

DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH // CHAPTER SIX

THE FIVE-FOLD MINISTRY & THE APOSTLE

I. INTRODUCTION

Paul in his Epistle to the Ephesians speaks of five ministry gifts that are given to the church for a specific time and for the purpose of helping to accomplish the church's mission. These gifts are often referred to as the "FIVE-FOLD MINISTRY" or "ASCENSION-GIFT MINISTRIES". They are found in Ephesians 4 and are the apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor and teacher. These ministries are necessary if we are going to build healthy, well balanced, Biblically based local churches.

Ephesians 4:7,11-16, "This is why it says: 'When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men.'... It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work."

II. THE NEED FOR THE FIVE-FOLD MINISTRY TODAY

A. THE FIVE-FOLD

| Ministry Gift | Role | Imbalance | Church Impact |
|---------------|--|---|--------------------|
| Apostle | Equipper, church planter, spiritual father, sees big picture, mentor, affirms others | Unfathered generation, lack of mentoring, lack of affirmation in people and leaders | UNFATHERED CHURCH |
| Prophet | Equipper, brings direction, intercessor, brings accountability, reminds of God's standards, sensitive to God's leading | Lack of direction, uncorrected, lack of accountability to biblical standards | UNCORRECTED CHURCH |

| | | | |
|------------|--|--|-------------------|
| Evangelist | Equipper, soul-winner, brings strategies for church growth and multiplication, evangelism is coupled with intentional discipleship | Unfruitful, churches not growing, lack of discipleship, people not getting saved/baptized | UNFRUITFUL CHURCH |
| Pastor | Equipper, shepherd, provide counsel and care, releases potential in others, comes alongside people and develops them, helps to fix brokenness in people, feeder of the sheep | Lack of healing in people, broken people, hurts not addressed, lack of leadership development, people not cared for. | UNHEALED CHURCH |
| Teacher | Equipper, systematic delivery of the Word, sound theologian, builder of the local church, feeder of the sheep, student of the Word | Uneducated, anemic, defeated believers, lack of love for the Word of God, | UNTAUGHT CHURCH |

B. THE GIFTS OF GRACE

C. THE PURPOSE OF THE FIVE-FOLD MINISTRY

1. For the perfecting of God's people.
2. For the work of ministry.
3. For the edifying of the body of Christ.
4. For the building up of the local church.

D. THE END GOAL OF THE FIVE-FOLD MINISTRY

Not only do these ministries-gifts have a very specific purpose, they also have an end in mind. Scripture clearly indicates that the five-fold ministry was given by Christ to His church until the purpose of Ephesians 4:12-16 is complete. Due to the fact that we have not fulfilled the promise of this powerful scripture further verifies the need for all five ministries-gifts to be in full operation.

Ephesians 4:13-16, "...until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work."

1. To bring His church into unity.
2. To bring His church into total knowledge of Jesus Christ.
3. To bring His church into full maturity.
4. To bring the church into their destined purpose.

E. 5-FOLD MINISTRY IN THE CHURCH TODAY

1. All of the Five-fold Ministries are available for today's local church.
2. All of the Five-fold ministries are needed for today's local church.
3. Each leader tends to have a blend of the five-fold ministry-gifts
4. All five-fold gift-ministries should be represented on a local church pastoral team.
5. Each of the Five-fold ministry-gifts brings benefits and strengths to the pastoral ministries of the local church.

III. THE MINISTRY OF THE APOSTLE

The ministry of the Apostle is one of great importance to the health of the local church, yet it is the one gift that is so universally misunderstood. There are many different approaches to this ministry gift, but if we are going to build healthy and balanced churches we must fight for the biblical definition and approach.

"...biblical, apostolic ministry is a fathering ministry given to the church to assist people, leaders and individual local churches in coming to a place of maturity. We will find that apostolic ministry is also a serving ministry that stands alongside of other ministries to lift and encourage them in the fulfillment of their respective destinies. In other words, an apostle is a fathering servant."

"Apostles: The Fathering Servant" by Bill Scheidler

A. DEFINING THE TERM, "APOSTLE"

1. The Old Testament

- a. The Hebrew word "shalach" is defined as "one who was commissioned and authorized by God; one who was sent away."
- b. The Septuagint uses the word, "apostello" and "seacpostello" some 700 times. They are used almost exclusively to render "Shalach, one who is sent, stretched out; authorized messenger." (Joshua 1:16; 2 Kings 19:4; Jer. 34:3).

2. The New Testament

The Greek word, "apostolos" from which we derive the word, "apostle" literally means, "one who is sent forth."

Various expositors add these definitions:

- a. A delegate, messenger, one sent forth with orders (Thayer).
- b. One sent as a messenger or agent, the bearer of a commission, messenger (Analytical Greek Lexicon).
- c. A title denoting a commissioned messenger or ambassador (Interpreter's Dictionary).

B. NEW TESTAMENT ORDER OF APOSTLES

A close study of the New Testament gives us greater understanding of the role of the apostle in the church today. We begin to see different classifications of apostles emerge in the church as not every apostle was the same.

1. Christ, the Apostle

"fix your thoughts on Jesus, whom we acknowledge as our apostle and high priest"
Hebrews 3:1

2. The 12 Apostles of Christ

- a. The twelve apostles were appointed by Christ (Luke 6:12,13).
- b. There are four times the list of twelve apostles appears in scripture. It is interesting to note that each time the list begins with Peter and ends with Judas, the traitor, last (Matt. 10:2-4; Mark 3:16-19; Luke 6:12-16; Acts 1:3).
- c. Paul speaks of the twelve (1 Cor. 15:5) and that these were the most eminent apostles (2 Cor. 11:5; 12:11). The NAS says, "Super Apostles."
- d. They had a unique TITLE. They were the only ones referred to as "apostles of the Lamb". They had and will have a unique FUNCTION. Only these 12 will be involved with Jesus in judging the 12 tribes of Israel. They had a unique PLACEMENT. The 12 will find a unique placement in the 12 foundations of the Eternal City (Rev. 21:14) because of their foundational role in establishing the church.
- e. Although there is some difference of opinions as the replacement of Judas Iscariot, it does seem that Matthias is the one chosen to complete "the Twelve."
- f. The number of twelve is the number of government and of apostolic foundations. It is prominent throughout Israel's history clear through to reference in the city of God (Rev. 21-22).
 - i. The twelve sons of Jacob were the foundation stones to Old Testament Israel (Genesis 48-49).
 - ii. The twelve wells of water symbolized the twelve apostles (Exodus 15:27).
 - iii. The twelve pillars of Mt. Sinai symbolized the twelve apostles (Exodus 24).
 - iv. The twelve princes and their offerings for the dedication of the brazen altar also symbolized the twelve apostles (Numbers 7).
 - v. The twelve stones with the twelve names of the twelve tribes in the breastplate of the High Priest pointed to such (Exodus 28-29).
 - vi. The twelve loaves of showbread on the Table pointed to the same (Exodus 25:23-30).

- vii. The twelve lions of Solomon's throne (1 Kings 10:20), the twelve oxen upholding the molten sea in the temple courts (1 Kings 7:25, 44) and the twelve porters at the gates of Jerusalem (1 Chronicles 26:13-19) all point to the same truth.
- viii. The city of God has twelve gates, twelve foundations, twelve names, twelve manners of fruits, twelve gates of pearl, etc. All point to foundational ministries, apostolic government, the authority of God manifested in the number twelve.

3. Paul, an Apostle to the Gentiles

It is clear that Paul stands unique among the other apostles mentioned in the New Testament, apart from the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

- a. Paul was called an apostle at the beginning of many New Testament books. It is important to recognize that Paul always referred to himself as "an apostle" not "the apostle."
- b. Paul was a "post-ascension apostle." He was called personally after the twelve by Christ himself on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:1-20).
- c. Paul was commissioned to minister to both the Jews and the Gentiles, and was the apostle of the uncircumcision (Gal. 2:7-8; Acts 9:15; 26:15-18).
- d. Paul's apostleship was verified by the fruit of his ministry. Writing of 2/3 of the New Testament, starting of churches, recognition by all New Testament Leaders, etc.
- e. Paul's apostleship was not inferior to the ministry of the twelve apostles (2 Cor. 11:15; 12:11-12).
- f. Paul functioned to some degree in each of the five ascension gifts as well as the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Apostle (Eph. 1:10), Teacher (2 Tim. 1:11), Prophet and Evangelist (Acts 17:2-4), and Pastor (Acts 18:9-10; 19:10).

4. Ascension Gift Apostles

There are over eighty references to apostles in the New Testament, amongst the below references and there are about fifteen other persons mentioned or designated as apostles besides the original Twelve Apostles. These ALL were named AFTER Christ's ascension. Although all may never be viewed in the level of stature as Christ, the original twelve, or Paul, each did function as apostles. So it has been through church history.

- a. Matthias (Acts 1:26)
- b. James, the Lord's brother (Acts 1:14; 1 Cor. 15:7)
- c. Paul (Acts 14:14; 22:21)
- d. Barnabas (Acts 4:36; 11:22-30)
- e. Apollos (1 Cor. 4:6-9)
- f. Andronicus (Rom. 16:7)
- g. Junia (Rom. 16:7)
- h. Epaphroditus (Phil. 2:25).
- i. Titus (2 Cor. 8:23)
- j. Two unnamed brethren (2 Cor. 8:23).
- k. Timothy (Acts 19:22, 1 Thess. 1:1; 2:6).
- l. Judas (Acts 15:23; 1 Thess. 2:6).
- m. Silas/Silvanus (Acts 15:23; I Thess. 2:6).
- n. Erastus (Acts 19:22).
- o. Tychicus (2 Tim. 4:12)

C. THE QUALIFICATIONS OF AN APOSTLE

In the light of the New Testament, there are certain things by which apostolic ministry can be recognized. It is not that all apostle will be exactly alike or have the same measures of the grace-gifts of Christ, but there will be enough of the evidences that confirm that a person is an apostle and should be recognized as such.

- 1. Called by the Lord (Mark 3:13-15; Rom. 1:1).
- 2. Same qualifications as an Elder (1 Pet. 5:1-5; 1 Jn. 1:1; Rev. 4:4)
- 3. Possess a servant spirit (Titus 1:1; Phil. 1:1)

4. Have Spiritual Authority (2 cor. 1:24; 1 Pet. 5:1-5)
5. Be a Spiritual Father (1 Cor. 4:15-21; 11:34)
6. Have sound doctrine (Acts 2:42; Rom 16:25)
7. Clothed in humility (Acts 20:19; 2 cor. 10:2)
8. Have proven patience (2 Cor. 12:12)
9. An exemplary leader that others will follow (1 cor. 11:1)
10. Manifest qualities of divine love (1 Cor. 13; 2 Cor. 12:15)

D. MINISTRY OF THE APOSTLE

1. Apostolic ministry function in areas of five-fold ministry (Eph. 4:11-13).
2. Apostolic ministry plants and/or establishes local churches (1 Cor. 3:9-16; Rom. 16:20; 1 Cor. 9:1)
3. Apostolic ministry preaches and teaches the Word (1 Tim. 2:7; 2 Tim. 1:11).
4. Apostolic ministry functions in the gifts of the spirit, signs and wonders (Acts. 4:23; 5:12; 2 Cor. 10:18; 12:12, Rom 11:13: 15:18)
5. Apostolic ministry involves the ordination and appointment of ministries (Acts 6:1-6)
6. Apostolic ministry involves baptism of the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:14-18; 10:1-16; 19:1-6).
7. Apostolic ministry involves preparation and placing of other potential ministries (2 Tim. 2:2, Acts 16:1-4).
8. Apostolic ministry involves church judgments and disciplines (Acts 5:1-11; 13:11; 2 John 9,10; 1 Tim. 1:20).
9. Apostolic ministry has a vision for the entire body of Christ (Eph 3:1-9; 4:1-16).
10. Apostolic ministry will especially care for the churches he plants (2 Cor. 11:28; 2 Thess. 3:14).

11. Apostolic ministry is willing to sacrificially suffer for the church (Acts 5:18-40; Col. 1:23-29; 1 Cor. 4).
12. Apostolic ministry will be willing to be tested and proven true (Rev. 2:2; Gal. 2:11-13; Acts 17:10-12).
13. Apostolic ministry will be characterized by wisdom (2 Pet. 3:15-16; 1 Cor. 1,2,3).
14. Apostolic ministry will set God's house in Divine order (1 Cor. 11:34; 7:17; 16:1-2).
15. Apostolic ministry should be identified with a Local Church (Acts 13-14).