

How Did God Design His Church to Function?

Ephesians 4:11-16

¹ How did God design His church to function? Ephesians, chapter 4, verses 11 through 16 tell us. ²

It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up 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. ¹ ³

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 men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting

¹ Ephesians 4:11-13.

ligament, grows, and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.²

God not only tailor made you, but He also tailor made His church! ⁴ Verse 7 states, **But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it**. He gave us what we needed to accomplish His mission.⁵

So, what did the Lord give us and why? ⁶ First . . .

I. God Gave the Church Leadership - v11

God gave the church leadership.

Verse 11 says, **It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers**.⁷

The first leaders He provided were the apostles. **Apostle**,³ in the original language, simply meant those who were sent forth on a mission. Today we would call them missionaries.⁸

² Ephesians 4:14-16.

³ ἀπόστολος.

They were, originally, the twelve who had been hand picked by the Lord, ⁴ had been with Him through His ministry and had witnessed His resurrection. ⁵ ₉

An apostle had to perform miracles as proof of his position. Second Corinthians, chapter 12, verse 12 says, **The things that mark an apostle — signs, wonders and miracles — were done among you with great perseverance.**

Later others, besides the twelve, were also called apostles. ₁₀

Romans, chapter 1, verse 1, **Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God ...** ₁₁

Acts, chapter 14, verse 14, **But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of this, they tore their clothes and rushed out into the crowd . . .** ₁₂

⁴ Luke 6:13 - When morning came, he called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them, whom he also designated apostles . . .

⁵ Acts 1:21-22 - Therefore it is necessary to choose one of the men who have been with us the whole time the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from John's baptism to the time when Jesus was taken up from us. For one of these must become a witness with us of his resurrection."

Romans, chapter 16, verse 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.** ¹³

Galatians, chapter 1, verse 19, **I saw none of the other apostles — only James, the Lord's brother.** ¹⁴

These people eventually died and left no successors. They left no successors because no one else fit the requirements of Second Corinthians, chapter 12, verse 12, **The things that mark an apostle — signs, wonders and miracles . . .** Their purpose was fulfilled; to get the church started and provide it with direction until the New Testament portion of our Bible appeared. ¹⁵ The New Testament provides direction for the church today. ¹⁶

The criteria for a New Testament book was that it had to have been written by an apostle or someone closely associated with an apostle. ¹⁷ It had to, also, be generally recognized by the leaders of the church of that time to be doctrinally correct. ¹⁸

The second type of leader the Lord provided were the prophets. **Prophets**, ⁶ were interpreters and proclaimers of the divine will or message. ¹⁹

In the Bible, they were given messages directly from God. ²⁰ Many of the books of the Old Testament were written by prophets who recorded what God directly revealed to them. ²¹

There were prophets in the New Testament as well. **Agabus** was one of them. ²² He provided warnings to the Apostle Paul ⁷ and foretold the future. ⁸ ²³ **Philip's daughters** were female prophets. ⁹

Not much is mentioned about prophets after the first century neither in Christian nor secular literature,

⁶ προφήτης.

⁷ Acts 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.'"

⁸ Acts 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.

⁹ Acts 21:8-9 - Leaving the next day, we reached Caesarea and stayed at the house of Philip the evangelist, one of the Seven. He had four unmarried daughters who prophesied.

even though some have claimed that gift throughout history. ²⁴

The third type of leaders the Lord provided were the evangelists. **Evangelists**, ¹⁰ were the bringers of the good news; literally the “gospel proclaimers”. ²⁵

The history of this word springs from ancient Syria. Military couriers would travel from the battlefield to bring the good news of victory to the king. ²⁶ Timothy ¹¹ and ²⁷ Philip ¹² were New Testament evangelists! ²⁸ We call them preachers today! ²⁹

The fourth type of leader the Lord provided were the **pastor/teachers**; the elder or bishop. What did they do? ³⁰

¹⁰ εὐαγγελιστής.

¹¹ II Timothy 4:5 - But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.

¹² Acts 21:8 - Leaving the next day, we reached Caesarea and stayed at the house of Philip the evangelist, one of the Seven.

They were the pastors; those who supervised the needs of the saints.¹³ ³¹ They were the teachers instructing the saints.¹⁴ ³²

So, who are the saints? ¹⁵ God's people. You! Verse 12, . . . to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up . . . ³³

So, God has not only provided us with the right leadership to give us direction, but, in verses 12 through 16 . . .

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

God gave the church a mission. ³⁴

What do the leaders do? Verse 12 tells us the leader's mission; to thoroughly prepare the saints for their ministries.¹⁶ The saints, then, do the ministry! This is where fulfillment, purpose and meaning come into

¹³ | Peter 5:1-2 - To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ's sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed: Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers . . .

¹⁴ | Timothy 5:17 - The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching.

¹⁵ ἅγιος.

¹⁶ Ephesians 4:12 - . . . to prepare God's people for works of service . . .

your Christian life. This is part of that abundant life Lord Jesus talked about. ³⁵

What do the saints do? Verse 12 says **you are to build up the body of Christ.** ¹⁷ ³⁶ You do this by nourishing one another providing spiritual growth. ³⁷ You do this by witnessing to non-believers providing numerical growth.

How long are the saints to build up the body? ³⁸ Verse 13 says three things; until a unity of faith is obtained, ¹⁸ ³⁹ until a full knowledge of the Lord is obtained, ¹⁹ ⁴⁰ and until a maturity in Christ is obtained. ²⁰ ⁴¹

Here are the goals! Philippians, chapter 2, verse 5, **Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus . . .** First is to have the mind of Christ. ⁴² Conduct yourself so others can see the Lord Jesus in you! ⁴³

¹⁷ Ephesians 4:12 - . . . so that the body of Christ may be built up . . .

¹⁸ Ephesians 4:13 - . . . until we all reach unity in the faith . . .

¹⁹ Ephesians 4:13 - . . . the knowledge of the Son of God . . .

²⁰ Ephesians 4:13 - . . . become mature . . .

Then, in verse 14, to be grounded enough in biblical teaching to recognize false teaching. **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 men in their deceitful scheming.** ⁴⁴

Finally, in verses 15 and 16, to develop a genuine love for the Lord and His authority over you. ²¹ ⁴⁵

You need to take what the Lord has provided for you. You need to function the way the Lord planned for you.

Then, glorify Him the way He wants you to glorify Him!

<http://www.biblelifemessages.org>

²¹ Ephesians 4:15-16 - Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. 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.