

# Mutual Ministry: The Life of the Church

During June we are spending our time in Ephesians 4.1-16. It is the perfect passage to concentrate on as we think about unity in the body. It also fits in very nicely with what we have been discussing over the last few weeks on Biblical Leaders for Today. Today we'll spend time in 4.12-16. Here we learn how gifted men equip the saints which results in unity, knowledge, Christlikeness, sound doctrine, and evangelism.

## I. Ephesians 4.12a - Gifted Men Equip the Saints

- A. **“Equip”**
- B. The purpose of biblical leaders is to bring believers to maturity, growing into spiritual stability.
- C. Passion, Not Profession
  1. Full energy needs to be expended.
    - a) Colossians 1.28: *We proclaim him, warning and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone **mature** in Christ.*
    - b) Colossians 4.12: *Epaphras, ... is always wrestling for you in his prayers, so that you can stand mature and fully assured in everything God wills.*
- D. How Leaders Equip the Church
  1. The continual teaching of sound doctrine: 2 Timothy 4.2: **Preach** the word...
  2. Constant reproduction of mature believers: 2 Timothy 2.2: *commit to faithful men who will be able to **teach** others also.*
  3. Set an example: 1 Timothy 4.11: *Command and teach these things.* Read. Explain. Apply.
  4. Teach the whole plan of God: Acts 20.27: *I did not avoid declaring to you the **whole plan** of God.*
  5. Lead and Feed: Acts 20.28.
- E. Equipping Brings Unity
  1. Ephesians 4.12: to equip the saints for the work of ministry...
  2. “equip” is from the same root word as 1 Corinthians 1.10. Means “to complete.”
    - a) The welding together of individual believers into one harmonious group.
    - b) To be knit together.
  3. John 17:20–22: *I pray not only for these, but also for those who believe in me through their word. May they all be **one**, as you, Father, are in me and I am in you.*

## II. Ephesians 4.12b - Saints Do the Work of Ministry

- A. Ephesians 4.12: Who does ministry? **The saints.**
- B. Gifted men concentrated on the word so they can equip the saints. Saints do the work of serving each other. Acts 6 sets the precedent.
- C. What is ministry? Practical service. The giving of yourself away for others ... the church is a fellowship of people engaged in loving expression of ministry to one another.
- D. This is what made the early church so effective: Acts 2.44-47: members serving each other; members taking the gospel to the world.

## III. Ephesians 4.13-16 - The Impact of Ministry

- A. 4.13a - **Unity** of Faith
- B. 4.13b - Knowledge of the Son: deep, experience acquaintance with Christ.
- C. 4.13c - Becoming Like Christ: the more we know Christ the more we become like Him.
- D. 4.14 - Knowledge of Sound Doctrine: constantly growing and being nourished.
- E. 4.15a - Evangelism: *speaking the truth **in love**.*
  1. 4.15 - A purpose of maturity is to speak the truth in love. Mature Christians evangelize.

## IV. As We Close...

- A. What brings all this together?
- B. 4.15b-16 - **Christ**. He is the power behind it all.