people (Matt 13:57; Mark 6:4). This is sad because without prophetic ministry, the Church cannot grow as it should (Eph 4:11-13).

b) Be on guard against false prophets (Jer 5:30,31; 14:13-18; 23:9-40; Ezek 13:1-23; Matt 7:15; 24:11,24).

We cannot judge a prophecy by how loud, how long or how fine or forceful its words are. It must be judged by God's Word, by God's Spirit, and by other godly leaders if there is any doubt (Isa 8:20; 1Thess 5:20,21; 1John 4:1).

2. God's warnings to His *prophets*:

a) They are warned to control themselves

Only through self-control can they rightly build up the people of God. They must be sensitive to God's Spirit, and minister in divine order (1Cor 14:32).

b) They are warned that they should allow their ministry to be judged (1Cor 14:29).

No one is free from making mistakes. The Bible teaches that all prophecy should be judged.

There are six questions that will help judge a prophetic ministry (1John 4:1):

- 1. Does the prophecy agree with God's Word? (Isa 8:20)**
- 2. Is the prophecy given in a good spirit? (1Cor 13:2)**
- 3. Do the prophet's words come to pass? (Deut 18:22)**
- 4. Does the prophet live a godly life? (Jer 23:13-16)**
- 5. Does the Holy Spirit bear witness (agree) that the prophecy is true? (2Pet 1:21)**
- 6. Do other godly leaders agree that the prophecy is true? (2Cor 13:1)**
- 7. Do the prophet's words lead people toward the Lord or away from Him? (Deut 13:1-4)**

IF ANY PROPHET INSISTS THAT YOU FOLLOW HIM WITHOUT ANY QUESTIONS, JUDGE HIM A FALSE PROPHET.

THE MINISTRY GIFT OF *EVANGELIST*

Many people in the Body of Christ have not had a clear idea about the role of the apostle and prophet. However, they do believe they understand the functions of the evangelist, pastor and teacher. Sadly, it is possible to have a viewpoint that is shaped more by tradition -- or personal opinion -- than by God's Word.

There is much more in the Bible about the other four ministries of Ephesians 4:11 than there is about the evangelist. Apart from Jesus, Philip is the only good example of an evangelist we can find in the New Testament. Still, we have enough information from these sources to make our study most worthwhile.

Definition Of Terms

There are three main Greek terms which relate to the ministry of the evangelist. They all come from the same root-word, as we shall see:

1. *Euaggelizo*: This word means “to preach, proclaim or declare good news”. It tells us what an evangelist does - what his **ministry** is (Acts 13:42; Rom 10:15; 2Cor 10:16; Eph 3:8; Col 1:27,28; Heb 4:2). It was often used of Christ’s ministry (Matt 11:5). In a sense we all have this calling. For the evangelist, however, it is the main ministry of his life.

2. *Euaggelion*: This word means “the gospel or good news and glad message”. It tells us about the **message** of the evangelist. It is the good news about God’s saving grace. It is about the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus - our Savior (Matt 24:14; Acts 20:24; Rom 1:16; 1Cor 4:15; Eph 1:13).

3. *Euaggelistes*: This word means “a preacher or messenger of good news”. It tells us about the **man** who preaches the gospel. The term is usually translated as “evangelist”. It is used only three times in the New Testament:

- a. It is used of Philip (Acts 21:8)
- b. It is in the five-fold ministries (Eph 4:11)
- c. It is used of Timothy (2Tim 4:5)

B. Christ: The Model Evangelist

The Gospel of Luke reveals Jesus in His ministry as an evangelist. Luke tells us that the main purpose for Christ’s coming was to preach the “good news” of God’s Kingdom (Luke 4:43).

Luke also tells us the nature of Christ’s ministry of evangelism (Luke 4:18,19) as he recounts Jesus’ reading from Isaiah 61:1,2 in the synagogue at Nazareth:

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me. He has anointed Me to:

- 1. preach the gospel to the poor,*
- 2. heal the brokenhearted,*
- 3. preach freedom for the prisoners [of sin],*
- 4. preach renewed sight for the blind,*
- 5. release those who are held down,*
- 6. preach that now is the year of God’s blessing.”*

What a beautiful picture this is of the ministry of an evangelist. And it was this ministry which was given by Christ to the Church. No wonder His final command to His disciples was to go forth and “evangelize” the world:

“Therefore, go into all the world and preach the gospel [euaggelion] to every

creature” (Mark 16:15).

C. The Ministry Of The Evangelist

Philip was the only person -- in the Book of Acts and the epistles -- that was actually called an “evangelist” (Acts 21:8).

There are four important things that we can learn from his life and ministry as an evangelist:

1. The *preparation of the evangelist* (Acts 6:1-6).

The Scriptures record a number of interesting facts about the background for Philip’s ministry:

- a. He belonged to a local church.
- b. He was a man of good character.
- c. He was full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom.
- d. He had a servant’s heart of love.
- e. He first proved himself as a deacon.
- f. He was submitted to godly authority.
- g. He waited for God’s time to go forth (Acts 8:1-5).

2. The *public ministry of the evangelist* (Acts 8:5-25).

Philip’s recorded ministry of evangelism occurred in Samaria. The seed had been sown there sometime earlier by Jesus and the woman at the well (John 4). The harvest is now going to be reaped with joy.

In Philip’s ministry as an evangelist, several important points should be noted:

- a. His preaching centered around Jesus Christ (Acts 8:5-12).
- b. His preaching was backed up by signs and wonders (Acts 8:6,7).
- c. His preaching produced many new believers (Acts 8:12).
- d. He baptized the new believers in water as a sign of their faith (Acts 8:12).
- e. He sent for Peter and John, who led them into the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:14-17).
- f. The new believers were formed into local churches (This was the pattern throughout the Book of Acts including in Samaria - see Acts 9:31).
- g. He did not leave until the Lord directed him to do so (Acts 8:26).

One sees at once that Philip’s ministry was “**evangelism with a purpose**”. The purpose was to make new believers and then partner with other ministry gifts for the purpose of establishing a church (Acts 8:14-17).

Philip was willing to have other ministries build upon his efforts. In this way, the fruit of his labors would remain in the form of new and growing fellowships.

We see the following pattern in Acts: when a number of converts were made without the direct involvement of apostolic ministry, apostles were sent in to confirm and establish a local church. This is what happened in Samaria (Acts 8:4-25; see also this

same pattern in Acts 11:19-26).

The ministry gift of evangelist has been called the “arm” of Christ, reaching out to gather in the unsaved of our world. The fruit of the evangelist's ministry should then be gathered into existing local churches. Or a new church should be planted where the other ministry gifts can be made available to the Body.

If we ignore this pattern, we could possibly cause the stumbling of many new believers. New churches formed without a proper foundation may become unbalanced or unscriptural.

Philip's ministry was a beautiful example for all of the evangelists who would follow in his footsteps in ages to come.

3. The *private ministry of the evangelist* (Acts 8:26-40).

An evangelist should be able to preach to large crowds, or share with people one-on-one. **An evangelist is a soul-winner at heart -- wherever he is.**

This was true of Philip, as the story of the eunuch on the road to Gaza reveals. Again, several important points should be noted:

- a. He was sensitive and obedient to the voice of the Lord (Acts 8:26-30).
- b. He had a good understanding of God's Word (Acts 8:35).
- c. He could clearly explain God's way of salvation through Christ Acts 8:35).
- d. He ministered to someone whose heart had been prepared by God (Acts 8:30).
- e. He led him to confess Christ as his Savior - a place of personal decision (Acts 8:37).
- f. He sealed the new believer's decision for Christ with water baptism (Acts 8:38).

Again we find in Philip a wonderful example for personal soul-winning.

4. The *role of the evangelist in the Body of Christ* (Eph 4:11-13).

The role of the evangelist in the Church is two-fold:

- a. To travel and preach the gospel in places that have not heard of God's salvation in Christ.
- b. To **teach and train *others* in his home church how to evangelize the lost**. This relates to their own city or town, and then on out to the whole world (Acts 2:8).

Never in the New Testament do we find an evangelist preaching to the lost in a local church. Church meetings were for **teaching** from the Word, and the **worship** of God. Believers were built up in the church in order to:

- a. Minister to God in praise and worship
- b. Minister to one another in Christian love
- c. Minister to a lost world in the power of the Spirit

If an unbeliever comes into such a meeting, God can speak to him by whatever he sees and hears (1 Cor 14:24,25). This does not mean that an appeal should not be made for those who wish to make a decision for Christ.

It does mean that when believers come together, the main purpose is not evangelism. Evangelism should occur through the witness of each member in their daily course of

life. From such daily efforts of evangelism, God will raise up strong evangelistic ministries. And such are needed in today's world; for, truly, the field is white and ready for harvest (John 4:35).

THE MINISTRY GIFT OF *PASTOR*

In Scripture, the people of God are often referred to as a flock of sheep (Isa 40:11; Jer 13:17; Matt 26:31; John 21:15; 1Pet 5:2). In fact, sheep have many traits which remind us of new Christians learning to grow up in the Lord:

1. They are totally dependent upon their shepherd (Gen 4:2; 1 Sam 17:20,28).

Sheep must be led to pasture and water. They must be rested when weary, and healed when hurt. Their very lives depend upon the care of their shepherd.

2. They have a very poor sense of direction (Ps 119:176; Isa 53:6; Jer 50:6; Ezek 34:12).

If sheep are left to themselves, they tend to wander off and get lost. As a rule, they cannot find their way home. The shepherd must search them out and bring them back to the fold.

3. They have very little means of defense (Matt 10:16; Num 32:24).

Sheep do not have sharp claws or teeth. They cannot run very fast. If left to themselves, they could not survive. They would soon fall prey to wild animals. They are safe only when brought together in a fold. They are truly dependent upon their shepherd for their protection.

Sheep do have some very fine qualities, however. They produce meat, milk and wool - which provide food, drink and clothing. They have the ability to hear and follow their shepherd like no other animal.

God wants His people to show these same good qualities. He also knows our need to be led, fed and protected. Therefore, He has given to the Church the shepherd-like ministry of the "pastor".

The Definition Of Terms

1. *Poimen*: The term refers to one who tends a flock or keeps sheep -- a shepherd. It is a word used ten times of actual shepherds of sheep (Matt 9:36; 25:32; Mark 6:34; Luke 2:8,15,18,20; John 10:2). It is used eight times of Jesus as the chief Shepherd (Matt 26:31; Mark 14:27; John 10:11,12,14,16; Heb 13:20; 1Pet 2:25). It is translated only once as "pastor" when referring to a person's ministry in the church (Eph 4:11).

2. *Poimaino*: The term means to tend, keep, lead and feed the flock. It is twice used of actual sheep (Luke 17:7; 1Cor 9:7). It is used once of Jesus as tending Israel (Matt 2:6). It is used to describe the care that the shepherds who are under the Great Shepherd, Jesus, should give to the flock (John 21:16, Acts 20:28; 1Pet 5:2). It is used once of false shepherds who are interested only in feeding and caring for themselves (Jude 12).

Both the noun and verb forms of the word carry two main thoughts:

1. Leadership: A shepherd is one who leads and provides spiritual oversight to the sheep. He is in a position of responsibility with limited authority (Acts 20:28-31; 1Thess 5:12,13; Heb 13:7,17; 1Pet 5:2,3; on elders see 1Tim 5:17,18).

These Scripture references clearly show God's standards for church leadership. In Acts 20:28-31, several key principles emerge for those in pastoral leadership:

- 1) "*Take heed to yourselves*" (v.28) means **pay close attention**. A shepherd must regularly check his heart, his motives, attitudes, behavior and character. He should constantly allow the Holy Spirit to shine the light of God's convicting truth upon him. This will help to ensure a more Christ-like heart and life.
- 2) "*and to all the flock*" (v.28): A church leader must also pay close attention to the needs and hurts of those in the church. Then he/she will pray more accurately and minister more effectively.
- 3) "*the Holy Spirit has made*" (v.28): God's leaders are not self-made, they are appointed and anointed by the Spirit of God. Leaders desperately need the Lord's help and enabling power; this leaves no room for any pride!
- 4) "*overseers*" (v.28): This word is from the same Greek root translated as "overshadow" in Luke 1:35. This conveys that to oversee is to protectively cover the flock in order for spiritual life to be nurtured in them.
- 5) "*the church of God which He purchased*" (v.28): The whole Church, and every local body, belongs to God because He bought it with the blood of His Son. Therefore, a local church leader should not act as if that body belongs to him; but rather, as a steward entrusted with the care of a precious possession of his Lord.

By way of contrast to Paul's exhortation to qualified church leaders, in verses 29-31 he shows the qualities of those false leaders he call "*savage wolves*". Three types of leaders to avoid are pointed out:

- 1) v.29 - Those that are only interested in themselves and view the flock as something to use to gain personal advantage (see Matthew 7:15).
- 2) V.30 - The false shepherds who will speak misleading ("perverse") things in order to lead people away from Jesus to something else.
- 3) V.31 - Those wrongly motivated leaders who will seek for quick results that require little work, time or personal sacrifice. As you read Acts 20:31, you will see that Paul was not this type of leader.

2. Service: A shepherd is one who cares for the flock. He feeds, waters, rests, heals and protects his sheep. He gives of himself **in humble service** to the well-being of the flock -- even unto death! (John 10:11-15; John 21:15-17; Rev 7:17).

It is very important to note that these two principles are tied inseparably together. Truly, the Spirit-led pastor is a **SERVANT-LEADER**.

God has NOT called the pastor to be in **control** of other believers. The pastoral ministry is NOT to take the place of a believer's personal relationship with God.

When Christ died on the cross, the veil of the Temple was torn in two (Matt 27:51). This signified that now there was no longer a need for the people of God to be represented by a human priest. Now **all** those who believe have direct access to God. **The pastor's ministry is to help lead people into a deeper relationship with the Lord.**

Christ: The Model Pastor

The Church is a "theocracy" -- a people ruled by God. God often refers to Himself as a Shepherd (Gen 49:24; Eze 34:12-14). He ministered to His people, Israel, as a Shepherd:

1. **He guided them** (Ps 23:3).
2. **He fed them** (Jer 50:19).
3. **He rested and watered them** (Ps 23:2; Isa 40:11).
4. **He protected them** (Ps 23:4).
5. **He called and gathered the strays** (Isa 56:8; Zech 10:8).
6. **He carried the lambs in His bosom** (Isa 40:11).
7. **He gently led those with young** (Isa 40:11).

When Jesus came, He put a face on God. People could hear and see what their divine Shepherd was really like. Peter called Jesus the "*Chief Shepherd*" (1 Pet 5:4). Jesus became the perfect model of the "shepherd-heart" of God. Shepherds working under the Chief Shepherd, Jesus, should carefully study the heart and motivation of the Chief Shepherd. Although our ministry is not the same as was the ministry of Jesus, many of our attitudes and motivations should resemble those of Jesus.

Every pastor should have the shepherd-heart of Jesus:

1. **He had love and compassion for the people of God** (Mark 6:34).
2. **He placed great value on each sheep** (Luke 15:4).
3. **He was willing to lay down His life for the sheep** (John 10:11,15).

Because of His love for the flock of God, Jesus was very concerned that they would have proper care when He was gone. Therefore, He gave "pastors" to shepherd His sheep in His absence (Eph 4:11-13).

Like all other elders in the church, every pastor is an under-shepherd. **He is directly responsible to Jesus for his service to God's people** (1Pet 5:1-4). He must always look to Jesus -- as the good and great Shepherd -- for the direction and approval of his ministry. To be a pastor is a great responsibility; but it is also a noble and blessed calling!

C. The Standards For A Pastor

There are some specific standards for a pastor beyond those of an elder. We shall list them below:

1. **A pastor must be able to lead the sheep** (John 10:4).

We can wisely and safely lead others only along paths on which we ourselves have gone before. The pastor must **himself** have a close and proven walk with God before he can lead others in the ways of God.

If a pastor wants his people to pray, tithe, read the Word and reach out to others, **he must set the example**. He must live a lifestyle which the sheep can follow (1Cor 11:1; Heb 13:7; 1Pet 5:2,3).

2. **A pastor must be able to feed the flock** (Jer 3:15; 23:4; Ezek 34:1-3; Acts 20:28; 1Pet 5:2, 3).

A pastor can give only what he has got. To minister the Word of God, one must be in the Word -- and the Word must be in him. This involves prayer, study, thought and obedience (application). The truth of God's Word must be at work in our own lives

before it can be put into the life of another (Jer 10:21; Acts 6:4).

The pastor must also be able to preach and teach in such a clear and simple way that all can understand. He must be able to reach people at their place of need and level of maturity. Their spiritual "diet" must be fresh and balanced by variety. Sometimes this can be done by bringing in visiting preachers and teachers.

3. The pastor must have a *personal relationship with the sheep* (John 10:27).

Jesus was able to be close to people without losing their respect. **He knew them personally by name -- and they knew Him.** This truly is the mark of a good shepherd (John 10:3). Only then can he minister into the deepest needs of the lives of his people.

The pastor must identify with his sheep. He must sit, walk and talk with them -- where they are. He must be honest in allowing them to know **he is not only a shepherd, but one of them as well -- a sheep in the flock of God.** Only then can he minister with understanding and compassion -- with love, grace and wisdom (2Cor 1:3, 4).

4. A pastor must be willing to *lay down his life for the sheep* (John 10:15; 1 John 3:16; Rev 12:11).

Both a pastor and his people need to know that **the pastor's ministry is not just a job, but is a calling in life.** He is committed to the flock of God in love and loyalty.

A pastor's commitment to God's people involves many things:

a. *Pouring out* of his life and strength (John 10:11).

b. *Caring* for the sheep in times of need (Ezek 34:4; John 10:13).