

Scripture highlights specific ministries that God has given to the church through spiritually gifted people.

Ephesians 4:11-13 (NKJV)

11 And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, 13 till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

This is commonly referred to as the ‘fivefold ministry’ of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. What is the purpose of the fivefold ministry?

How long will we have the fivefold ministry gifts for the church?

Why do you think God highlights the roles of these five ministries with regard to establishing and expanding the church?

How does the fivefold ministry encourage unity?

Ephesians 3:5 (NKJV)

which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets.

1 Corinthians 12:28 (NKJV)

And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues.

Ephesians 2:20 (NKJV)

having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone

Why does it say that the apostles and prophets were the foundation of the church with Jesus Christ being the cornerstone?

Romans 1:1-5 (NKJV)

1 Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God 2 which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, 3 concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, 4 and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead. 5 Through Him we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations for His name.

2 Corinthians 10:13 (NKJV)

We, however, will not boast beyond measure, but within the limits of the sphere which God appointed us—a sphere which especially includes you.

APOSTLE:

Acts 14:14 (NKJV)

But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard this, they tore their clothes and ran in among the multitude, crying out

2 Corinthians 12:12 (NASB)

The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with all perseverance, by signs and wonders and miracles.

With so many people calling themselves apostle today, we need to be careful and know just how to distinguish between a true and false apostle. We will look at 5 “signs” or marks of a true apostle.

Read the following passages and discuss some of the responsibilities of an apostle.

Romans 15:20 (NKJV)

And so I have made it my aim to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build on another man's foundation

1. An apostle will _____

1 Corinthians 3:6,10 (NKJV)

6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase.

10 According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it.

2. An apostle will start churches by _____

Titus 1:5 (NASB)

For this reason I left you in Crete, that you would set in order what remains and appoint (ordain) elders in every city as I directed you

3. An apostle will _____

1 Corinthians 9:2 (NKJV)

If I am not an apostle to others, yet doubtless I am to you. For you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.

1 Corinthians 4:15 (NKJV)

For though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet you do not have many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.

4. An apostle will _____

1 Corinthians 9:9-12 (NKJV)

9 For it is written in the law of Moses, "You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain." Is it oxen God is concerned about? 10 Or does He say it altogether for our sakes? For

our sakes, no doubt, this is written, that he who plows should plow in hope, and he who threshes in hope should be partaker of his hope. 11 If we have sown spiritual things for you, is it a great thing if we reap your material things? 12 If others are partakers of this right over you, are we not even more?

5. An apostle is to be _____

Are apostles in a place of authority over others in the body of Christ?

The role of apostle has largely been misunderstood in our present culture. Are there any people you can identify as fulfilling the role of apostle today?

What happened when Paul died and they no longer had him as their apostle for their church? Did they find someone else to be an apostle? Would it still be needed?

Note: Be careful of teaching that promotes the restoration of the authority of apostles over already established churches. This is a dangerous false teaching that promotes control over churches and their leaders. Stay away from such teaching and note those who teach such things.

Why do you think the role of apostle is so important in scripture?

What might we miss by not having apostles in the world today?

- The gospel will not reach the unreached as effectively
- Churches will not be planted in many new areas.
- Church leaders will not be appointed in many new areas where it is lacking.
- Churches in newly reached areas will not get the support they may desperately need.

PROPHET:

A prophet holds no authority yet speaks directly to the church with the word of God when it has been given to them.

What is the role of a prophet?

Read the following passages and discuss some of the responsibilities of a prophet.

Jeremiah 1:7 (ESV)

to all to whom I send you, you shall go, and whatever I command you, you shall speak.

Deuteronomy 18:18 (ESV)

I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. And I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him.

1. A prophet _____

2 Chronicles 24:19 (NKJV)

Yet He sent prophets to them, to bring them back to the Lord; and they testified against them, but they would not listen.

Jeremiah 7:1,3 (NKJV)

1 The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying... 3 Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: "Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place.

2. A prophet may _____

Acts 11:27-28 (NKJV)

27 And in these days prophets came from Jerusalem to Antioch.

28 Then one of them, named Agabus, stood up and showed by the Spirit that there was going to be a great famine throughout all the world, which also happened in the days of Claudius Caesar.

Acts 21:10-11 (NKJV)

And as we stayed many days, a certain prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. 11 When he had come to us, he took Paul's belt, bound his own hands and feet, and said, "Thus says the Holy Spirit, 'So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man who owns this belt, and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.'"

3. A prophet proclaims _____

How can you know if a prophet is trustworthy?

Deuteronomy 18:21-22 (NKJV)

21 And if you say in your heart, 'How shall we know the word which the Lord has not spoken?'—

22 when a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing does not happen or come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him.

A prophet's words MUST be consistent with scripture and be accurate 100% in its fulfillment.

1 Corinthians 14:29 (NKJV)

Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others judge.

1 Thessalonians 5:21 (NKJV)

Test all things; hold fast what is good.

1 John 4:1 (NKJV)

Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

What are we as the church supposed to do with prophecy when we hear it?

What are we supposed to do with prophecies that don't come to pass?

Why is God so serious about false prophets and false prophecies?

The following verse occurs in the middle of a discussion about orderly worship in a church.

1 Corinthians 14:29-33 (NKJV)

29 Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others judge. 30 But if anything is revealed to another who sits by, let the first keep silent. 31 For you can all prophesy one by one, that all may learn and all may be encouraged. 32 And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. 33 For God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.

Why might God want to send a specific message to a church?

In what ways would true godly prophecy strengthen the church?

Prophets are the only ones of the five fold ministry that are not to be paid for what they do. Why?

EVANGELIST:

What is an evangelist?

Acts 21:8 (NKJV)

On the next day we who were Paul's companions departed and came to Caesarea, and entered the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, and stayed with him.

Why do you think the role of an evangelist is listed as one of the five fold ministries of the body of Christ?

Is their work inside or outside the church?

How are they connected to the church? Or multiple churches?

2 Timothy 4:5 (NKJV)

But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

What did Paul mean by saying “do the work of an evangelist”?

How have pastors and the churches been taking over for the evangelists?

Are we perhaps limiting someone who is gifted as an evangelist by doing these things outside our calling?

Where does an evangelist fit in with pay and church authority?

What will happen to a church that ignores the calling of the evangelist?

PASTOR:

We will cover this in the next lesson, "church offices".

TEACHER:

What is the job of a teacher?

Where does a teacher fit in with pay and church authority?

Too often pastors take over the role of a teacher when a church can support a teacher. This can often lead to pastoral burn out when it is unnecessary. If the church can support a teacher, this allows the pastor to focus on shepherding duties and the teacher to focus on teaching.

James 3:1 (ESV)

Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness.

Why do you think teachers (and all ministers of the gospel) will be held so accountable?