



## THE WORK OF MINISTRY

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Ephesians 4:8; 11-16 NKJV

<sup>8</sup> *When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive and gave gifts to men.*

<sup>11</sup> *and He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers,*

<sup>12</sup> *for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ,*

<sup>13</sup> *till we all come to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. (Maturity...as sons of God*

<sup>14</sup> *that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness by which they lie in wait to deceive,*

<sup>15</sup> *But, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head-Christ-*

<sup>16</sup> *from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.*

In the forefront of these verses of scripture is Christ.

Then comes who we are as a church and the purpose that He has given to us all to fulfil.

My story: I was a sinner, got born again, was brought into a family, grew to maturity and then became able to go and touch the lives of others.

The backdrop to what we are talking about today, namely being equipped for the work of ministry and the edifying of the body of Christ and the role that we ALL play in that scenario:

Week 2 - Craig spoke on predestination and the work of the cross. (Calvary)

Week 3 - Jen touched on knowing Him and the power of His resurrection.

Week 4 - Gavin gave an amazing description of the cost of that love and the stark reality of the cruelty that Christ endured and the reality of the death that placed Him in the tomb.

Week 5 - Marius showed us that we were taken from exclusion to acceptance into a family by the price He paid.

Week 6 - Henry gave an account of that family, a church built with living stones, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone.

Week 7 - Deon gave an account of the mission, now that we have been redeemed from our trespasses and sins **and placed in God's family**.

Week 8 - Grant showed us the relevance and the power of **Paul's** prayer in this regard.

Week 9 - Rory and Cathi. Looked at the gifts in more detail.

Here we are today, saved by grace, in the world but not of it, a part of the body of Christ with Him as the head of the church, and you and me fitting into that body as a joint or member of the body, somewhere.

What now?

Have I been saved by grace and am now waiting patiently for the train to glory one day while I wait here in the departure lounge called the church, or is there more to it ... a lot more?

A brief look at the gifts that Christ gave us:

Apostle - one who is sent off, a pioneering missionary, one who establishes.

Prophet - one who utters divine inspired revelations, a proclaimer of the will of God.

Evangelist - one who seeks to connect the lost with the love and life of God.

Pastor - one who shepherds, who leads to green pasture, who cares and tends for people.

Teacher - one who instructs in the word of God and teaches and helps to bring believers into maturity.

The scripture says that these gifts equip us for the work of ministry.

What is this work of ministry?

Typically:

- working with people to cultivate spiritual growth,
- developing strong communities,
- providing services to others and
- communicating to people the gospel of the kingdom.

Does it take place inside or outside of the body of Christ, or both?

In Acts 2:42 we read of celebration, worshipping God together, fellowship and community, breaking of bread, having meals in homes and praying together. And we also read how they turned cities upside down with the gospel of the kingdom.

Notice ... they ... not one or two of them ...

We are all called to play a role. Can you agree with that?

Testimonies of what is already happening among us:

Trayle Oates – started computer classes for those in need of help, with mustard seed faith

Shane Farrow – God’s miraculous provision week after week to feed the children from Nompumelelo

Zoleka Putye – helping a family who lost everything in a shack fire, with no experience

Kevin Barnard – started a community group for retired gentlemen

The thrust today is to encourage us all in being mobilised, not to be condescending or critical.

Remember in Ephesians it says that Christ is the head ... and has been given to the church and we are the fullness of him who fills all in all.

## Edification of the body

This means to instruct and to improve, to see the church grow as the Lord adds those that are being saved - the church is described as **Christ's flock, or His body, or His building.**

Love edifies - 1 Corinthians 8:1 *"knowledge puffs up but love edifies"* (Nothing builds up the church more than the demonstrated love of Christ. As we love one another, we are encouraged to continue the faith in times of joy and difficulty. Our spirits are rejuvenated by the Holy Spirit when we sense and appreciate the love of God demonstrated through His people.)

Respect edifies - 2 Corinthians 13:10 *"Therefore I write these things being absent, lest being present I should use sharpness, according to the authority which the Lord has given me for edification and not for destruction."*

Sensitivity edifies – Romans 14:19 *"Therefore let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another."*

Unselfishness edifies – Romans 15:2 *"Let us each please his neighbour for his good, leading to edification."*

Testimony edifies - Acts 9:31 *"Then the churches throughout all Judea, Galilee and Samaria had peace and were edified and walking in the fear of the Lord and the comfort of the Holy Spirit, they were multiplied."*

Hope edifies - 1 Thessalonians 5:11 *"So encourage each other and build each other up, just as you are already doing."*

We can also include our gifting and the words we speak, as we read in Ephesians 4 earlier.

## Have we reached our full potential as a body?

1 Corinthians 12:12-20 NKJV

<sup>12</sup> for as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ.

<sup>13</sup> for by one Spirit we were all baptised into one body-whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free-and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.

<sup>14</sup> for in fact the body is not one member, but many....**think of your physical body if some parts don't co-operate...**

<sup>15</sup> **if the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body", is it therefore not of the body.**

<sup>16</sup> and if the ear should say, because I am not an eye, I am not of the body, is it therefore not of the body?

<sup>17</sup> if the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole body were hearing, where would be the smelling?

<sup>18</sup> but now God has set the members, each one of them in the body, just as He pleased.

<sup>19</sup> and if they were all one member, where would the body be?

<sup>20</sup> but now indeed there are many members yet one body.

I feel that the undeserved, unconditional, undying love that He has for the world, that saved a wretch like me; compels the love that I have for Him, which in turn compels me to be His hands, His feet, His voice, His touch to those who have not yet appropriated that love into their lives.

It compels me to pray earnestly for the church and to see the body come into maturity and be the dwelling place of God.

I feel that the church today, with the condition of and circumstances that, the world faces, stands on the brink of the greatest breakthrough and victory that we would see in our lifetime, if we maximise to our full potential, or alternately the biggest disappointment that we could face as a church globally.

If we look at the status quo and statistics of our own city, our nation, and the world in general, are we comfortable with what we see and hear? If we are not, are we as the church praying earnestly, are we doing something; are we laying down our lives to show a better way - to see His kingdom come and His will being done on earth as it is in heaven?

None of us need say that I feel inferior or inadequate in doing this work of ministry.

1 Corinthians 12:21-22 NKJV

*<sup>21</sup> and the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of you, nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. <sup>22</sup> No, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary.*

Illustration: The importance of Joel Stransky's big toe in winning the 1995 rugby world cup and helping unite us as a nation.

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Discussion question:

How much are we as a body making an impact on, and how relevant are we as a church in addressing the status quo in our communities, city and nation to see the necessary change being effected and bringing this gospel of the kingdom to the world and showing the lost the unconditional love of Christ?