



## GIFTS – EQUIPPING GIFTS

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Church Alive

We are on our journey in our series Church Alive. We're trusting that each one of us will be awakened in our God-given gifts and callings in a fresh way and begin to serve one another and make a difference in our city.

### Equipping Gifts

#### Introduction

There are four different areas people are involved in, in the church:

- Members
- Deacons
- Elders
- Fivefold gift to the body of Christ (Christ's gifts to the church)

#### **Christ's gifts to** the church

You've had a look at the Motivational gifts and then last weekend at the Spiritual gifts and I was asked to come and share some thoughts on the gifts that Christ gave to the Church as found in Ephesians 4:11.

In Ephesians Paul speaks about another level of gifting, what we sometimes call the fivefold ministry, or the offices of the church.

Paul writing to the Ephesians speaks about unity, then he says:

*Ephesians 4:7–9 (NLT)*

*<sup>7</sup>However, he has given each one of us a special gift through the generosity of Christ. <sup>8</sup>That is why the Scriptures say,*

***"When he ascended to the heights,  
he led a crowd of captives  
and gave gifts to his people."***

*<sup>9</sup>Notice that it says "he ascended."*

*Ephesians 4:11 (NLT) <sup>11</sup>Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers.*

*Ephesians 4:12–13 (NLT) <sup>12</sup>Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ. <sup>13</sup>This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ.*

*Ephesians 4:14–16 (NLT)* <sup>14</sup> Then we will no longer be immature like children. We won't be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth. <sup>15</sup> Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church. <sup>16</sup> He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.

The fivefold gift offices of the church:

1. Teachers
2. Pastors
3. Evangelists
4. Prophets
5. Apostles

## 1. Teachers

Gift mix: but one gift usually predominates

Equipper of teachers

Derek Prince Renewal Conference 1980: Old Showgrounds in Johannesburg 6000

You may have a teaching gift but we need to understand the measure of gifts:

Measures of gifting:

*Ephesians 4:7 (TEV)*

<sup>7</sup> Each one of us has received a special gift in proportion to what Christ has given. (Then goes on to describe five fold gifts)

*Ephesians 4:7 (ESV)*

<sup>7</sup> But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift.

*2 Corinthians 10:13-15 (NKJV)*

<sup>13</sup> We, however, will not boast beyond measure, but within the limits of the sphere which God appointed us--a sphere which especially includes you.

<sup>14</sup> For we are not overextending ourselves (as though our authority did not extend to you), for it was to you that we came with the gospel of Christ;

<sup>15</sup> not boasting of things beyond measure, that is, in other men's labors, but having hope, that as your faith is increased, we shall be greatly enlarged by you in our sphere,

*2 Corinthians 10:13 (AMP)*

<sup>13</sup> We ... will not boast beyond our legitimate province and proper limit, but will keep within the limits [of our commission which] God has allotted us as our measuring line...

*2 Corinthians 10:13 (KJV)*

<sup>13</sup> ...according to the measure of the rule which God hath distributed to us...

**Strong's NT:3358 metron (met'-ron)**; a measure ("metre"), by implication a limited portion

Your service in the Kingdom: (and in the Church) is according to:

1. Your gifting
2. The measure of that gifting.

Unlike Jesus, whose measure was not limited, we all have different measures.

Remember Derek Prince, Bob Mumford, and people like Charles Spurgeon.

Not necessarily limited to one gift, but there may be different measures of each of the gifts.

Does not prevent the Lord from using you when there is no one else around.

It is not a perfect science, there is always the God Factor in the equation.

#### Definition of Teacher:

The gift of Teaching is the special ability that God gives to communicate information relevant to the health and ministry of the Body of Christ in such a way that others will learn and be equipped. (Peter Wagner: Your Spiritual Gifts can help your Church to grow)

**It's mentioned in Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12 and then as an equipping gift in Ephesians 4:11.**

Very needed gift.

Although it may be expressed in many ways in general, such as numbers of people, settings (children, radio, TV, small groups, one on one, or pulpit or thousands).

In this case the Office of the teacher equips the saints for the work of Ministry:

**NLT: Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church.**

## 2. Pastors

This is often linked to the gift of the teaching office. Some say Pastor-Teacher and talk of the 4-fold gifts. I have seen them as separate.

#### Definition of pastor:

The gift of pastor is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to assume a long-term personal responsibility for the spiritual welfare of a group of believers. Difference between an Elder (Pastor, Shepherd, Presbyter, Bishop,) and the fivefold equipping pastor.

**The equipping pastor's role is to equip pastors for the ministry of pastoring the church**

Obviously also pastors' but main function should be to equip everyone in the church to do the ministry of pastoring.

## 3. Evangelists

#### Definition of evangelist:

The gift of evangelist is the special ability God gives to certain members of the body of Christ **to share the gospel with unbelievers in such a way that men and women become Jesus' disciples and responsible members of the body of Christ.**

- a. Do you have a strong desire to share your faith with others? (Not just: do you desire to see people become believers?)
- b. Do you see results?

Remember that we are talking here of the office of the evangelist, **THEREFORE it's the equipping role in this instance.**

We are all called to evangelise.

## 4. Prophets

### Definition of prophecy:

The gift of prophecy is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to receive and communicate an immediate message of God to His people through a divinely-anointed utterance.

All can prophesy but not all are in the office of the prophet

Measures: some speak into international matters.

De-mystify it: Aaron was a prophet to Moses: speaking on behalf of another.

As those who find life in the charismatic expression of church, in other words churches just like this one, we often find ourselves attacked by other Christians who can sometimes vehemently disagree with us about the gifts of the Holy Spirit but especially the offices of Prophet and Apostle.

### *1 Corinthians 13:8–10 (ESV)*

<sup>8</sup>Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. <sup>9</sup>For we know in part and we prophesy in part, <sup>10</sup>but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away.

Tongues is not a language we learn: Paul very clearly says that he wishes all spoke in tongues, presumably therefore all do not but he is clear that tongues is a language of the Holy Spirit using the tongue of man to speak or pray in an unknown language to God.

Tongues in Acts was understood as the home language of many who were visiting in Jerusalem but Paul makes it clear that people who speak in tongues are communicating with God not with man.

There are many other scriptures in the New Testament that testify to the fact that prophecy continued after the ascension of Jesus.

I have never understood why people believe that the office of the prophet and that of the apostle have ended and why not the other three offices?

You have to do huge theological gymnastics to jump through the hoops of proving they are not there anymore, whereas if you just simply read scripture you are in no doubt that these two offices continue

## 5. Apostles

Not all Christians embrace this office.

The other scripture that I feel like I've been attacked with and I guess we as COTN have all been, is:

### *Ephesians 2:19–22 (ESV)*

<sup>19</sup>So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, <sup>20</sup>built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets.

We will openly make the statement that we are an Apostolic and Prophetic movement in COTN.

We believe in the ongoing operation of the gifts of the Spirit and we believe in the fivefold offices that Paul says Christ gave to the church for the equipping of the saints and without that full expression we are at a huge disadvantage.

Without these gifts, it's like pushing a boat on wet sand on the beach or like watering the entire garden with a watering can, when you can use a hosepipe.

I believe we are hugely lacking if we discard the offices of the Apostle and Prophet.

And to the same extent as we are helped through the gifts of the Holy Spirit in our own spiritual lives so I believe the church is helped in its mission to reach the lost at home and in unreached people groups and to build the church and extend the Kingdom

### **It's post ascension:**

There were pre-ascension apostles: 12 of them.

And then something like 17 other people identified as being apostles.

Definition of apostle:

**"The gift of Apostle is the special gift that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ which enables them to assume and exercise general leadership over a number of churches with an extraordinary authority in spiritual matters that is spontaneously recognized and appreciated by those churches."**

Most difficult to define.

Other terms for it: ambassador

At the centre of it though, in our understanding, is the heart of a father.

Church planting and mission are also at the heart of this office.

*"There is something very dynamic about being involved in an international family of churches with apostolic leaders who act like fathers to many in the family. Under such leadership, the whole family finds itself caught up in world mission, as every local church, and indeed every individual believer, is enabled to see the big picture of God's purposes in the world and equipped to play their part."*  
(*Fathering Leaders Motivating Mission* by David Devenish.)

In the first century in classical Greek (Bauer's Lexicon) it denoted a naval expedition, or the commander of such an expedition. It could also mean a messenger or a delegate bearing a commission, an envoy or an ambassador (one who represents the one who sent him.)

A helpful picture is that of a naval ship fully equipped and being sent to take territory off the enemy.

- The original Apostles are unique. They had seen Jesus. The post ascension office of the apostle is different to the original apostles.
- There are many examples in the New Testament of people called Apostles who could not have been with Jesus. (Barnabas, Apollos, Andronicus, Junias, etc.)
- Paul speaks of Apostles of the churches

*2 Corinthians 8:23 (ESV) <sup>23</sup> As for Titus, he is my partner and fellow worker for your benefit. And as for our brothers, they are messengers (GREEK APOSTOLOS) of the churches, the glory of Christ.*

- The Greek word used here is apostolos, translated messenger.

*Philippians 2:25 (ESV) <sup>25</sup> I have thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier, and your messenger (GREEK APOSTOLOS) and minister to my need,*

- Rev 2:2 refers to false apostles at the end of the first century as does the Didache. If we are warned against false apostles, presumably there were still genuine apostles

## Apostolic Work

Bringing understanding of the revelation concerning the overall purposes of God in the earth.

1. Planting churches and establishing them
2. Laying solid foundations for those churches and appointing elders
3. Becoming fathers to those churches and to the leaders of those churches
4. Provision of on-going care and oversight and accountability for the churches built on father-son relationships
5. Involving the churches in mission to the unreached regions of the world
6. Concern for the poor
7. **Equipping and building up God's people, so that there will be unity in our faith and maturity in the body of Christ, His church, built into Him.**

## Apostolic Alignment

*Matthew 8:9 (ESV) <sup>9</sup>For I too am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. And I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes, and to another, 'Come,' and he comes, and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it."*

Alignment is probably a better word than "oversight" or "covering" but these words are also widely used in modern day networks of churches.

The picture is of aligning two pipes with the resultant flow of life.

## Apostolic Commission

- Matthew 28:18-20 is an apostolic commission, revealing God's heart for the church and nations.
- Ephesians 2, 4: God's desire is to have a mature, powerful church. To do that, He has to have a church that is united and well led.

## Principles Relating to Apostles:

- Apostles are given to the church.
- **Apostles do not take the place of Jesus in a son's life.**
- Apostles do not exercise some weird or devious control over people.
- Alignment is always about achieving Ephesians 4:12-13 <sup>12</sup>to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, <sup>13</sup>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,
- Apostles are found in the foundations not sitting on the rooftop.

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## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Have you experienced the call of Jesus as a fivefold ministry (equipping) gift?
  2. If so, have you developed in it, are you operating in this function in the church and how can you be more effective in this calling?
  3. Do we recognise, appreciate and utilise these gifts in the church to the fullest extent? Discuss.
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