

# Five Fold Ministry Gifts

## Key Verse

*Ephesians 4:11 - And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers,*

## Exploring The Bible

### I. Overview

*Ephesians 4:11 - And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers,*

Question: Name the gifts listed in this verse.

Answer:

These gifts overlap lists of other gifts found in 1 Corinthians 12 with a couple of unique gifts listed in this list (evangelist and pastor). But there is something unique about these gifts that make them different from the other gifts. The wording in this passage suggests that the person is the gift to the body. In other words, God gives grace to a person in the form of one of these five gifts, and the person with that gift becomes a gift to the body.

### II. Purpose

*John 17:20 – 23 - I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me.*

Question: What does Jesus ask for all believers (verse 17)?

Answer:

Question: What is the result of this unity (verse 23)?

Jesus' request to the Father was that everyone who would believe in him would become perfectly unified just as Jesus and the Father were perfectly unified as one. It is this unity of believers that is to stand before the world as a testimony of the supernatural nature of the believers in Jesus Christ. The world has no ability to create the kind of unity that Jesus is talking about in this prayer. How was Jesus intending to bring about this unity?

Read *Ephesians 4:3 – 6*

Question: Who brings unity to the body of Christ (verse 3)?

Answer:

One of the primary functions of the Holy Spirit on this planet is to facilitate the unity of believers that Jesus requested of the Father. On our own, we as believers are not going to have any more success in building unity than the world will have in building unity. This unity can only come through the one Spirit that indwells all believers everywhere on this planet. It is through the Holy Spirit that we can recognize that there is only one body, only one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and father of all of us. Now, the question is, what does the practical out working of this unity movement look like?

*Ephesians 4:12 – 13 - 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,*

Question: These gifted people prepare God's people for what (verse 12)?

Answer:

Question: What should happen Christ body (verse 12)?

Answer:

Question: What is the goal of being built up (verse 13)?

Answer:

The five – fold people gifted to the church have the purpose of equipping the saints for works of service. The works of service have the goal of building up the body into unity of faith and knowledge of Jesus Christ. It is through these people who are gifts to the

church that the Spirit works to create unity. Therefore, the whole goal and purpose of these gifts is inward or body focused.

### **III. A Closer Look**

At the beginning of this lesson, we listed all the gifts that belong to this group of gifts. Now, let's take a closer look at each one of these gifts to see how they function in this particular role.

#### **A. Apostle**

The word apostle simply means "one sent with a message." This could be any message, and the "sent person" could be sent by anyone. In this case an apostle is commissioned and sent by Jesus Christ, and the apostle's message is the good news of the kingdom of God and of Jesus Christ. But, the message is more than the salvation message that might be given by an evangelist. It is a commission to expand the territory of the kingdom by proclaiming and declaring the message of the kingdom and demonstrating with miracles the power of the kingdom. Doing so brings vision and life to the body of Christ.

#### **B. Prophet**

A prophet either foretells (something in the future) or forth tells (something in the now). They bring encouragement, warning, and insight to the body of Christ. They can be very black and white when it comes to issues of right and wrong, sin, etc. In Acts 21:10, a prophet named Agabus prophesied Paul's impending arrest in Jerusalem.

#### **C. Evangelist**

This person is God's salesperson. They are anointed to present the truth of the salvation message and call people to Christ either in one-on-one situations or through the preaching and proclamation of the word. They are always winning people to Christ and expanding Christ's body. They also should be able to help other members of the body learn how to bring people to Christ.

#### **D. Pastor**

This person is God's Shepherd. He or she is anointed to care for the other believers as a shepherd cares for sheep. They carry great concern that the flock

is fed properly, the hurt and injured are cared for, and they care for new believers. Their focus is the spiritual health and well-being of the body of Christ.

### **E. Teacher**

This person's focus and anointing is the clear communication of God's truth to the body of Christ. A teacher has the ability to digest and understand the truths of Scripture and make them clear and understandable to others. Their main concern is with the growth and maturity of the body.

## **IV. Who Has These Gifts**

Not everyone in the church has these five – fold ministry gifts. There are at least two reasons why we draw this conclusion. First, if the people are themselves the gift, then it doesn't make much sense if everyone has these gifts. Second, if the purpose of these gifted people is to build up the rest of the saints for works of service, then it also doesn't make sense if everyone in the church has these gifts.

## **V. How Do I Know**

How do I know if I have one of these gifts? Just like with other gifts there is a natural flow and operation of the gift in a person's life. You don't have to work at it. But, because the person himself is the gift, the gift becomes part of your DNA. It is who you are. A shepherd will exhibit aspects of being a shepherd no matter where they are, whether at work or at home or someplace else totally unrelated to the church because that is who they are. Another aspect of these gifts is a concern for the body of Christ. Because you are a gift to the body, there should be a desire to see the body grow and develop and expand. So, three things to check:

- I have one of these five gifts that flows naturally
- I operate in that gift in such a way that it is a part of who I am (others will see this in you).
- I have a concern for the body of Christ that it would grow and expand and mature and be enabled to serve.

## **VI. Are All These Gifts For Today?**

There are some groups of people that teach that the apostle and prophet in this group of gifts no longer operates today. The claim is that the purpose of the apostle and

prophet was to help get the church started in the first century and once it was launched they were no longer needed.

Fortunately, this is not true. We know this because the stated purpose of these five gifts is to prepare the saints for works of service so that the body of Christ will mature. This is a completely different goal from starting church. This is an ongoing need in the church throughout the centuries and around the world. Therefore, all five gifts must be active today.