



November 21, 2022

God's infinite and merciful loving-kindness is clearly seen in the structure and His beautiful design of the Body of Christ, the born-again believers, in the Age of Grace. We have benefits individually as a result of the new birth, and also benefits proceeding from our loving God working in the hearts of men and women with gift ministries. Ministers operating the gift ministries function in the Body of Christ, helping believers to continue in fellowship and to overcome together and grow. Let's take a look at these five gift ministries by defining each one so we can see how they are operated in the Body of Christ, the Church, today!

We can go to God's Word to find where the five gift ministries are listed and to see them in operation within the Church.

Ephesians 4:11:

And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers.

Apostle—An **apostle** is one who brings new light to his or her generation. It may be old revelation, but it is new to the generation to whom he or she speaks. In Romans 1:1, Paul was called an apostle, and he certainly brought new light in his day and time regarding the one Body of Christ. Acts 13:46-49 shows a great example of this apostle bringing new light to his generation.

Prophet—A **prophet** is one who speaks for God to God's people. He works within the body of believers, speaking to get God's people back to God's Word and back to the fellowship which the Father ordained. A man named Agabus is called a prophet in the Book of Acts (Acts 21:10-12).

Evangelist—An **evangelist** is one who wins the unsaved to Christ by teaching them from the Word how to be born again and live for God. An evangelist also teaches and inspires the believers to effectively carry out their ministry of reconciliation. In Acts 21, Philip is called an evangelist. Philip was one of the “seven men of honest report” listed in Acts 6 who were ordained to special ministries of service to God’s people (Acts 6:3-6).

Acts 21:8:

And the next day we that were of Paul’s company departed, and came unto Caesarea: and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was one of the seven; and abode with him.

Pastor—A **pastor** is one who cares for the individual needs within the Church. He cares for the flock. Ephesians 4:11, which simply lists the gift ministries, is the only occurrence of the word “pastors” in the New Testament. The Old Testament, which was written for our learning, gives us some understanding of a pastor.

Jeremiah 3:15:

And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.

The pastor cares for the flock, God’s people, by keeping them fed with God’s Word. Pastors are to faithfully care for the Church and be examples to the believers (I Peter 5:2,3; Acts 15:36,41; 18:11; 19:1-6).

Teacher—A **teacher** clearly expounds the accuracy of God’s matchless Word to the believers for their understanding and application. One who has the gift ministry of a teacher is especially adept at teaching God’s Word. The ministry of a teacher is listed last in Ephesians 4:11, because teaching is the foundation of every gift ministry.

Acts 20:20:

And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publickly, and from house to house.

We see from Ephesians 4 how long these ministries will continue.

Ephesians 4:13:

Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

This will be when Christ returns, when “that which is perfect is come” (I Corinthians 13:10). With the coming of Christ will come perfection. But for now, the five gift ministries are still needed and in operation in the Church today!

God has provided the gift ministries to equip us for growth, to be established together, fit, repaired, restored, adjusted, mended, and prepared. Each ministry provides uniquely powerful aspects of the strength and love that the Body of Christ needs! Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers—these are five gracious gifts that are given to benefit each individual believer and the whole Body of Christ. What wonderful love and care our God has for His children!

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