COGMA

Church of God Mission Academy

STUDY GUIDE 47

4 OF 5

The Gifts & Offices in the New Testament

STUDY GUIDE 4 OF 5:

The Offices of the Church

An overview of Christ-given ministries serving and strengthening His Church.



Equipping and empowering for effective service

2 Timothy 2:2

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE STUDENT

My Study Plan

Preparing a Study Plan before starting this Study Guide will assist you in completing it within a designated timeframe. It also helps in developing the discipline required for studying God's Word effectively.

Proverbs 16:3:

> *Commit thy works unto the LORD, and thy thoughts shall be established.*

My Study Guide Journal

Keep a record as you progress through your Study Guide, including the Personal Responses for each section, for future reference and goal setting.

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Important Points

- COGMA does not claim to be infallible or the authority.
- Infallibility and authority belong only to God and His Word.

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PREFACE

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Jesus Christ is the Head of His Church. Every ministry, responsibility and office within the body exists under His authority and for the service of His people.

Paul wrote in **Ephesians 4:11-12**:

> *"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:"*

These ministries were given by Christ. They did not originate through human organisation, religious tradition or the desire of individuals to hold positions of authority. Christ gives different responsibilities within His body according to His purpose.

The New Testament does not present an office as a position of spiritual superiority. An office describes a responsibility or function of service. Some believers are called to carry particular responsibilities within the Church, but those responsibilities do not create a higher spiritual class separated from the rest of the body.

Paul wrote in **Romans 12:4**:

> *"For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office:"*

The members differ in function, but they remain members of one body under one Head. Jesus Christ does not divide His Church into spiritually superior leaders and inferior believers. He works through different members according to the responsibility He has entrusted to them.

Paul also wrote in **1 Corinthians 12:28**:

> *"And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues."*

Notice the words *"God hath set."* The order and ministry of the Church come from God. Human ambition does not create a genuine office. Religious titles have no place within the body of Christ because ministry terms describe functions of service rather than titles of rank or honour.

The purpose of ministry is service. Christ gives offices so that His people may be equipped, strengthened, edified and protected from spiritual instability. Ministry should help the members of the body fulfil the work Christ has given them rather than make them dependent upon a religious hierarchy.

Every office must therefore remain under the headship of Jesus Christ. It must be governed by His Word and expressed through His life within the believer.

The offices of the Church are functions of service given by Jesus Christ for the strengthening, equipping and edification of His body.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why did Jesus give offices of service to strengthen and equip His Church?

Personal Reflection

When looking at a ministry office, do you value the work done for people or the status attached to the person?

Action Step

Identify a leader's genuine service and explain how you will respond with respect for the work rather than admiration of rank.

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Jesus Christ has placed both gifts and ministries within His Church. Spiritual gifts describe different operations of the Spirit through the members of the body, while ministry offices describe continuing responsibilities through which particular believers serve, lead, equip and strengthen others.

Paul wrote in **Ephesians 4:11**:

> *"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;"*

The words *"he gave"* are important. These ministries belong to Christ's provision for His Church. They are not positions that people create for themselves through ambition, education, popularity or religious appointment alone.

Not every believer carries the same responsibility within the body. A believer may be used through spiritual gifts without being called to a particular ministry office. In the same way, those who carry recognised ministry responsibilities remain members of the same body and remain dependent upon Jesus Christ as their Head.

Paul wrote in **Romans 12:4-7**:

> *"For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching;"*

Paul connects different functions with one body. The members do not all have the same office, but their differing responsibilities do not divide them into separate spiritual classes. They remain *"one body in Christ."*

This distinction is necessary because religious leadership has often been treated as rank rather than service. Religious titles must not be used within the body of Christ. They create distinctions of religious rank that are contrary to Christ's teaching that His people are brethren and can contribute to the false separation of clergy from laity.

That is not the pattern established by Jesus Christ.

Jesus said in **Matthew 20:25-28**:

> *"But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."*

Jesus deliberately contrasted the government of His people with worldly authority. Leadership within His Church is not to be built upon domination, status or personal importance. The greater responsibility a believer carries, the greater the obligation to serve.

This does not mean that the Church has no leadership, order or government. Scripture clearly recognises ministry, teaching, ruling, governments and differing responsibilities. The issue is not whether leadership exists, but how that leadership operates and under whose authority it remains.

Jesus Christ remains the Head, and those whom He calls to ministry serve beneath His authority. They serve through His life within and for the benefit of His people.

This Study Guide will therefore examine the meaning and purpose of ministry offices, the work of equipping and edifying the saints, biblical ruling and government, and the responsibility of every member to contribute to the life of the body.

The Church needs order, leadership and ministry, but all of it must remain under the headship of Jesus Christ and operate through service rather than spiritual rank.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How can the Church have order and leadership while remaining under Christ's headship?

Personal Reflection

Have you accepted a leadership practice because it is traditional or impressive, without considering whether it serves Christ's people?

Action Step

Examine that practice by Jesus' teaching and state what needs to change in your attitude towards godly leadership.

CHRIST GIVES MINISTRY TO HIS CHURCH

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Ministry in the Church begins with Jesus Christ. He is the Head of the body, and He appoints different members to different responsibilities according to His purpose.

Paul wrote in **Ephesians 4:11-12**:

> *"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:"*

The words *"he gave"* establish the source of ministry. These offices are not created by human ambition, religious institutions or personal desire. They are part of Christ's provision for His Church. A genuine ministry therefore begins with His calling and remains under His authority.

Christ Remains the Head

Every office must be understood within the one body of Christ. Paul wrote in **Colossians 1:18**:

> *"And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence."*

Jesus Christ does not surrender His headship to those whom He calls to serve. A minister may carry significant responsibility, but that responsibility never places the person between Christ and His people as another spiritual head. The authority of genuine ministry remains derived from Christ and subject to His Word. The office serves the Head; it does not replace Him.

Paul expressed the same principle when describing the placement of members within the body. He wrote in **1 Corinthians 12:18**:

> *"But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him."*

The placement belongs to God. A person should not appoint themselves to ministry simply because they desire recognition or believe they possess ability. Spiritual ambition is not the same as divine calling.

Paul later wrote in **1 Corinthians 12:28**:

> *"And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues."*

Again the wording is direct: *"God hath set."* The Church is therefore not free to redefine ministry according to human ideas of status, popularity or organisational power. Christ determines the responsibilities required within His body.

Gifts and Offices Are Not the Same

Spiritual gifts and ministry offices are closely related, but they should not automatically be treated as identical. A spiritual gift describes an operation of the Spirit through a believer, while an office involves a recognised and continuing responsibility of service within the body.

Paul wrote in **Romans 12:4-6**:

> *"For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith;"*

Paul speaks both of differing functions and differing gifts. A believer may teach without automatically holding a recognised office of teacher. Another may prophesy without that gift alone establishing the ministry of a prophet. A person may exhort, show mercy or help others without occupying a formal office.

The gift describes how the Spirit works through the member, while the office describes a continuing responsibility Christ has entrusted within His body. This distinction also guards against spiritual ambition. Possessing a gift does not give a person the right to appoint themselves to leadership.

A believer should not reason, *"I can teach, therefore I must hold authority,"* or, *"I have exercised a spiritual gift, therefore the Church must recognise me as a minister."* The gift is given for service, not personal advancement.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why is ministry given for service rather than personal advancement?

Personal Reflection

Where have you desired a ministry title or recognition more than the responsibility to serve others?

Action Step

Identify that motive and choose a useful responsibility you can carry without expecting a title or public praise.

Ministry Is a Call to Responsibility

Paul described his own ministry as something entrusted to him. He wrote in **Romans 11:13**:

> *"For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office:"*

The word translated *"office"* here carries the thought of ministry or service. Paul's apostleship was not a religious title attached to his name. It described a responsibility he had been called to fulfil, and that responsibility required labour, sacrifice and faithfulness.

Paul also wrote in **1 Corinthians 9:16-17**:

> *"For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel! For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me."*

Paul understood ministry as something *"committed unto me."* This is the proper spirit of office. It is not something possessed for honour; it is something entrusted for service.

The equality of believers in Christ does not mean that everyone performs the same function. Paul wrote in **Romans 12:4**:

> *"For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office:"*

Some are called to preach, some teach, some oversee, some evangelise, and some carry other forms of ministry and service. Difference of function does not create difference of spiritual worth. Every born-again believer belongs to Christ, possesses the Spirit of Christ and is complete in Him. Ministry responsibility concerns service within the body, not a higher level of salvation or spirituality.

Christ Works Through Those He Calls

A ministry office does not give a believer independent spiritual ability that can operate apart from Christ. Paul wrote in **2 Corinthians 3:5**:

> *"Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God;"*

Training, experience and natural ability may be useful, but none of them can replace the life and direction of Christ within. A person may carry an office, yet still be spiritually ineffective if they attempt to operate independently of Him. The effectiveness of genuine ministry depends upon Christ.

The office also never exists primarily for the benefit of the person carrying it. Ephesians 4 states that ministries are given *"for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ."* The direction is outward.

The minister serves the saints, the saints are equipped for service, and the body is edified. Everything returns to the purpose of Christ for His Church.

Jesus Christ gives ministry to His Church, appointing different members to continuing responsibilities of service so that His body may be equipped, strengthened and edified under His headship.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why should the Church look to Christ rather than to a minister as the source of ministry?

Personal Reflection

Have you looked to a minister to give what only Jesus Christ can supply within His people?

Action Step

Name that expectation, bring it under the truth of Christ's headship, and explain how you will honour ministry without making it your spiritual source.

OFFICES ARE FUNCTIONS OF SERVICE

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The word 'office' must not be understood as a religious title or spiritual rank. In the New Testament, an office describes what a person does in service to Christ and His body.

An office describes a responsibility, function or continuing area of ministry. It identifies work to be done rather than status to be displayed.

The New Testament Emphasises Function

Paul wrote in **Romans 11:13**:

> *"For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office:"*

The word translated *"office"* here is DIAKONIA. It carries the thought of service or ministry. Paul was not magnifying himself, but recognising the importance of the ministry Christ had entrusted to him among the Gentiles. His office was defined by service.

Paul wrote again in **Romans 12:4**:

> *"For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office:"*

Here the word translated *"office"* is PRAXIS. It carries the thought of a deed, action or function. The emphasis is upon what the member does within the body.

This same principle can be seen in the language used of the Old Testament priesthood. Luke wrote in **Luke 1:8**:

> *"And it came to pass, that while he executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course,"*

The emphasis is upon the work being performed. The priest *"executed the priest's office,"* and the office existed because there was a responsibility to fulfil.

The New Testament continues this functional emphasis when speaking of bishops and deacons. Paul wrote in **1 Timothy 3:1**:

> *"This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work."*

Paul immediately describes the office as *"a good work."* A bishop or overseer is therefore not being invited to seek personal honour. The person is considering a demanding responsibility of care, oversight and service within the Church.

Paul also wrote in **1 Timothy 3:10**:

> *"And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless."*

The word connected with deacon carries the thought of serving or ministering. Whether Scripture speaks of apostleship, overseership, deaconship or another recognised ministry, the same principle remains: the office is understood by the work and service connected with it.

An Office Is a Continuing Responsibility

A spiritual gift may operate on a particular occasion, while an office normally involves a continuing responsibility within the body. A believer may teach at times without carrying a recognised ministry responsibility as a teacher. Another may exhort, show mercy or help others without occupying a formal office.

An office involves an established area of service that the believer repeatedly and faithfully fulfils. This is why character, faithfulness and responsibility matter so greatly in ministry. The work is not a temporary display of ability, but continuing service.

Paul's own language demonstrates this clearly. Paul wrote in **Romans 1:1**:

> *"Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God,"*

Paul first described himself as *"a servant of Jesus Christ."* He was then *"called to be an apostle."* His apostleship described the responsibility Christ had entrusted to him, while his fundamental position remained that of a servant.

This distinction is important. Ministry should never become a person's spiritual identity in a way that elevates them above the rest of the body. The person remains a servant of Jesus Christ. The function identifies the work, but it does not exalt the worker.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why should a ministry office never become a person's spiritual identity or higher status?

Personal Reflection

Have you shown greater respect for someone's office than for their place as a brother or sister in Christ?

Action Step

Examine the way you speak to and about leaders, and change one habit that gives status more importance than shared life in Christ.

Service Does Not Remove Responsibility

Calling an office a function of service does not mean that ministry carries no authority or responsibility. An overseer must oversee, a teacher must teach faithfully, a pastor must care for the flock, and those who rule must do so diligently.

Service and responsibility belong together. The difference is that biblical authority is exercised beneath Christ rather than independently of Him. The minister does not become the source of truth, spiritual life or authority. Jesus Christ remains the source.

This also means that differing responsibilities within the body do not create different levels of spiritual worth. Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 12:14-18**:

> *"For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him."*

The members differ, but all belong to the same body. One member may carry greater responsibility in a particular area, but that does not make the person more complete in Christ or spiritually superior to another born-again believer.

Every believer possesses the same Christ. The difference concerns function, not salvation or spiritual worth.

The Office Exists for the Body

The New Testament repeatedly directs attention away from the status of the minister and towards the needs of the Church. Paul wrote in **Philippians 2:3-5**:

> *"Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:"*

Ministry cannot be separated from humility. If an office becomes a means of seeking recognition, control or personal importance, its purpose has been distorted. The life of Jesus Christ within must govern both the responsibility and the manner in which that responsibility is fulfilled.

An office exists because the body needs to be taught, cared for, protected, guided, strengthened and equipped. The person carrying the office becomes a servant through whom Christ supplies what His body needs. That is the proper way to understand ministry responsibility.

The office belongs to the work of the body, not to the personal importance of the individual.

A New Testament office is a continuing function of service and responsibility within the body of Christ. It identifies the work Christ has entrusted to a believer. Ministry functions are never religious titles or ranks of spiritual superiority.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why does faithful service matter more than a ministry title when recognising a Church office?

Personal Reflection

When you hear an office named, do you think first about duties carried or honour received?

Action Step

Choose one office and explain what evidence of faithful service should matter more to you than the title.

THE PURPOSE OF THE MINISTRY OFFICES

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Paul does more than name the ministry offices in Ephesians chapter 4. He also explains why Jesus Christ gave them to His Church.

Paul wrote in **Ephesians 4:11-16**:

> *"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."*

These verses give a complete picture of the purpose of ministry. The offices do not exist to create positions of honour or spiritual rank. Christ gives them so that His people may be equipped for service, the body may be built up, believers may grow in unity and maturity, and the Church may remain stable in truth. Everything remains centred upon Jesus Christ.

Equipping and Building the Body

Paul first says that the offices are given *"for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ."* The word translated *"perfecting"* carries the thought of equipping, preparing or bringing into a condition of fitness for service.

This does not mean that believers are incomplete in salvation until ministers add something to them. Paul wrote in **Colossians 2:10**:

> *"And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:"*

The believer is already complete in Jesus Christ. Ministry therefore does not complete salvation. It equips saved people to understand the truth more clearly, serve more faithfully and fulfil their responsibilities within the body.

Paul also speaks of *"the work of the ministry."* The word *"ministry"* is DIAKONIA, carrying the thought of service. This means that ministry is not limited to those who hold recognised offices. The offices themselves serve, but they also help equip the wider body to serve.

Paul wrote in **2 Corinthians 5:18**:

> *"And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;"*

Every believer has a responsibility to serve Christ according to the place and opportunity God has given. The offices therefore do not exist so that a small group performs all ministry while the rest of the Church remains passive. They help prepare the members to function.

Paul then speaks of *"the edifying of the body of Christ."* To edify means to build up. The Church is already the body of Christ, composed of those who are born again. Ministry does not create the body, but strengthens, instructs and builds up those who already belong to Christ.

Different offices contribute in different ways. Apostolic ministry can establish and strengthen works, prophetic ministry can bring warning, exhortation and clarity, evangelistic ministry carries the Gospel outward, pastoral ministry cares for and protects the flock, and teaching ministry establishes believers in the truth of Scripture. The functions differ, but the purpose is the same: the strengthening of Christ's body.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why should the Church receive different kinds of ministry rather than expect one leader to meet every need?

Personal Reflection

Have you expected one minister to meet every need while overlooking other ways Christ supplies His body?

Action Step

Identify that expectation and show appreciation for two different kinds of ministry without ranking one above the other.

Unity and the Knowledge of Christ

Paul continues with the words *"Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God."* Ministry should contribute to unity in the truth. This unity is not produced by ignoring doctrine or by imposing outward organisational conformity. It grows as believers are brought into clearer understanding of Jesus Christ and His Word.

Paul warned the Corinthians against dividing themselves around human personalities. He wrote in **1 Corinthians 1:12-13**:

> *"Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?"*

Ministers must not become centres around which believers form competing groups. Christ is the centre, and ministries should work together in harmony, teaching and preaching the same truth from Scripture rather than building separate loyalties around personalities.

Paul also speaks of *"the knowledge of the Son of God."* The Greek word EPIGNOSIS carries the thought of fuller knowledge or discernment. Ministry should therefore deepen the believer's understanding of Jesus Christ.

A ministry that continually draws attention towards the minister rather than Christ has lost its proper direction. The purpose of teaching, preaching, pastoral care and spiritual oversight is not to create dependence upon a personality, but to help believers know Christ more clearly through the truth of His Word. The goal is not greater knowledge of the minister. It is greater knowledge of the Son of God.

Maturity and Stability in Truth

Paul continues with the words *"Unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."* The word *"perfect"* here carries the thought of maturity. This is different from completeness in salvation.

A believer is complete in Christ at the new birth, yet that believer still grows in understanding, wisdom, discernment and responsibility. Spiritual maturity means becoming increasingly stable in truth and effective in service.

Paul then explains one of the results of that maturity with the words *"That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine."* Spiritual immaturity makes believers vulnerable to instability. They may follow a new teaching, be carried by a persuasive personality or accept a dramatic claim without careful examination. Sound ministry helps believers become settled in the truth.

Paul also warns of *"the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive."* Not every religious teaching is harmless. Some error comes through ignorance, while other deception is deliberate.

The ministry of the Church therefore has a protective function. Sound teaching, pastoral care, prophetic warning and spiritual oversight help protect believers from confusion and false doctrine. This protection does not mean that believers surrender their personal responsibility

to examine Scripture. Genuine ministry should teach people to stand in truth, not make them dependent upon a leader to think for them.

Paul then gives the positive alternative: *"But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ."* Truth and love belong together. Truth without love can become harsh, while love without truth can become compromising.

Jesus Christ supplies both. Paul says believers are to *"grow up into him in all things."* The direction of growth and the goal of ministry is Christ.

Every Joint Supplies

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Paul concludes these verses by describing the whole body with the words *"From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth."* This prevents the ministry offices from becoming the whole Church. The offices are important, but every member also has a part.

Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 12:22**:

> *"Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary:"*

No member is unimportant. Some may preach, teach, encourage, give or help, while others carry recognised ministry responsibilities or serve in quieter ways. The operation differs, but the same Christ works through His body.

Paul says the body grows *"according to the effectual working in the measure of every part."* Every part has a measure, and every part has a contribution. The ministry offices therefore do not replace the members. They help equip and strengthen the members so that the whole body can function.

Ministry Produces Participation, Not Passivity

The purpose of ministry is not to create spectators. It should equip believers to participate in the life and work of the body. A healthy ministry does not say, *"Leave everything to us."* It helps every member recognise and faithfully fulfil the place God has given them.

Paul's picture is of a living body in which the Head supplies direction, the ministries serve, the members contribute and the body is edified in love. The ministers do not replace the body. They help the body function under Christ.

Christ Remains the Purpose and the Source

Every purpose described in Ephesians 4 finally returns to Jesus Christ. The saints are equipped to serve Him, the body is edified in Him, unity centres upon Him, maturity is growth in Him, and protection from false doctrine keeps believers faithful to Him.

Truth is spoken in His love, and every joint receives its supply from Him. Ministry begins with Christ, operates under Christ and serves the body that belongs to Christ.

Jesus Christ gives ministry offices so that His people may be equipped for service, strengthened in truth, brought into greater unity and maturity, protected from deception, and enabled to fulfil their place within His body under His headship.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How do ministry offices equip God's people for service?

Personal Reflection

What work have you left to a minister even though Christ has given you an opportunity to help?

Action Step

Recognise what has held you back and put one part of the teaching you have received into service for another believer.

PERFECTING MEANS EQUIPPING THE SAINTS

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When Paul explains why Jesus Christ gave ministry offices to the Church, his first statement is *"for the perfecting of the saints."* This expression must be understood carefully because Scripture also teaches that every born-again believer is already complete in Jesus Christ.

Paul wrote in **Ephesians 4:11-12**:

> *"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:"*

The word translated *"perfecting"* is KATARTISMOS. It carries the thought of preparing, equipping or bringing someone into a condition of fitness for a particular purpose. Paul is therefore speaking about preparing believers for effective spiritual service.

Complete in Christ, Yet Growing in Maturity

The word *"perfecting"* must not be interpreted as though salvation is incomplete at the new birth.

Paul wrote in **Colossians 2:9-10**:

> *"For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:"*

The believer is *"complete in him."* Nothing needs to be added to Jesus Christ in order to complete salvation. No ministry office, later spiritual experience, religious ceremony or human teacher supplies a missing part of Christ.

Complete means complete.

At the same time, being complete in Christ does not mean that a believer immediately possesses complete knowledge, wisdom or experience. A person can be fully born again and still need instruction, correction, encouragement and growth.

Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 3:1-2**:

> *"And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able."*

They were *"in Christ,"* yet Paul described them as babes. Their problem was not that they lacked Christ, but that they needed growth and maturity. This distinction is essential because completeness belongs to salvation in Christ, while maturity concerns growth in understanding, discernment, responsibility and faithful service.

Equipped for Service

This is where the ministry offices serve the body. Christ gives different ministries so that believers may receive teaching, guidance, exhortation, care and spiritual instruction. Through these ministries, believers learn how to function faithfully in the place God has given them.

The ministry does not give them spiritual life because Jesus Christ has already given that life. Ministry helps them understand how to live, serve and function from the life they already possess in Him.

The ministries listed in Ephesians 4 do not all perform the same work. Apostolic ministry helps extend and establish the Gospel, prophetic ministry can bring warning, instruction and spiritual clarity, and evangelistic ministry directs people towards salvation in Jesus Christ and keeps the Gospel moving outward.

Pastoral ministry cares for, feeds and protects the flock, while teaching ministry explains and establishes the truth of Scripture. These functions complement one another. The detailed work of each office will be considered separately, but the important point here is that Christ provides different ministries because the body has different needs. The purpose is preparation for service, not dependence upon personalities.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How do pastoral care and teaching serve different needs in the flock?

Personal Reflection

Have you valued teaching above pastoral care, or pastoral care above sound teaching, without recognising the need for both?

Action Step

Identify your imbalance and explain how you will receive and support both kinds of ministry for the health of the Church.

From Receiving to Serving

Good ministry prepares people to function. A teacher should help believers understand Scripture rather than make them believe they can never understand anything without the teacher. A pastor should strengthen believers in Christ rather than make them dependent upon the pastor's personality. An evangelist should direct people towards Jesus Christ rather than towards the evangelist.

Ministry succeeds when the members become stronger in their own service to Christ. The writer of Hebrews rebuked believers who had remained dependent upon elementary instruction for too long.

The writer of Hebrews wrote in **Hebrews 5:12-14**:

> *"For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."*

They should have progressed from needing continual elementary instruction to being able to help instruct others. Maturity moves the believer from only receiving towards also serving. **Ephesians 4:12** connects *"the perfecting of the saints"* directly with *"the work of the ministry."* The saints are equipped so that ministry can take place throughout the body.

This prevents the Church from becoming divided into a small group that ministers and a large group that only receives. Every believer has a place and can serve according to the function Christ has given. The offices help prepare and strengthen the members so that the whole body can function.

Christ Within Remains the Source

Equipping must never become an external programme for trying to make believers copy Jesus through human effort. Jesus Christ already dwells within every born-again believer, and His life within is the source of spiritual service.

Paul wrote in **Galatians 2:20**:

> *"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."*

Paul's service did not originate from an attempt to imitate Christ externally. Christ lived within him, and the same principle governs every born-again believer. Ministry helps the believer understand His Word, recognise His direction and faithfully express the life He has placed within.

When believers are properly equipped, they become more stable, useful and effective within the Church. They understand the truth more clearly, recognise their responsibilities and become less dependent upon personalities. The minister can teach, encourage, warn and guide, but only Christ can supply spiritual life.

The minister does not become the believer's source. Jesus Christ remains the Head, and His life within every born-again believer remains the source from which true Christian service flows.

The perfecting of the saints means equipping and preparing believers for mature and effective service. The believer is already complete in Jesus Christ, while ministry helps each member understand, develop and faithfully fulfil the function Christ has given within His body.

Personal Response

Key Truth

What does 'perfecting the saints' mean for the work believers are prepared to do?

Personal Reflection

What truth have you been taught but have not yet allowed to affect how you serve others?

Action Step

Name the gap between knowing and doing, and describe one response that will express Christ's life in your service.

FOR THE WORK OF THE MINISTRY

BACK TO CONTENTS

Paul continues in Ephesians chapter 4 by saying that the ministry offices are given *"for the work of the ministry."* The purpose of these offices is not simply to identify those who hold recognised responsibilities, but to help the whole body serve.

Paul wrote in **Ephesians 4:11-12**:

> *"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:"*

The word translated *"ministry"* is DIAKONIA. It carries the thought of service. This is important because ministry is often thought of mainly as preaching from a pulpit or holding a recognised office. The New Testament gives a broader picture: ministry is service to Christ and His body.

Ministry Is Service

The word DIAKONIA directs attention away from status and towards responsibility. A minister is one who serves, and this agrees with the teaching of Jesus.

Jesus said in **Matthew 20:26-28**:

> *"But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."*

Jesus did not define greatness by position, but by service. Those entrusted with ministry should therefore understand that their calling places responsibility upon them rather than lifting them into a higher spiritual class. The greater the responsibility, the greater the obligation to serve faithfully.

This applies to every recognised ministry office. Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers may carry different responsibilities, but all are servants beneath the same Head. Jesus Christ remains the Lord of the ministry.

Ministry Belongs to the Whole Body

The work of ministry is not confined to those who hold recognised offices. The offices equip and strengthen the saints so that service can take place throughout the body.

Paul wrote in **2 Corinthians 5:18**:

> *"And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;"*

Every born-again believer has received the life of Christ and has a responsibility to bear witness to Him. One believer may preach publicly while another speaks personally to someone about salvation. One may teach while another encourages, and one may give while another helps carry practical burdens.

Different believers serve in different ways, but ministry is not reserved for a small group of people with recognised positions. Peter wrote in **1 Peter 4:10**:

> *"As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."*

The instruction is *"minister the same one to another."* The body of Christ is therefore active rather than passive. The members serve one another according to the grace and opportunity Christ gives them.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why must members minister to one another rather than remain passive?

Personal Reflection

When have you expected an office holder to do an act of care that you could have offered?

Action Step

Identify one neglected opportunity and offer helpful service without waiting to be given an office or formal responsibility.

The Offices Equip the Body to Serve

The ministry offices have an important part in preparing the Church for this work. Apostolic ministry helps establish and extend the Gospel, prophetic ministry can warn, strengthen and bring spiritual clarity, and evangelistic ministry directs people towards salvation in Jesus Christ and keeps the Church outward-looking.

Pastoral ministry cares for and protects the flock, while teaching ministry establishes believers in the truth of Scripture. These ministries contribute differently, but they are not competing with one another. They work towards the same purpose.

No single ministry expresses everything the Church needs. Different offices supply different forms of service so that the body can function properly, but the offices do not replace the members. Their work should help believers become stronger in their own service to Christ.

A healthy ministry does not gather all responsibility into the hands of a few people. It equips the members so that service takes place throughout the body.

Christ Works Through the Members

The work of ministry must never be understood as human effort performed independently of Christ. Jesus Christ dwells within every born-again believer, and His life within is the source of genuine spiritual service.

Paul wrote in **Philippians 2:13**:

> *"For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."*

Service does not begin with outward pressure, but with Christ working within. The believer responds to His life, His Word and His direction. This keeps ministry from becoming a mechanical religious duty.

A person may perform outward religious work while depending only upon natural ability, habit or organisational expectation. That is not the pattern of the New Testament. True ministry flows from Christ within.

Paul expressed this dependence in **Colossians 1:29**:

> *"Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily."*

Paul laboured, served and worked, but he recognised that the power came from *"his working, which worketh in me."* This is the proper relationship between the believer and ministry. The believer serves and acts, but Christ supplies the life and remains the source.

Ministry Is for the Benefit of Others

The work of ministry is directed towards the needs of others. Paul wrote in **Galatians 5:13**:

> *"For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another."*

Service is governed by love. A ministry that seeks recognition, influence or personal importance has moved away from its proper purpose. The question should not be, *"How important is my ministry?"* but, *"How is Christ using this service to strengthen His body and reach others with the Gospel?"*

This applies equally to visible and less visible service. A person preaching to a congregation may be serving Christ, while a believer quietly helping someone in need may also be serving Christ. The outward form differs, but the governing principle remains the same.

Ministry is service.

The Work Belongs to Christ

Ultimately, the work of ministry belongs to Jesus Christ. He calls, equips, supplies and works through His people. The believer's responsibility is to remain faithful to what Christ has entrusted.

Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 4:2**:

> *"Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful."*

Faithfulness is more important than prominence. A ministry may be widely seen or almost unnoticed, but what matters is whether the believer faithfully serves in the place Christ has given.

The Church functions properly when recognised ministries equip the saints and the saints themselves become active in service. The result is not a divided body in which a few minister and the rest observe. It is a living body in which Christ works through many members according to His will.

The work of the ministry is the service of Jesus Christ expressed through His people. Ministry offices help equip the saints, but every member has a responsibility to serve according to the life, grace and function Christ has supplied within His body.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How is the work of ministry expressed through Christ's people?

Personal Reflection

Is there a need in Christ's body you have avoided because you felt it was somebody else's responsibility?

Action Step

Examine that attitude and respond to a real need from Christ's love within you, according to the ability and opportunity He has given.

FOR THE EDIFYING OF THE BODY OF CHRIST

BACK TO CONTENTS

Paul gives another purpose for the ministry offices in Ephesians chapter 4: *"for the edifying of the body of Christ."* To edify means to build up, strengthen or establish.

Paul wrote in **Ephesians 4:11-12**:

> *"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:"*

The Church is already the body of Christ. Ministry does not create that body, and it does not add people to Christ through religious position or organisation. Those who are born again are already members of His body.

Ministry serves those members so that the body may become stronger, more stable and more effective in fulfilling the purpose of Christ.

The Body Must Be Strengthened

The Church contains believers at different stages of experience and maturity. Some are newly born again, while others have walked with Christ for many years. Some are facing trials, while others are carrying responsibilities that require wisdom and strength.

The ministry offices contribute to the strengthening of the body by supplying teaching, care, warning, encouragement, leadership and spiritual direction.

Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 14:26**:

> *"How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying."*

The governing principle is clear: *"Let all things be done unto edifying."* Whatever takes place within the Church should contribute to strengthening the body.

Preaching, teaching, exhortation, spiritual gifts and leadership should all edify. Even correction should ultimately seek the spiritual good of the believer and the health of the body. Ministry

loses its proper direction when it becomes centred upon the reputation of the minister, the excitement of a meeting or the growth of an organisation rather than the strengthening of Christ's people.

Different Ministries Strengthen in Different Ways

The offices do not all contribute to edification in exactly the same way. Apostolic ministry may help establish and strengthen congregations, prophetic ministry may bring warning, exhortation or clarity, and evangelistic ministry carries the Gospel outward and helps keep the Church concerned for those who need salvation.

Pastoral ministry cares for the flock, while teaching ministry establishes believers more firmly in the truth of Scripture. These functions complement one another because the body needs both outward movement and inward strengthening.

If there were evangelism without teaching, people could hear the Gospel but remain weak in understanding. If there were teaching without evangelistic concern, believers could gain knowledge while becoming inward-looking and neglecting the responsibility to carry the Gospel to others.

The various ministries therefore contribute balance to the life of the Church. They do not compete, but supply different needs within the same body.

Paul described this interdependence in **1 Corinthians 12:20-22**:

> *"But now are they many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary:"*

The principle applies throughout the body. No genuine ministry should behave as though every other ministry is unnecessary, and no member should be treated as though their contribution has no value. Christ has designed His body to function through many members working together.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why must less visible members also supply what Christ has given if the whole body is to grow?

Personal Reflection

Whose quiet contribution to the Church have you overlooked because someone else's ministry is more visible?

Action Step

Correct that oversight by recognising and encouraging the less visible believer's faithful work in Christ.

Every Member Contributes to Edification

Although the ministry offices have particular responsibilities, edification is not their work alone.

Paul wrote in **Ephesians 4:16**:

> *"From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."*

Paul does not say that the body is built up only by apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. He says *"every joint supplieth"* and speaks of *"the effectual working in the measure of every part."* Every member therefore has a contribution.

Some contributions are highly visible, while others may be almost unnoticed. One believer may preach, another may pray, another may encourage someone privately, another may give practical assistance, and another may quietly support the work in ways few people ever see.

The value of service is not determined by visibility. The important question is whether Christ is using that member to strengthen His body.

Paul wrote in **Romans 15:2**:

> *"Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification."*

Edification is therefore a responsibility shared throughout the Church. The ministry offices help equip the body, and the equipped body then strengthens itself as every member supplies.

Edification Flows From Christ

Ephesians 4:16 begins with the words *"From whom."* The body receives its supply from Jesus Christ. The Church is not built up spiritually by human organisation alone.

Good organisation, training and experience can be useful, but spiritual edification ultimately comes from Christ working through His people.

Paul wrote in **Colossians 2:19**:

> *"And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God."*

The nourishment comes from the Head. This is why ministry must remain connected to Jesus Christ. A congregation may possess structure, programmes and activity, yet still lack genuine spiritual edification if Christ is no longer the centre and source.

True ministry keeps the members connected to Him. The teacher directs believers towards His Word, the pastor cares for those who belong to Him, the evangelist proclaims Him, the prophet speaks truth under His authority, and the apostle serves the spread and establishment of His Gospel.

Every genuine ministry points beyond itself to Jesus Christ. The same is true of every member. Spiritual service flows from the life of Christ within His people, supplying love, wisdom, strength and grace for the good of the body.

Paul concludes **Ephesians 4:16** by saying that the body makes increase *"unto the edifying of itself in love."* Love governs the process. Edification is not domination, competition or the building of personal ministries. It is Christ supplying His life through the members of His body so that they strengthen one another.

The edifying of the body of Christ is the continuing strengthening of His Church as ministry offices serve faithfully and every member supplies according to the measure Christ has given, with Jesus Christ Himself remaining the Head and source of all spiritual growth.

Personal Response

Key Truth

What does it mean to edify Christ's body over time?

Personal Reflection

What activities fill your time without strengthening another believer or serving the Gospel?

Action Step

Identify one unhelpful priority and replace it with a specific response that builds up someone in faith and love.

UNITY, MATURITY, AND PROTECTION FROM FALSE DOCTRINE

BACK TO CONTENTS

Paul continues his explanation of the purpose of ministry by showing that Christ intends His people to become established in truth. The ministry offices contribute to unity of faith, deeper knowledge of Jesus Christ, spiritual maturity and protection from deceptive doctrine.

Paul wrote in **Ephesians 4:13-15**:

> *"Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:"*

The direction of these verses is clear. Christ does not give ministry so that believers remain uncertain, divided or dependent upon personalities. Ministry should help establish them in the truth so that they grow in understanding, discernment and faithfulness while remaining centred upon Jesus Christ.

Unity of the Faith

Paul speaks first of *"the unity of the faith."* This unity is not produced simply by belonging to the same organisation, attending the same congregation or agreeing to avoid difficult subjects. Biblical unity is unity in the truth.

Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 1:10**:

> *"Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."*

Ministry should therefore teach the Word faithfully and consistently. Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers should not build separate followings around themselves or promote competing messages. Their different responsibilities should serve the same Gospel and the same Head.

Paul rebuked the Corinthians when they began identifying themselves around particular ministers. He wrote in **1 Corinthians 1:12-13**:

> *"Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?"*

The problem was not that Paul, Apollos or Cephas had different areas of service. The problem was that believers were allowing those differences to become divisions. Christ is not divided, and true ministry therefore directs people towards unity in Jesus Christ rather than loyalty to a human personality.

Personal Response

Key Truth

What was wrong when believers divided around Paul, Apollos and Cephas?

Personal Reflection

Have you treated a minister as the leader of a party rather than a servant of the same Jesus Christ?

Action Step

Identify where that loyalty has affected your fellowship and make one response that honours Christ as the only Head.

Growing in the Knowledge of Christ

Paul next speaks of *"the knowledge of the Son of God."* The word translated *"knowledge"* is EPIGNOSIS, carrying the thought of fuller knowledge or discernment. Ministry should help believers understand Jesus Christ and His truth more clearly.

The aim is not simply the accumulation of religious information. Knowledge must lead to a clearer understanding of Christ and greater faithfulness to Him.

Different ministries contribute to that understanding in different ways. Teaching explains Scripture, pastoral ministry applies truth to the needs of the flock, prophetic ministry can bring warning and spiritual clarity, evangelistic ministry keeps the saving work of Jesus Christ before the Church, and apostolic ministry helps establish and extend the Gospel. These different functions should not produce different Christs or different Gospels, but should bring the Church into clearer understanding of the same Lord.

Paul wrote in **2 Corinthians 4:5**:

> *"For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake."*

That statement provides an important test for ministry. If people leave with greater admiration for the minister but little greater understanding of Jesus Christ, something has gone wrong. The ministry exists to help people know Him.

Maturity Means Stability in Truth

Paul continues with the words *"Unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."* The word *"perfect"* here carries the thought of maturity. This must again be distinguished from completeness in salvation.

The born-again believer is already complete in Christ, but still grows in understanding, discernment and responsibility. Spiritual maturity is seen in increasing stability in truth and faithful service.

Paul contrasts maturity with spiritual childhood through the words *"That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine."* A child can be easily influenced because experience and discernment are still developing. The same danger exists spiritually.

A believer who is not established in Scripture may be impressed by confident speakers, unusual claims, popular movements or new interpretations. One teaching may pull in one direction and another teaching in the opposite direction. Sound ministry helps believers become settled in the truth.

The purpose is not to make people dependent upon ministers for every decision. It is to help them become established enough in the Word that they can recognise truth and error for themselves.

The writer of Hebrews wrote in **Hebrews 5:14**:

> *"But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."*

Maturity therefore includes exercised discernment. The believer learns to examine what is taught, compare it with Scripture and recognise whether it agrees with the truth.

Protected From Every Wind of Doctrine

Paul does not treat false doctrine as a minor problem. He warns of believers being *"carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive."* Some error may arise from misunderstanding, but Paul also recognises deliberate deception.

This gives ministry a protective responsibility. Those who teach and lead must not simply present attractive ideas. They must faithfully guard the truth entrusted to the Church.

Paul wrote in **Acts 20:28-30**:

> *"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them."*

Paul warned that danger could come from outside and from within. This is why sound teaching, spiritual discernment and faithful oversight remain necessary. Ministry must protect

believers without taking away their responsibility to know and examine the Word for themselves.

Protection from error must not become harshness or control. Paul gives the proper manner with the words *"But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ."* Truth must be spoken and error must be addressed, but love must govern the manner.

The purpose is not to win arguments or humiliate those who are mistaken. The purpose is to bring believers into greater stability and faithfulness to Jesus Christ.

Growing Up Into Christ

The final direction of Paul's teaching is *"into him."* Maturity does not lead to independence from Christ, but to deeper dependence upon Him. As believers grow, the life of Christ within becomes more clearly expressed through sound understanding, faithful conduct, spiritual discernment and service to others.

Ministry therefore succeeds when believers become more firmly established in Christ rather than more dependent upon the personality of the minister. Jesus Christ remains the Head, the truth around which the Church is united and the One into whom His people grow.

The ministry offices help bring the Church into unity of faith, deeper knowledge of Jesus Christ, maturity in understanding and stability against false doctrine. Their purpose is not to control believers, but to establish them in truth so that they may grow up into Christ, who remains the Head of the body.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How should ministry offices help believers grow in unity and sound teaching?

Personal Reflection

When have you followed a confident teacher without checking whether the teaching agreed with God's Word?

Action Step

Examine one teaching in its biblical context and state how you will respond if it does not agree with Christ and His Word.

RULING AND GOVERNMENTS IN THE CHURCH

BACK TO CONTENTS

The New Testament Church is not without order. Jesus Christ is the Head, but He also works through believers who are given responsibility to lead, guide, oversee and help maintain order within His body.

Paul wrote in **Romans 12:8**:

> *"Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness."*

Paul also wrote in **1 Corinthians 12:28**:

> *"And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues."*

These verses show that ruling and governments have a legitimate place within the Church. The question is not whether leadership exists, but how that leadership operates under the authority of Jesus Christ.

Leading With Diligence

In **Romans 12:8**, the word translated *"ruleth"* is PROISTEMI. It carries the thought of leading, standing before, managing, caring for or giving direction. Paul says that the person who leads should do so *"with diligence."*

Leadership in the Church should therefore not be careless, inconsistent or self-serving. Those entrusted with responsibility must take that responsibility seriously because their decisions and example affect other members of the body.

Paul used the same word when speaking about recognised leaders within the congregation. He wrote in **1 Thessalonians 5:12-13**:

> *"And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves."*

Notice the connection between leadership and labour. Those who are *"over you in the Lord"* are also those *"which labour among you."* Their responsibility is expressed through work, care and admonition rather than personal status.

Paul used similar language concerning elders. He wrote in **1 Timothy 5:17**:

> *"Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine."*

Again, leadership is connected with labour. The emphasis is not upon dominating people, but upon carrying responsibility faithfully.

Government Means Guidance and Order

Paul includes *"governments"* among the operations God has placed within the Church. The Greek word KUBERNESIS carries the thought of steering or guidance. It gives the picture of directing something safely towards its proper destination.

Government within the Church therefore involves wisdom in direction, organisation, administration and decision-making so that the work of Christ can proceed in an orderly way. Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 14:40**:

> *"Let all things be done decently and in order."*

Order does not oppose the operation of the Spirit. The same Spirit who gives gifts also produces order in their use. A congregation may have sincere believers and genuine spiritual gifts, but practical responsibilities still need to be organised.

Decisions have to be made, needs must be recognised, ministry must be coordinated and difficult situations may require wise direction. The gift of governments helps supply that need. It may operate through those carrying recognised oversight, but its purpose remains service to the body rather than control of the body.

The Church is not governed by personal ambition or by human opinion standing above Scripture. Jesus Christ remains the Head, so leadership must remain submitted to His Word and His purpose.

Personal Response

Key Truth

What should govern leadership in the Church instead of ambition or opinion above the Bible?

Personal Reflection

Have you accepted a church decision simply because a respected leader preferred it?

Action Step

Examine the decision by the Bible and its effect on the body, and explain how you will express agreement or concern respectfully.

Leadership Is Not Dominion

The existence of leadership does not give ministers unlimited authority over the faith and conscience of believers. Paul stated this clearly in **2 Corinthians 1:24**:

> *"Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye stand."*

Paul was an apostle with significant responsibility, yet he rejected the idea that he had dominion over the faith of God's people. He described himself instead as a helper. This gives an important boundary for all biblical leadership.

A leader may teach, warn, correct, organise and make necessary decisions, but no human leader becomes the master of another believer's faith. Jesus Christ holds that place.

Peter gave the same instruction to elders. He wrote in **1 Peter 5:2-3**:

> *"Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock."*

Oversight is biblical, but being *"lords over God's heritage"* is not. Those who lead are to guide by truth, service and example rather than coercion.

Paul could therefore say in **1 Corinthians 11:1**:

> *"Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ."*

He did not ask believers to follow him independently of Christ. His example had value only as he followed Christ. That remains the proper order of leadership in the Church.

Mature and Proven Leadership

Because leadership carries responsibility, Scripture warns against placing spiritually immature believers into positions of oversight too quickly. Paul wrote in **1 Timothy 3:6**:

> *"Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil."*

The word *"novice"* refers to one newly planted or recently converted. The danger is not simply lack of age, but lack of spiritual maturity and proven character. A new believer may be sincere and gifted, but leadership requires more than enthusiasm.

Leadership requires stability, wisdom, humility and experience in walking faithfully with Christ. Timothy demonstrates that chronological age alone does not determine spiritual maturity.

Paul wrote in **1 Timothy 4:12**:

> *"Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity."*

Timothy was young, yet Paul expected him to be an example. The qualification was not age alone, but conduct and spiritual maturity. Those entrusted with direction should therefore be proven in character and able to lead by example.

They should not rely upon position to make people follow them. Their life should give weight to their words. Leadership that is faithful to Christ produces order, stability and confidence within the body, while leadership that becomes proud, controlling or self-serving damages the people it was meant to serve.

The Church therefore needs both sides of the biblical balance. Believers should not despise genuine leadership, and leaders must not abuse genuine authority. Those who guide must remain under Christ, and those who follow must remain under Christ.

Believers also have a responsibility to recognise and respond properly to godly leadership. Biblical leadership is not domination, but neither does rejecting domination mean rejecting those whom Christ has entrusted with genuine responsibility within His body.

The writer of Hebrews wrote in **Hebrews 13:17**:

> *"Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you."*

Notice that responsibility rests on both sides. Believers are instructed to respond to godly leadership, while those who lead *"must give account."* Submission therefore does not place a minister above Jesus Christ or make human leadership absolute.

Submission is first to Christ and His Word. If human leadership contradicts what God has clearly commanded, the believer must obey God.

Peter and the other apostles said in **Acts 5:29**:

> *"Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men."*

Biblical submission is therefore neither rebellion against genuine leadership nor blind obedience to human authority. Leaders remain accountable to Christ and Scripture, and believers respond to faithful leadership while retaining their direct responsibility before Jesus Christ.

Ruling and governments are God-given functions of leadership, guidance and order within the Church. Those entrusted with them must lead diligently, humbly and by example, never exercising dominion over the faith of God's people, because Jesus Christ alone remains the Head and final authority of His body.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How do ruling and governments provide guidance and order without replacing Christ's rule?

Personal Reflection

Do you tend to resist any oversight, or do you obey human leaders without first considering Christ's Word?

Action Step

Identify which tendency needs correction and explain how you will support faithful leadership while keeping your first loyalty to Jesus Christ.

LEADERSHIP WITHOUT RELIGIOUS HIERARCHY

BACK TO CONTENTS

The New Testament recognises genuine leadership within the Church, but it does not present ministry as a higher spiritual class standing above ordinary believers. Jesus Christ remains the Head, and every born-again believer belongs to the same body. Those who carry ministry responsibility are called to serve the body, not to become a ruling class over it.

Jesus addressed this directly in **Matthew 23:8-11**:

> *"But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant."*

The words *"all ye are brethren"* establish the relationship among believers. Different responsibilities exist within the body, but spiritual rank does not.

All Ye Are Brethren

Jesus did not deny that some believers would carry greater responsibility than others. The New Testament clearly recognises apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers, elders, bishops and deacons. What Jesus rejected was the elevation of religious leaders into a superior spiritual class.

There is one Master, one Head and one body. Those who lead remain brothers and sisters among the people they serve.

Paul's own language demonstrates this. He wrote in **1 Corinthians 1:1**:

> *"Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother,"*

Paul did not present his apostleship as a title of personal elevation. He described himself as one *"called to be an apostle."*

He used similar language in **Titus 1:1**:

> *"Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness;"*

Service comes first, while the office describes the work. The same principle applies throughout the Church. A pastor, teacher, apostle or other minister remains a brother or sister within the body. The responsibility may differ, but the relationship within the body does not.

Christ Rejects the Nicolaitan Spirit

The danger appears when ministry ceases to function as service and begins to operate as domination. Jesus contrasted the government of His people with the way authority commonly operates in the world.

Jesus said in **Matthew 20:25-28**:

> *"But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."*

Jesus said plainly, *"But it shall not be so among you."* The Church is not to copy systems in which authority is demonstrated by elevation, privilege and control. The greater responsibility belongs to the greater servant.

This principle helps us understand the warning concerning the Nicolaitans. John recorded the words of Jesus in **Revelation 2:6**:

> *"But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate."*

The word NICOLAITAN can be understood from two parts. NICO carries the thought of conquering, overcoming or having victory over, while LAITY refers to the common people. Together, the expression describes the idea of conquering or ruling over the people.

The Nicolaitan spirit therefore appears when a small group of religious leaders is elevated above the rest of the body and begins to rule over the people as a superior spiritual class. This produces the familiar division between clergy and laity. The clergy become the ruling group, while the laity become the people being ruled.

This is contrary to the words of Jesus: *"One is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren."* The problem is not leadership itself because Scripture clearly establishes

leadership, oversight and government. The problem is a form of leadership that places another level of spiritual authority between Jesus Christ and His people.

Christ is the Head of His body. No minister replaces Him, and no religious class stands between Him and the born-again believer.

Peter gave the same instruction to elders in **1 Peter 5:2-3**:

> *"Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock."*

Oversight is biblical, but being *"lords over God's heritage"* is not. Those who lead are to guide by truth, service and example rather than control. The Nicolaitan spirit reverses that order by making the body subject to an elevated religious class.

Jesus rejected that spirit.

Function Must Not Become Status

Ministry terms must never become religious titles. Apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, teacher, elder, bishop and deacon describe biblical functions and responsibilities, not titles to be placed before a person's name.

Paul consistently identified his calling while retaining the language of servanthood. He wrote in **Romans 1:1**:

> *"Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God,"*

His apostleship did not replace his identity as a servant of Jesus Christ. Paul was not presented as *"Apostle Paul"* as though apostle were a title establishing personal rank. He was *"Paul, called to be an apostle."*

The distinction is important. Apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor and teacher describe the work a person has been called to perform. They must never be used as religious titles within the body of Christ.

The same principle applies to the words 'brother' and 'sister.' They describe the relationship shared among those who belong to Christ and must not be turned into religious titles. This guards the Church against personality-centred ministry.

A person does not become more valuable because their ministry is more visible. Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 12:21-22**:

> *"And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary:"*

Visibility does not determine importance. A preacher standing before a congregation is not spiritually more valuable than the believer quietly serving in another part of the body. The body requires both.

Paul continued in **1 Corinthians 12:25-26**:

> *"That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it."*

The purpose is unity, not rank. Every born-again believer possesses the Spirit of Christ and is complete in Him. No ministry office adds another level between Christ and His people.

True Leadership Serves the Body

Rejecting religious hierarchy does not mean rejecting leadership. The Church still needs those who teach, oversee, warn, guide and carry responsibility. The difference is the manner in which that responsibility is exercised.

Paul wrote in **2 Corinthians 1:24**:

> *"Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye stand."*

That is a powerful description of biblical leadership: *"helpers of your joy."* The minister helps, the believer stands by faith, and Christ remains Lord.

True leadership therefore seeks to strengthen believers in their relationship with Jesus Christ rather than make them dependent upon the leader. It helps them understand Scripture, encourages them to exercise discernment, equips them to serve, protects without controlling, corrects without becoming lord over them and leads without replacing Christ.

Paul gave the spirit that should govern every member, including those who lead. He wrote in **Philippians 2:3-5**:

> *"Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:"*

The life of Christ within produces humility and service. Leadership is therefore not an opportunity for the flesh to gain recognition, but an opportunity for Christ to serve His body through the believer He has called.

The Church needs genuine leadership, but that leadership must remain genuinely biblical. Different believers carry different responsibilities, yet all remain brethren under one Head.

There is no spiritual hierarchy in the body of Christ. The Nicolaitan spirit of conquering or ruling over the people must be rejected. Different believers carry different responsibilities, but all remain brethren under one Head. True leadership serves, guides and strengthens the Church because Jesus Christ alone remains Master of His body.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why is there no spiritual hierarchy among members of Christ's body?

Personal Reflection

Has a minister's title ever influenced you to value them above another born-again believer?

Action Step

Name that bias and show equal honour to a believer whose ministry is less recognised, remembering that both belong to Christ.

EVERY JOINT SUPPLIES

Paul brings his teaching in Ephesians chapter 4 to a powerful conclusion by showing that the whole body must function together.

Paul wrote in **Ephesians 4:16**:

> *"From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."*

The words *"every joint supplieth"* are important. The Church is not designed to function through a small number of visible ministers while everyone else remains passive. Christ works through the many members of His body, and every member has a place in that operation.

Every Member Has a Place

Paul repeatedly compares the Church to a human body. He wrote in **1 Corinthians 12:14-18**:

> *"For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him."*

No member should conclude that they have no value because their function differs from someone else's. The foot is not less part of the body because it is not a hand, and the ear is not less necessary because it is not an eye.

The important statement is *"God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him."* The arrangement belongs to God. This should remove both pride and discouragement.

A believer should not become proud because their ministry or gift is highly visible. Neither should another believer feel unimportant because their service receives little public attention. Every member belongs to the body according to God's purpose.

Every Part Supplies Something

Ephesians 4:16 speaks of *"the effectual working in the measure of every part."* Every part has a measure, and every part has a contribution.

One believer may preach publicly, while another may teach. Another may encourage someone privately, give, help meet practical needs, pray faithfully for the work, exercise a spiritual gift that strengthens the congregation or carry a recognised office. The forms of service differ, but each contribution can help strengthen the body.

Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 12:21-22**:

> *"And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary:"*

The members that appear less visible or less impressive may still be necessary to the proper functioning of the body. This protects the Church from valuing only public ministry.

A congregation needs preaching and teaching, but it also needs prayer, encouragement, generosity, hospitality, practical help, wisdom, mercy and faithful service. The quiet work of one member may strengthen the body just as genuinely as the public ministry of another.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why does every member's practical service matter to the growth of Christ's body?

Personal Reflection

What kind of service do you overlook because it seems too ordinary to matter?

Action Step

Recognise the value of that service and contribute to one practical need without seeking a prominent position.

Offices and Gifts Work Together

The ministry offices have a particular responsibility within the body, but they are not the whole body. Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers contribute important areas of ministry, while spiritual gifts also operate throughout the membership according to the will of the Spirit.

These functions should complement one another rather than compete. Teaching without evangelistic concern can become inward-looking, while evangelistic zeal without sound teaching can leave believers without sufficient grounding in truth. The body needs balance.

One ministry may emphasise the spread of the Gospel, while another strengthens believers through teaching. Another may provide pastoral care, another may bring warning or exhortation, and another member may supply practical help. The Church functions most effectively when the different parts fulfil their responsibilities without trying to become every other part.

Paul wrote in **Romans 12:4-6**:

> *"For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith;"*

Different functions do not weaken unity. They make the one body able to function properly. The danger comes when one part begins to despise another, compete with another or attempt to perform every function itself.

The body needs the supply of its different members.

The Supply Comes From Christ

Ephesians 4:16 does not begin with the members. It begins with the words *"From whom."* The supply originates in Jesus Christ.

He is the Head from whom the body receives spiritual life, direction and strength. The members do not possess independent spiritual resources that they contribute apart from Him. Christ works through them.

Paul expressed the same truth in **Colossians 2:19**:

> *"And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God."*

The body receives nourishment from the Head. This is why no office, gift or member can rightly become self-important. Whatever is supplied spiritually comes from Christ.

The preacher, teacher, leader and believer serving quietly all depend upon Christ. Every genuine contribution is the life of Christ working through the members of His body.

Ephesians 4:16 concludes by saying that the body *"maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."* The whole body is involved: ministers equip, members serve, gifts operate, love governs and Christ supplies.

This is the New Testament picture of a functioning Church. The purpose of the ministry offices is not to gather all spiritual responsibility into a few people. They help prepare the members so that the whole body can function according to Christ's design.

No member should say, *"I have no need of thee."* Neither should any member conclude that they have nothing to supply. Jesus Christ has placed the members in His body according to His will, and each should faithfully fulfil the responsibility He has given.

The Church grows and is strengthened when every member supplies according to the measure Christ has given. The offices, gifts and individual members all function together, while Jesus Christ remains the Head and source of everything His body needs.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How does the Church grow when every member supplies what Christ has given?

Personal Reflection

Have you held back from helping because you believe your part in Christ's body is too small?

Action Step

Explain why that belief is mistaken and offer your particular help where it will strengthen another member.

CONCLUSION: CHRIST GOVERNS HIS BODY THROUGH SERVICE

BACK TO CONTENTS

Jesus Christ is the Head of His Church. Every office, gift, responsibility and act of service must remain under His authority and serve His purpose for the body.

Paul wrote in **Ephesians 4:11-12**:

> *"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:"*

The ministry offices are given by Christ. They are not positions of spiritual superiority, but functions of service through which believers are equipped, strengthened, instructed and prepared to fulfil their place within the Church.

The saints do not receive spiritual completeness from ministers. Every born-again believer is already complete in Jesus Christ. Ministry helps believers grow in understanding, maturity, discernment and usefulness while serving from the life of Christ already dwelling within.

The Church also requires order. Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 12:28**:

> *"And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues."*

Leadership, ruling and government therefore have a proper place within the Church. Those entrusted with these responsibilities must lead diligently, wisely and faithfully. Yet biblical leadership is never domination.

Jesus Christ rejected the pattern in which a few elevated people rule over the rest. He said that His people are brethren and that those who would be greatest must become servants.

Jesus said in **Matthew 23:10-11**:

> *"Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant."*

The Nicolaitan spirit reverses this order by turning ministry into hierarchy and separating the body into rulers and those being ruled. That spirit must be rejected because Jesus Christ alone is Master of His people.

Those who lead, teach and oversee remain servants. Every office remains beneath the same Head.

Paul also makes clear that the ministry offices are not the whole Church. He wrote in **Ephesians 4:16**:

> *"From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."*

Every joint supplies, and every member has a place. Some carry recognised ministry responsibilities, while others serve through spiritual gifts, practical help, encouragement, giving, prayer and many other forms of service. The work differs, but the source remains the same.

Jesus Christ works through His people. The purpose of ministry is therefore not to create dependence upon human leaders, but to strengthen believers in Christ so that the whole body functions according to His will.

Christ calls, equips, gives the offices, supplies the gifts and directs the members. Christ remains the Head.

The New Testament Church is governed by Jesus Christ through servants who lead, teach, guide and equip His people without becoming lords over them. As every member supplies according to the place Christ has given, His body is strengthened, edified and enabled to fulfil His purpose in love.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How does Christ govern His Church through servants without making them lords over others?

Personal Reflection

In a responsibility you carry, are you more concerned with directing others or helping them become able to serve?

Action Step

Identify one controlling habit that needs changing and describe how you will equip or support another person instead.

SUBMISSION TO COGMA FOR APPRAISAL

Instructions

Complete this section after you have finished the Study Guide. It must be completed online.

The link is located at the bottom of the online Study Guide — https://cogma.com.au/study-guides/

Your answers should reflect your understanding, your personal response, and how you intend to live by the truth you have studied. Answer honestly and be specific.

1. Main Truth

Explain why Christ gives ministry offices to His Church. How do these functions serve His people while keeping Him, rather than a minister, as the Head?

2. Understanding

How do equipping the saints, the work of ministry and building up the body fit together in Ephesians 4? Explain why every member still has work to do.

3. Personal Reflection

Has this teaching corrected the way you view a church title, a leader or your own part in ministry? Explain what you now understand differently and why it matters.

4. Response to Truth

How should you respond to leaders who equip others and to members who serve quietly? Describe one change in the way you give honour or support, and explain why.

5. Action Step

Identify one responsibility you have left to a minister or one way you have valued a title more than faithful service. What needs correcting in your attitude, and how will you serve the body through Christ's life within you?

6. Early Response

Have you begun to make the change identified in Question 5? If so, describe the service you offered or the attitude you corrected. If not, explain why you have not yet begun.

7. Ongoing Practice

What will help you continue to receive sound guidance while testing teaching by the Bible and refusing to divide around personalities? Explain how you will respond when loyalty to a leader conflicts with Christ's truth.

8. Doctrinal Clarity

How can ruling and governments bring real order without making leaders lords over the Church? Explain how the Nicolaitan spirit reverses Christ's rule through servants and how leadership should protect unity, maturity and sound teaching.

9. Living the Truth

Think of a real church decision or relationship. How can you honour Christ's rule, support responsible leaders and make room for every member to serve? Describe what you would do.

10. Final Response

Bring together Christ's headship, the work of ministry offices, and the service of every member. What has changed in your understanding, and what part are you prepared to take in building up His body?