

Purpose of Training in the Church

Every believer possesses gifts. There is no such thing as a believer who is not gifted for work in the body of Christ.

Ephesians 4:11-16

BIBLE PASSAGE

"And He gave some *as* apostles, and some *as* prophets, and some *as* evangelists, and some *as* pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; 13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. 14 As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; 15 but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all *aspects* into Him who is the head, *even* Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love." (Ephesians 4:11-16)

INTRODUCTION

1. Ephesians 4:11-16 is **one** of the most powerful passages in the Bible after the cross. We are not only to understand what God has done for the church in Christ by His saving her but what He saved her for. We must get excited about the work of the

cross and the purpose of the cross.

2. "**Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. 5 And there are varieties of ministries, and the same Lord. 6 There are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all *persons*. 7 But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.**" (1 Corinthians 12:4-7)
3. In this section, we read: About **What** Christ gave to the church, His **purpose** for giving it, and for **how long**.
4. Andrew Lincoln, "What does the exalted Christ give to the church? He gives people, these particular people who **proclaim the word and lead.**"

BIBLE PASSAGE

Ephesians 4:11: "And He (Christ) **gave** some *as* apostles, and some *as* prophets, and some *as* evangelists, and some *as* pastors and teachers,"

1 God's Work in the Church (Ephesians 4:11)

EXPLANATION

A. Christ gave (4:11):

1. Apostles- Hand-picked by Jesus to be "sent forth" as His representatives on earth after Jesus ascended into heaven.

- a. They were promised to be inspired by the Holy Spirit **"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you." (John 14:26)**
 - b. Their preaching would carry authority as if Christ Himself preached it: **" If you forgive the sins of any, their sins have been forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they have been retained."** (John 20:23)
 - c. Except for Judas, no provision was made to replace the apostles as they died out.
 - d. They served as the church's foundation, which was laid ONLY once. **"having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone". (Ephesians 2:20)**
 - e. The apostles, especially the Apostle Paul, wrote most of the New Testament.
 - f. With the death of the last apostle, this office no longer exists. Many modern-day self-proclaimed apostles cannot do what these "Christ hand-picked, Christ-sent" apostles did: raise the dead and heal the sick (remove leprosy, make the lame walk, etc.).
2. Prophets - this group of leaders is closely linked with the apostles in Ephesians 2:20 and 3:5.
- a. God gave them the gift which enabled them to speak directly from God, usually about the future: **"10 and to another the effecting of miracles, and to another prophecy, and to another the distinguishing of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, and to another the interpretation of tongues. 28 And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues." (1 Corinthians 12:10; 28)**
 - b. Just like the apostles, in the early days of the church, this office was vital - before the New Testament was written. And they did not make provision for the succession of prophets. Once the New Testament was written, this office ended. The sufficiency of the Scriptures makes the prophets unnecessary today.
 1. How did one prove the validity of the apostles and prophets? **"As for the prophet who prophesies of peace, when the word of the**

prophet comes to pass, the prophet will be known as one whom the LORD has truly sent.” (Jer 28:9)

2. Apostles: Miracles
3. Jesse Duplantis, Benny Hinn, Kenneth Copeland, etc.
3. Evangelists - Are those who proclaim the "good news" of the Gospel.
 - a. Do not have the authority of apostles nor inspiration of prophets
 - b. Philip (Acts 21:8) and Timothy (2 Timothy 4:5) were evangelists at established churches.
 - c. Unlike apostles and prophets, evangelists are found in every generation of the church (Matthew 28:20)
4. Pastors and teachers: the definite article in Greek links the two terms together as one category.
 - a. The word pastor is used interchangeably with shepherd, elder, and overseer. These men were able to teach (1 Timothy 3:2)
 - b. They were to provide nurture and instruction to new converts.
5. These are not the only gifts given to the church: **"As each one has received a *special* gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. 11 Whoever speaks, *is to do so* as one who is speaking the utterances of God; whoever serves *is to do so* as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever." (1 Peter 4:10-11)** The point is all gifts given to the church are for a special purpose!

BIBLE PASSAGE

Ephesians 4:12: (Purpose) **for** the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ;

2

Purpose: To Prepare God's People for Works of Service. (Ephesians 4:12)

EXPLANATION

A. Purpose (for the) (4:12):

1. Literally, "Toward the equipping of the saints unto work of service." The verb "equipping" occurs several times in the New Testament, and it shows what the leaders are to do for the saints:
 - a. To teach (Luke 6:40)
 - b. To equip with everything good (Hebrews 13:21)
 - c. To supply what is lacking (1 Thessalonians 3:10)
 - d. To prepare for use (Hebrews 10:5)
 - e. To form, mold, and shape (Hebrews 11:3)
 - f. To mend and repair (Matthew 4:21)
 - g. To correct faults (2 Corinthians 13:11)
 - h. To restore a fallen brother (Galatians 6:1)
 - i. To bring into functioning harmony (1 Corinthians 1:10)
2. God's holy people (the Christians) have been set apart, and their shepherds/teachers are to help them get ready to do the work of service.
3. "so that the body of Christ may be built up"

BIBLE PASSAGE

13 (Duration) **until** we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son

of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ." (Ephesians 4:13)

3

Duration: Until We All Reach Unity in the Faith (Ephesians 4:13)

EXPLANATION

A. Unity:

1. Despite all the diversity of gifts and various ministries among the saints, the body moves toward the ultimate unity.
2. Unlike the unity of the Spirit of Ephesians 4:3, the unity here is a goal NOT YET attained.
3. Note the word "ALL." This means that everyone needs to be involved in growing THROUGH service; the leaders cannot DO IT ALL.
4. The "ALL" eliminates the possibility of an ELITE class.

B. Unity of faith:

1. This is not cultish belief and blind following.
2. Romans 14 is proof that there will be areas of difference.
3. People will never agree on every opinion of this side of heaven.
4. Paul is thinking of "faith" as total trust and commitment to Jesus.
5. Faith unites Christians to Jesus Christ, and faith unites Christians to one another.
6. At the same time, a united church on faith cannot disagree about who Jesus is and what He taught.
7. A united, mature church will "no longer be infants blown here and there by

every wind of teaching. (Ephesians 4:14)

C. Until - Duration. Until Jesus returns

CONCLUSION

1. Let us be encouraged to continue growing in spirit and knowledge of our Lord Jesus.
2. Let us use our special gifts as the Lord has given them to us, and exercise them to the best of our abilities. **(Luke 12:48; "...From everyone who has been given much, much will be required; and to whom they entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more.")**
3. The church has been a part of God's eternal plan for a reason. Let us be a part of that plan.
4. Plan of Salvation