

## **Eph 4:11**

Ephesians 4:11 is often referred to as the five fold ministry of the church. Actually there are 4 gifts here as Pastor/teacher is one gift. Notice that these gifts are for a specific purpose mentioned in verse 12. Because they are to equip people for God's service I believe they are elder giftings. Others in the congregation may have one of these gifts but not have the other qualifications of an elder. 1Cor 12:28 lists them in a numerical order but leaves out Evangelists and then lists other gifts without placing a number on them.

Let us take a moment to look at each of the four gifts that are used to equip people. APOSTLES: We are talking about gifts and the Apostles were a gift to the body of Christ. They were hand picked and trained by Jesus to help get the Church off on the right foot with Jesus personal example in their minds eyes to help guide them. We saw in Acts 1 that one of the main responsibilities of the Apostles was to bear witness to the resurrection. Apostle means an official representative. Were they a unique position/gift for that time? Was Ignatious instruction to appoint bishops a replacement of Apostles? If so was it a valid pattern and do we have them today?

PROPHETS: Some believe this position has passed like that of Apostles. 1Cor 14 says we should desire the gift of prophecy. There are several examples of prophetic words given by Jesus and others. Paul received several warnings from prophets while on his way to Jerusalem. A prophet foretells and forth tells the word. There is an excellent book on the flood of false prophets of our day and a Biblical outline to discern what is from God and what is not. *Thus Saith the Lord?* By John Bevere Perhaps you have been wounded by a false prophetic word and do not want to hear about prophecy. Paul encouraged the gift even when there were excesses in Corinth. It is important that someone with knowledge of the Word judges the prophecy as to its alignment with God's word. We forget that a preached message can be a prophetic word as the preacher receives the message from the Spirit of God for a people at a certain time. This also is prophecy.

EVANGELISTS: Timothy was told that he had a gift of Evangelism. To tell the good news. Timothy is specifically instructed to work as an Evangelist (II Tim. 4.5). In addition we are told that Timothy was set apart for special work by his home church (I Tim. 1.18; 2.14; II Tim. 1.6; 4.5).

Commentators are almost unanimous in agreeing that Timothy was an Evangelist, and generally agree the same regarding Titus. There was no need for Timothy to be a pastor, because, as John Gill says, "the church at Ephesus already had elders, pastors, or bishops."

A church planter could be considered an evangelist when most of those in the new church were a result of his sharing the gospel. Some are especially gifted at witnessing salvation to the lost. What a needed gift in the church today! We are all called to witness and spread the good news but this is a special anointing to do that. We certainly witnessed it in Billy Graham.

PASTOR/TEACHER: The word 'Pastor' is the same as shepherd. The shepherd feeds the sheep with the Word of God. He teaches from the Word. I caution you not to put this one gift as a place above the others. It is listed fourth here. He also protects the flock from wolves. He will often be the one to judge a prophecy.

Jesus had all these gifts. It is possible to have any combination of them or none of them, but instead other gifts. Since these gifts are to equip the body to serve I think an elder would have at least one of these gifts. Would you agree?

When we think about elders or leadership we are in the habit of thinking in terms of clergy and laity. Actually there was no division of clergy and laity in the early church. All in the body were considered ministers of Jesus Christ. Elders merely have the gifting to equip the body to minister. That is their particular ministry. They also administered church life for the sake of order. Some worked at a job for income and others were supported by the offerings and gifts of the people.

But this idea needs some work to bring it home. Before you read on define 'layman' and 'minister' in your own words. Most people will define layman in the negative, what they are not. It comes from the Greek *laos* which means people. Laymen are the people of God. God calls us ALL to be ministers. Baptism has been called the ordination of the laity. Some of those ministers have the ministry we described above in equipping the other ministers.

See the chart. What does this mean to us? Which way are you use to thinking? Why? How should it affect our day to day lives? Our church structure?