

The Five-Fold Ministry Gifts

Ephesians 4:7-13

*But grace was given to each **one** of us according to the measure of Christ's gift.*

Therefore it says, "When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men." (In saying, "He ascended," what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower regions, the earth? He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.)

And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ

Jesus Christ is generous. He gives gifts to people - he also gives *people* to people (people who are gifted in ways that can build others up). He also has the correct idea of what the church (His body) needs to be all He has in mind for it to be. We hear much about having a biblical worldview, but we also need to have a biblical church view! That means that we need to adjust our current understanding of how the church grows and functions to the view that Jesus has.

- * I am called to equip the members of my church to do ministry and the five-fold ministry is the vehicle.
- * Ephesians 4 is the antidote to the 80/20 rule (20% of the people do 80% of the work).
- * Jesus knows exactly what is needed to grow his church - he gives us what is needed.
- * The active work of grace in the church is given in five parts:
 - * leadership and fathering (activation)
 - * spiritual insight (clear eyes and righteousness)
 - * mission (outward focus or mobilization)
 - * care (stabilization)
 - * biblical wisdom (maturation)

The gifts mentioned in the Ephesians 4 passage are often referred to as the **Five-Fold Ministry Gifts**. Jesus has a purpose in mind for these gifts - The goal of gifted ministry (five-fold and individual) is the building up and maturing of the body of Christ (other gifted members), and unity in the body - what pastor does not want this for his church? All believers do the work of ministry, having been equipped to do so by the gifted people of verse eleven.

The Five -Fold Ministry Gifts are given to "some" (Ephesians 4:11) who are called to a specific ministry role in the church. Not everyone has one of these gifts. These are equipping and training gifts, given to enable other members of the church, Christ's body, to function more effectively.

The 5-fold ministry gifts are also called "the ascension gifts of Christ" because they were given as He ascended to heaven after his ministry on earth. His purpose was to leave behind the various aspects of His ministry that His Father had given to Him to begin God's Kingdom on earth. *This is why it says: "When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men." Ephesians 4:8 (NIV)*

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In the New Testament, God *ordained* men to these roles and man *recognized* the ministries God gave. Elders were ordained by men. However, the office ministries of Ephesians 4:11 seem to be ordained by God Himself. These gifts are given to “some” who are called to a specific ministry role in the church. Not everyone has one of these gifts. This stands in contrast to the spiritual gifts of Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12, gifts that are distributed to everyone.

Through these Five-Fold Ministry Gifts:

- 1) The saints are equipped for the work of the ministry → **so that** → The body of Christ is built up → **so that** → We grow in unity in Jesus → **so that** → We increasing in the knowledge of Jesus → **so that** → We come to full maturity

Understanding the Five-fold ministry gifts

- * Because of the grammar of the Gk., we can say that there may only be four gifts - at least there is overlap between the gifts of pastor and teacher - because they are known as the “five-fold gifts” I will refer to them this way.
- * All of these are not merely titles, they are functions (e.g. if you listen to someone sing excellently, you know that they are a singer - they are a singer because they function that way already).

Apostles govern (by laying and keeping true to a foundation)

An apostle is one called and sent by Christ and given the spiritual authority, character, gifts and abilities to reach people and establish them in Kingdom truth and order, especially through founding and overseeing local churches. They lay a foundation and they make sure that the foundation is kept true (Example: Paul).

Three types of apostles:

- 1) *Apostles of the Lamb*
- 2) *apostles (five-fold ministry gifts - still exist today)*
- 3) *people who are titled “apostle” because of of a particular hierarchical order in a denomination (they may or may not function as or be called by God as an apostle)*

Prophets guide (by speaking what they see)

Prophets reveal God's heart to His people, giving guidance to individuals and the body, giving revelation, as well as often interpretation, application and timing. They also are jealous for purity and holiness in the body of Christ. The New Testament prophet is one who brings a message that edifies, exhorts and comforts (1 Cor 14:3). (Example: Agabus, Acts 21)

- * Note that a person can be prophetic (have a Romans 12 motivational gift of prophecy) without having the office of a prophet

Evangelists gather (by winning those not yet in the kingdom)

An evangelist carries a great burden for those who are unsaved, and an anointing to preach the gospel to them that comes with great conviction and draws them to the Lord. They will often have signs and wonders following them to confirm their message. (Example: Philip, Acts 8)

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Pastors guard (by keeping the flock healthy and safe)

The pastor is the heart of the church. They are shepherds who deeply care for the sheep, ready to lay down everything for them. They want the flock to be fed, to grow, to be equipped, to develop their giftings and step into the calling of God for them. (pastor, elder, shepherd, bishop all come from the same Gk. word (Example: Timothy)

The office of the pastor is the one most recognized today of all five. Because of a lack of understanding of the other four, those called by God to these other offices have often had to become pastors, therefore filling shoes that were not theirs, and creating tension.

** The above passage is the only place in the New Testament that “shepherd” or “pastor” is a noun. In the NT, “pastor” is a function, rather than merely a title or position.*

Teachers ground (by establishing people in truth)

Teachers teach and edify the church, making the members of the body more hungry for the Word of God. (Example: Apollos - Acts 18:24 “a man mighty in the scriptures... spoke and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus”)

Note: Teachers are held to a higher standard in judgment (James 3:1 - Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness.)

Jesus Christ is the quintessential model of all five of the five-fold gifts

Apostle - Hebrews 3:1 says that Jesus is the “Apostle and High Priest of our faith”

Prophet: Jesus is the proclaimer of truth, the revelation of the heart of God, and he foretold events that were to come as well.

He is spoken of in Deut 18:15 “The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—it is to him you shall listen”

Evangelist: Jesus was the greatest proclaimer of the good news that world has even known.

The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me, to bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to captives and freedom to prisoners (Is 61:1)

Pastor: In John 10:11, Jesus said of Himself: “I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep”

Teacher - Jesus Christ is the greatest teacher the world has ever known.

John 13:13 “You call Me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am.

The function of the five-fold: Equip the Body

* Gk: *katartismos* (means: fit, frame, mend, restore) (translated equip, perfect, prepare)

* The word has three pictures:

- * Medical - to set the bone (to mend the net - Mark 1:19 **To equip is to fix what is broken**)
- * Construction (1 Cor 3 - the church is a building **To equip is to build something**)
- * Athletics (1 Cor 9:24-27 - the church is a school **To equip is to train**)

* These gifts equip us **for work of ministry** (not just life skills, parenting, or coping with life, etc)

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The context of the chapter is unity, maturity and growing in the knowledge of Jesus - How do the five-fold promote unity and maturity?

Five-fold Apostles promote unity and maturity and through their authority, through fathering (telling my kids that they are best friends), and through correction.

Five-fold Prophets promote unity and maturity through casting vision and correcting the course. They keep the vision before the people.

Five-fold Evangelists promote unity and maturity by imparting a burden for those who are not yet in the fold. They help people focus outward, not merely inward.

Five-fold Pastors promote unity and maturity by bring the sheep together in the protective fold and making a safe place. They encourage the flock to care for the flock.

Five-fold Teachers promote unity and maturity by bringing truth (the body of doctrine) to bear on practical situations. They make the body hungry for the Word of God and fight error.

Other thoughts:

- * If my church is to increase in fivefold ministry I must pray for these gifts to manifest and I must network with others to have access to these gifts
- * If I am to increase in my fivefold ministry gift, I increase in faith and faithfulness
- * There are people who operate in the apostolic, prophetic, evangelistic, pastoral and teaching ministry but who are not called, fivefold ministry people. Teaching on these gifts will cause those inclined toward these gifts in our congregation to rise up.
- * Disobedience, laziness and unhealthy control will keep the local church leadership from releasing the fivefold ministry.
- * These gifts must operate in love - sometimes they have not and many have been hurt.
- * We want to be a church that is characterized by all five gifts