

How Did God Design His Church to Function?

Ephesians 4:11-16

Intro:

1. God not only tailor made you - He tailor made His church!
2. **v7** - He gave us what we need to accomplish His mission.
3. So - what did the Lord give us & why?

I. **v11** - God Gave the Church Leadership

A. **Apostles** (ἀπόστολος) = ones who are sent forth on a mission, missionaries.

1. They were originally the 12 who had been hand picked by the Lord, had been with Him through His ministry & had witnessed the resurrection. - **Lk 6:13 & Act 1:21-22**
2. An apostle had to perform miracles as a proof of his position. **II Cor 12:12** - The things that mark an apostle — signs, wonders and miracles — were done among you with great perseverance.
3. Later others, besides the 12, were also called apostles.
 - a. **Rom 1:1** - Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God . . .
 - b. **Act 14:14** - But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of this, they tore their clothes and rushed out into the crowd . . .
 - c. **Rom 16:7** - Greet Andronicus and Junias, my relatives who have been in prison with me. They are outstanding among the apostles, and they were in Christ before I was.
 - d. **Gal 1:19** - I saw none of the other apostles — only James, the Lord's brother.
4. These people all eventually died & left no successors!
 - a. They left no successors because no one else fit the requirements of **II Cor 12:12**!
 - b. Their purpose was fulfilled - to get the church started & provide it with direction until the New Testament portion of our Bible appeared.
5. The New Testament provided direction for the church. The criteria for a New Testament book was that it:
 - a. Had to have been written by an apostle or someone closely associated with an apostle.
 - b. Had to be generally recognized by the leaders of the church of that time to be doctrinally correct.

B. **Prophets** (προφήτης) = interpreters & proclaimers of the divine will or message.

1. In the Bible they were given messages directly from God.
2. The prophets of the Old Testament.
3. Agabus was a New Testament prophet.
 - a. He provided warnings. **Act 21:11** - Coming over to us, he took Paul's belt, tied his own hands and feet with it and said, "The Holy Spirit says, 'In this way the Jews of Jerusalem will bind the owner of this belt and will hand him over to the Gentiles.'"

- b. He foretold the future. **Act 11:27-28** - During this time some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. One of them, named Agabus, stood up and through the Spirit predicted that a severe famine would spread over the entire Roman world.
- 4. Philip's daughters were female prophets. (**Act 21:8-9**)
- 5. Not much is mentioned about prophets after the 1st Century although some have claimed that gift throughout history.
- C. **Evangelists** (εὐαγγελιστής) = the bringers of good news, gospel proclaimers.
 - 1. Originally these were Syrian couriers who brought news of victory from the battlefield.
 - 2. Timothy & Philip were New Testament evangelists. (**II Tim 4:5 & Act 21:8**).
 - 3. Today these people are preachers.
- D. **Pastor/Teachers** = the New Testament elder or bishop.
 - 1. They were the pastors, those who supervised the needs of the saints (**I Pet 5:1-2**).
 - 2. They were the teachers instructing the saints (**I Tim 5:17**).
 - 3. Today they are our primary pastors & teachers.
- E. **v12** - Who are the saints, **God's people**? You!

II. v12-16 - God Gave the Church a Mission

- A. **v12** - What do the leaders do?
 - 1. The leader's mission - to thoroughly prepare the saints for their ministries. The saints, then, do the ministry!
 - 2. This is where fulfillment, purpose & meaning come into your Christian life.
 - 3. This is the abundant life!
- B. **v12** - What do the saints do?
 - 1. You **build up the body of Christ**.
 - 2. You do this by nourishing one another - providing spiritual growth.
 - 3. You do this by witnessing to non believers - providing numerical growth.
- C. **v13** - How long are the saints to build up the body?
 - 1. Until a **unity of faith** is obtained.
 - 2. Until a **full knowledge of the Lord** is obtained.
 - 3. Until a **maturity in Christ** is obtained.
- D. The goals.
 - 1. **Phil 2:5**. To have the mind of Christ.
 - 2. To conduct yourselves so others can see the Lord Jesus in you.
 - 3. **v14** - To be grounded enough in biblical teaching to recognize false teachings.
 - 4. **v15-16** - To develop a genuine love for the Lord & His authority over you.

You need to take what the Lord has provided for you.
Function the way the Lord planned for you.
Then, glorify Him the way He wants you to glorify Him!