

Growing Up Together

'New Beginning Studies' #4 of 4 (UPDATED 9-5-17)

Eph. 4:11-16

"So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, ¹² to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ¹³ 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. ¹⁴ 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 people in their deceitful scheming. ¹⁵ Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. ¹⁶ 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." (NIV)

Q: What is an apostle?

- The Greek word for Apostle is "**apostolos**" (*ap-os'-tol-os*), and it means "one who is sent."
 - In [Heb. 3:1](#), Jesus is called "the Apostle", meaning He was sent by God.
 - In [2Cor. 8:23](#), Paul referred to some "brothers" as "**apostolos**" of the church, which we might call missionaries today.
 - Others referred to as "**apostolos**" include Barnabas ([Acts 1:22](#)), and James the brother of Jesus ([Gal. 1:19](#)).
- In this verse, it means the ones Jesus personally sent, or apostles of Jesus, who had been witnesses of Jesus' resurrection ([Acts 1:22](#)).

Q: What is a prophet?

- The Greek word for prophet is "**prophetes**" (*prof-ay'-tace*), and it means a foreteller.
 - In the New Testament, we read about prophets who came from Jerusalem to Antioch and prophesied of future events ([Acts 11:27-28](#); [21:10-11](#)), and Philip the Evangelist's four unmarried daughters who prophesied ([Acts 21:8-9](#)).
- Prophets foretold the future, as in [Acts 11:28](#) and [Acts 21:9, 11](#), but like the Old Testament prophets, their great work was to '**forth-tell**' the word of God.
 - '**Forth-telling**' the word of God included bringing to light, with convicting power, people's sins ([1Cor. 14:24-25](#)), or in bringing new strength to the church by the word of exhortation or encouragement.
 - An example of "**forth-telling**" can be found in [Acts 15:32](#), where it is said that in Antioch 'Judas and Silas, *who were themselves prophets*, exhorted the brethren with many words, and strengthened them.'
- What sets prophets apart from evangelists, pastors, and teachers is that they were inspired directly by God ([2Peter 1:20-21](#)).

Q: What is an evangelist?

- The Greek word for evangelist is "**euaggelistes**" (*yoo-ang-ghel-is-tace*), and it means a preacher of the gospel.
- In the early church, evangelists were probably traveling preachers.

Q: What are pastors?

- The Greek word for pastor in this verse is “**poimen**” (*poy-mane*), and it means shepherd.
- A pastor (shepherd) led the flock, protected it, guided it to places where there was grass to eat and water to drink. He healed the sheep that were hurt, assisted in birth, and, with tenderness, cared for the flock.
- This describes pretty well what a spiritual leader does for a group or congregation, which is sometimes referred to as a “flock” ([Acts 20:28-29](#); [1 Peter 5:2-3](#)).
- The New Testament also refers to this role as “overseer” or “bishop” (**episkopos** – [Titus 1:7](#); [Phil. 1:1](#)), and “elder” (**presbuteros** – [Acts 15:6](#); [1Tim. 5:17](#); [Titus 1:5](#); [James 5:14](#)).

Q: What is the “teacher” role Paul is talking about here?

- The teacher (**didaskalos**) has a role closely related to the pastor/elder/overseer, but is somewhat specialized.
- The pastor is more a leader of, and care giver for, people; while the teacher grounds people in truth, and helps them to understand the implications of truth as it relates to their everyday lives.

These roles are descriptions of what leaders do to serve the church. Sometimes one person may serve in more than one of these roles.

- Timothy seems to be a pastor and teacher, and was also told to do the work of an evangelist. ([2Tim. 4:5](#)).
- Peter was referred to as both an apostle and an elder. ([Matt. 10:2](#); [1Peter 5:1](#)).
- Jesus took on all these roles in His ministry.

Q: Why does Jesus give us these servants?

- “...to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.” ([vs. 12](#))
- Jesus gives us leaders who can help us learn how to do the work Jesus has bought us to do ([1Cor. 6:20](#); [Eph. 2:10](#)), so the body of Christ (the church – [Col. 1:18](#)) can be built up.

Q: Why does the body of Christ need to be built up?

- To carry on Jesus’ mission of “making all things new” ([Rev. 21:5](#)), and bringing Heaven to Earth ([Matt. 6:10](#)).

Q: How does Jesus want you to relate to the leaders He gives the church?

- Jesus didn’t give the church bosses that get to order you around. He gave the church servants to help you obey Him! ([Matt. 20:25-28](#))
- Jesus is the head of the church ([Col. 1:18](#); [Eph. 4:15](#)), and we are all just parts of His body.
 - The head of a person’s body is what each part of the body is supposed to connect to and be directed by.
 - Jesus gives us leaders to help us learn to serve Him as His body ([Heb. 13:7, 17](#)).

Q: When will the Church become mature the way Jesus wants His body to be?

- When we “*reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God*” ([vs. 13](#)).
- Unity is not uniformity; it is harmony and agreement.
 - That doesn’t mean it’s OK for everyone to just believe whatever they want, and somehow overlook the differences.
- When we become mature, we won’t be tossed around by crazy teachings and religious fads ([vs. 14](#)).
- To become mature, Jesus expects us to “*speak the truth in love*” to each other ([vs. 15](#)).
 - For us to grow up together, we have to get good at loving and telling each other the truth!

What about you?

Paul says the body of Christ grows and builds itself up in love when each part does its work ([vs. 15](#)). Are you doing your part?

[Read Heb. 10:24-25](#)

*“And let us consider **how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds,** ²⁵ **not giving up meeting together,** as some are in the habit of doing, but **encouraging one another**—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.” (NIV)*

Q: How important is it that you “go to church”?

- It is very important! Not for what you get, but for what you give to others!
- Every time Christians meet together, you have an opportunity to do your part, and help build up the church by encouraging others and spurring them on toward love and good deeds.

Q: Are you going to church regularly **to encourage others to love and to do good deeds**?

[Read Acts 4:32-35](#)

*“All the believers were one in heart and mind. **No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had.** ³³ With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And God’s grace was so powerfully at work in them all ³⁴ that **there were no needy persons among them.** For from time to time **those who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales** ³⁵ **and put it at the apostles’ feet, and it was distributed to anyone who had need.”** (NIV)*

Q: Is giving generously part of the work everyone has to do in order for the body to be built up in love ([Eph. 4:16](#))?

- It was one of the distinguishing marks of the early Christians.
- Giving is listed as one of the gifts of the Spirit ([Rom 12:6-8](#)).
- Paul told the Galatian Christians to share “*all good things*” with those who taught them the Word ([Gal. 6:6](#)).
 - In context, “*all good things*” seems to refer to financial support.
- Paul also told Timothy that elders, especially those who preach and teach, should be supported by the church ([1Tim. 5:17-18](#)).

Q: Are you doing your part to give generously to the church and to others?

Read Mark 16:15

*“He said to them, **“Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.”** (NIV)*

Read Matt 28:18-20

*Then Jesus came to them and said, **“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”** (NIV)*

Q: Are you telling people the gospel?

Q: Are you making disciples?

Q: Are you teaching new disciples to obey everything Jesus commanded?

Read 1Cor. 12:4-7

*“There are **different kinds of gifts**, but the same Spirit distributes them. ⁵ There are **different kinds of service**, but the same Lord. ⁶ There are **different kinds of working**, but in all of them **and in everyone** it is the same God at work. ⁷ **Now to each one** the manifestation of the Spirit is given **for the common good.**” (NIV)*

- **Everyone has a gift!** That includes you!
- If you are in Christ, the Spirit has given you a gift to serve and work *“for the common good.”*
 - Other people will probably notice the gift you’ve been given before you do—they’ll know what you’re doing that ministers to them.
- **Everyone who is walking in the Spirit will be walking in love and serving people in the ways that are most natural to them.**

Q: Are you showing love to others?

Q: Are you serving others?

Q: Has anyone told you that you do something that really helps them? If so, what was it?

It might be a gift the Holy Spirit has given you to use to build up the body of Christ!

If you’re not sure about how to do your part, or you need some help, then let someone teach you and train you so you can help build up the body of Christ to carry on His mission. Jesus has given leaders to the church to help you, all you have to do is ask them, imitate their faith ([Heb. 13:7](#)), and let them guide you ([Heb. 13:17](#)). The mission of bringing Heaven to Earth, and taking the Good News of the Kingdom to the world around us, is too important for you to sit by and let others shoulder the load!!