

## Identifying Ministry Gifts - Ephesians 4:11

### DEFINITIONS:

**Apostle:** The word simply means "a sent one, an ambassador, a delegate, one who is sent forth one commissioned and authorized by another to represent another and carry out his will and purposes". The one sent is one with the one who sent him/her. Hebrews 3:1, Luke 6:12 & 13; Romans 1:1, Romans 16:6.

**Prophet:** Is God's mouthpiece or spokesperson, through which the Word of God flows, whether forthtelling or foretelling. He/she is God's ambassador sent from the presence of God with the words of God. John 4:19, Acts 15:32, 11:28, 1 Corinthians 14:27, 29, Luke 2:36.

**Evangelist:** He/she is able to share the Gospel/good news with unbelievers in such a way that men/women/children become Jesus' disciples. Luke 4:18&19, 18:11, 9:6, Acts 21:8, Philippians 4:3.

**Pastor:** Is one who tends/herds flocks, feeding guiding and superintending them; a pastor exercises oversight of the flock of God, the believers; a pastor is a shepherd. He/she assumes personal responsibility for the spiritual welfare of a group of believers. John 10:10, Hebrews 13:20, 1 Peter 5:4, 2:25, Ephesians 4:11, Acts 20:17&28, 1 Peter 5:1-5.

**Teacher:** Is one who instructs and by his/her teaching causes others to learn. It involves exposition, explanation and instruction of doctrine to others; he/she is able to communicate to the Body of Christ information relevant to the health and ministry of the Body and its members. John 3:2, Mark 6:2, John 8:2, 1 Corinthians 12:28, 29, Acts 13:1-4, 15:35.

### **MINISTRY/GIFTS IN NEW TESTAMENT CHURCHES**

Jerusalem	Samaria	Antioch	Ephesus	Philippi	Crete	Corinth	Rome	Asia Minor	Dispersion
The Twelve Apostles Deacons Elders	Evangelist  Apostles	Prophets  Teachers Apostles	Apostles  Prophets Evangelists Pastors Teachers Elders Deacons	Apostles  Bishops Deacons Saints	Elders	Apostles  Prophets Teachers Governing Wisdom Knowledge Faith Healing Miracles Prophecy Discerning Tongues Interpretation Helps	Prophecy  Serving Teaching Exhorting Giving Ruling Mercy	"Angel"  Messenger	Apostles  Fellow- Elders

Source: *The Church in the New Testament*, by K J Conner

**G Coates** - Pioneer Ministries:- To use biblical language, the Evangelist gets people saved, the Pastor gets them nurtured, the Teacher gets them taught and the Prophet gets them encouraged and directed. So what on earth does the Apostle do! The Apostle may not be the most gifted person there, but he/she has the ability to recognise ministries, draw on them, make sure there is a good foundation and get them to harmonise in such a way so that they enrich each other.

**Lyn Green** - YWAM Ministries:- "I am at my best developing new projects and helping other people find their place in getting them done. I am happiest when I can see people really working together as a team, extending the Kingdom into a new field."

J Buckingham - "Where Eagles Soar":

In short, the seminary concept is that one man called "the pastor" should do the work that the Apostle Paul said should be handled by at least five men. Not once in my four years of training in a theological seminary was I told to find my place and fulfil my dream as either an apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor or teacher. It was just assumed I would be all five - despite Paul's admonition to the Ephesians (Ephesians 4:11-16). But just because one has a pastor's heart does not make him a public teacher or an evangelist. Just because one has burden for lost souls does not mean he is also gifted as a shepherd - or has the insight of a prophet.

Over the years, as I have watched men fail in the ministry, it is often because they have been forced into roles where they were not gifted. The prophet, who had a great gift of preaching and deep spiritual insight, was forced to be a pastor - or an administrator. When he failed in that, and since his preaching was often irritating and pointed, he was forced out of the church. Or perhaps it was a man with a tender, shepherd's heart, who loved his sheep as deeply as he loved his own children. Yet because he was not a prophetic preacher or was a poor evangelist, those in the congregation who wanted to build a bigger, more efficient organisation would finally see to it that he was replaced - usually by some kind of human dynamo who shot golf in the high 70s, remembered jokes like Bob Hope and was the darling of the social circle - but knew God only as a distant cousin.

When the church recognizes that God never intended for the spiritual leader to be all things to all people and when the spiritual leaders become secure enough in their gift that they are not threatened by others who can supplement their ministry and succeed in areas where they are weak, then the church will once again grow strong and healthy.

A man is happy and productive only if his work life corresponds with his dream - with the desire of his heart. Self-inventory is absolutely necessary for every Christian, especially those in leadership.

Last year the 10 elders in the Tabernacle Church in Melbourne - most of whom were in full-time ministry - submitted themselves to a series of vocational tests - the kind given to corporate executives in industry. The purpose was to help us discover our basic, motivational gifts. In short, how to let our dreams come true. After a week of thought and prayer, we withdrew to a small cabin on the beach to spend two days in intense personal evaluation. Each man had jotted down who he really thought he was. Brushing aside "Who do others want me to be?" and "What am I doing now?" each of us focused on such questions as "What do I really want to do? What is the best contribution I can make to the Body of Christ? What are the real desires of my heart? What is God telling me to do with my life?"

It was an interesting and revealing session. Each man got extremely honest. "You men see me in *this* role," our church administrator said. "But if I were free from all restraints, I would get out of this office and spend all my time as a pastor - ministering to people's needs at the personal level."

Another man confessed he was tired of being thrust into the role of a pastor and counsellor. He did it because it was demanded of him. But his real gift was in seeking the Lord in prayer, meditation and

through the anguish of the soul, then coming back to the Body as a prophet to speak with strong authority, "This is what God is saying."

I myself confessed I had been playing the role of a pastor for a number of years - first by necessity because there was no one else to do it and later by tradition and habit and because it was expected of me by the people. But deep in my heart I knew my gift was not that of a pastor, even though I shared deep compassion for people. But my basic gift to the local Body was that of a spiritual overseer, fulfilling the apostolic office.

In describing the functions of the "five-fold" ministries Paul outlines in Ephesians 4:11-16, Bob Beckett, one of our pastors, likened it to a human hand. The apostle is the thumb, touching all the other fingers. The prophet is the index finger, jabbing and pointing. The evangelist is the long middle finger, reaching out to the lost. The pastor is the ring finger, calling people into covenant. And the teacher is the little finger, constantly digging for knowledge.

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Question to Esther Rantzen:- "Who do you admire?" answer:- "Mother Teresa. It must be wonderful to have such a clear vision of the world and your own place and purpose in it."

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Sara Parkin began the letter that withdrew her from the ballot for the Green Party's leadership with a quote from E F Schumacher: "If we don't do the right thing, we'll be doing the wrong thing, and we'll just be part of the disease and not a part of the cure."

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From "Lectures To My Students" - C H Spurgeon:

"That narrow chest does not indicate a man formed for public speech. You may think it odd, but still I feel very well assured, that when a man has a contracted chest, with no distance between his shoulders, the all-wise Creator did not intend him habitually to preach. If he had meant him to speak he would have given him in some measure breadth of chest, sufficient to yield a reasonable amount of lung force. When the Lord means a creature to run, He gives it nimble legs, and if He means another creature to preach, He will give it suitable lungs. A brother who has to pause in the middle of a sentence and work his air-pump, should ask himself whether there is not some other occupation for which he is better adapted. A man who can scarcely get through a sentence without pain, can hardly be called to "Cry aloud and spare not." There may be exceptions, but is there not weight in the general rule?"

Spurgeon is using an argument from the natural to the spiritual (1 Corinthians 15:46). Let us ask ourselves two questions from this:

1) At this point in your life what do you see yourself physically suited for:

- a) pioneering/church planting (Apostle);
- b) spending concentrated time in God's presence to receive the rhema word (Prophet);
- c) spending time with the unsaved (Evangelist);
- d) settled long-term shepherding and nurturing (Pastor);
- e) being in the study and making the Scriptures relevant for today (Teacher).

2) Go through (a) to (e) again and ask yourself what at this point in your life are you spiritually suited for? Do you have the same answers as in (1)?