COGMA

Church of God Mission Academy

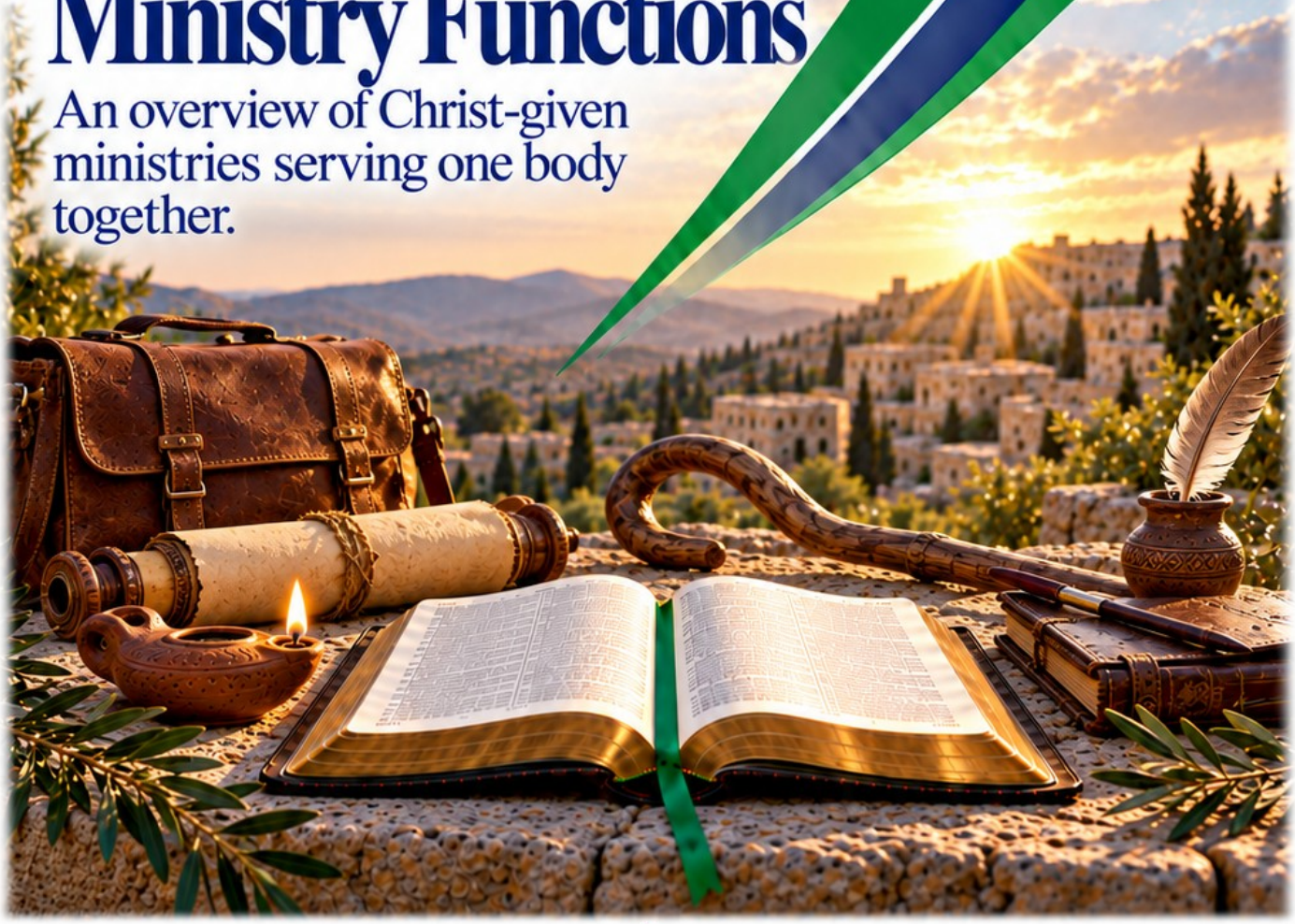
STUDY GUIDE 48 5 OF 5

The Gifts & Offices in the New Testament

STUDY GUIDE 5 OF 5:

The Five Ministry Functions

An overview of Christ-given ministries serving one body together.



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.

Content

PREFACE

INTRODUCTION

CHRIST GAVE FIVE MINISTRY FUNCTIONS

THE APOSTOLIC FUNCTION — SENT FORTH

THE PROPHETIC FUNCTION: DECLARING GOD'S TRUTH

THE EVANGELISTIC FUNCTION: PROCLAIMING THE GOSPEL

THE PASTORAL FUNCTION: CARING FOR THE FLOCK

THE TEACHING FUNCTION: ESTABLISHING BELIEVERS IN TRUTH

THE FIVE FUNCTIONS CONTINUE IN THE CHURCH

THE MINISTRIES WORK TOGETHER

LEADERSHIP BY EXAMPLE, NOT FORCE

CONCLUSION: CHRIST MINISTERS THROUGH HIS SERVANTS

MODULE CONCLUSION: CHRIST WORKING THROUGH HIS BODY

Important Points

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

COGMA therefore strongly advises that you prayerfully study the content of each Study Guide with the heart of a Berean (**Acts 17:10–12**).

Contact and Links

Website: cogma.com.au

Email: admin@cogma.org.au

Radio COGMA: radiocogma.com

YouTube: youtube.com/@COGMAChannel

Facebook: facebook.com/profile.php?id=61585399471540

SEARCH THIS STUDY GUIDE

Windows: Ctrl + F | Mac: Cmd + F | Phone or tablet: use Search in your PDF reader.

PREFACE

BACK TO CONTENTS

Jesus Christ gives different ministries to His Church so that His body may be strengthened, instructed, cared for and equipped for service. These ministries belong to His provision for the Church and must always remain under His headship.

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 these ministries. Jesus Christ gives them according to the needs of His body. They are not positions created by religious organisations, and they must never be turned into religious titles through which believers are elevated above one another.

Apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor and teacher are descriptions of ministry functions. They are not religious titles, and within the body of Christ they must never be used as titles of honour, rank or personal address.

The New Testament presents believers carrying different responsibilities while remaining brethren under one Head. The function may differ, but no ministry creates a higher spiritual class within the body of Christ.

Each of these ministries contributes something important. Apostolic ministry is sent forth in the work of the Gospel. Prophetic ministry declares and applies God's truth. Evangelistic ministry carries the message of salvation to those who need Christ.

Pastoral ministry cares for and guards the flock. Teaching ministry establishes believers more firmly in the truth of Scripture.

These functions are different, but they do not compete with one another. They serve the same Lord and the same body.

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."*

Again, Scripture says *"God hath set."* True ministry begins with Christ's calling rather than human ambition. It operates through the life and grace He supplies, and its purpose is always the strengthening of His people.

These ministries must also remain servants of the Word. No apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor or teacher becomes an independent source of spiritual truth or authority. Jesus Christ remains the Head, and Scripture remains the standard by which every ministry and message must be examined.

This Study Guide will examine the five ministry functions named in Ephesians chapter 4, their biblical purpose, their continuing place within the Church and the way they work together.

The five ministry functions are gifts of service from Jesus Christ to His body. They exist to direct people towards Him, establish them in His truth and strengthen the Church under His headship.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why did Jesus give five ministry functions to serve His body?

Personal Reflection

Do you see ministry mainly as service given by Christ, or as a position carrying honour?

Action Step

Examine one attitude towards ministers and explain how gratitude for their service will replace admiration of religious rank.

INTRODUCTION

BACK TO CONTENTS

Jesus Christ has given different ministry functions to His Church because the body has different needs. These ministries are not ranks of spiritual importance, and they are not religious titles. They are responsibilities of service entrusted by Christ to particular believers for the strengthening of His body.

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

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

These five ministry functions are distinct, but they belong to the same body and serve the same Head. Apostolic ministry is sent forth in the work of the Gospel, prophetic ministry declares and applies the truth of God, and evangelistic ministry carries the Gospel to those who need salvation. Pastoral ministry cares for the flock, while teaching ministry establishes believers in the truth of Scripture.

The New Testament does not present these words as religious titles of honour or personal address. Paul did not call himself *"Apostle Paul."* He described himself as *"Paul, an apostle,"* identifying the work to which Christ had called him.

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."* His apostleship described the ministry Christ had entrusted to him, but his fundamental position remained that of a servant.

The same principle governs every ministry function. Apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor and teacher must never become religious titles within the body of Christ. Elder, bishop and deacon also describe responsibilities rather than titles of spiritual rank, while brother and sister describe the relationship shared among believers rather than religious titles.

Jesus Christ alone is Master of His people.

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."*

The words *"God hath set"* show that genuine ministry originates with God. Human ambition cannot create a calling, and religious recognition cannot manufacture a ministry that Christ has not given.

These ministries are also not independent sources of truth. Every person who ministers remains subject to Jesus Christ and the written Word. No apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor or teacher has authority to introduce doctrine that contradicts Scripture or to require believers to follow a human personality.

The ministry functions work together because no single function supplies everything the Church needs. Each contributes according to the responsibility Christ has given, while every believer remains part of the same body under the same Head.

This Study Guide will examine each of the five ministry functions individually, their biblical purpose, their continuing place within the Church and the way they work together under the headship of Jesus Christ.

The function identifies the work. It never creates a title, rank or spiritual class. Jesus Christ alone remains the Head, and every genuine ministry exists to serve Him and strengthen His body.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why does a ministry function never create a spiritual class or title of rank?

Personal Reflection

Have you valued public ministry above the quiet service of another believer?

Action Step

Identify someone you have overlooked and show them the same respect you give to a publicly recognised minister.

CHRIST GAVE FIVE MINISTRY FUNCTIONS

BACK TO CONTENTS

Paul does not present the ministries in Ephesians chapter 4 as positions invented by the Church. He says that Jesus Christ gave them.

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 five ministry functions belong to Christ's provision for His body. Their purpose is service: equipping the saints, helping the work of ministry and building up the Church.

Christ Gives the Ministries

The words *"he gave"* place the emphasis upon Jesus Christ. A genuine ministry begins with His calling. Human education may prepare someone in useful ways, and other believers may recognise a person's ministry, but neither education nor human appointment can create a calling that Christ has not given.

Paul expressed the same truth when writing to the Corinthians. He 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, Scripture says *"God hath set."* The placement belongs to God. This protects the Church from treating ministry as a career ladder through which people advance in religious status.

A believer does not become an apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor or teacher simply by choosing a title, receiving public recognition or desiring prominence. Christ gives the responsibility and places the member within His body according to His purpose.

Five Functions, Not Five Titles

The five words in **Ephesians 4:11** describe ministry functions. Apostle describes one who is sent forth in ministry, prophet describes a prophetic function, evangelist describes one whose ministry particularly concerns proclaiming the Gospel, pastor describes shepherding and caring for the flock, and teacher describes the responsibility of instructing believers in the truth.

These words identify the work. They must never become religious titles of honour, rank or personal address.

Paul wrote in **Romans 12:4-5**:

> *"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."*

Different functions exist because the body has different needs. Yet those differences never divide believers into a superior ministry class and an inferior membership. All remain members of the same body, all remain brethren and all remain under Jesus Christ.

The ministry words therefore must not be placed before a person's name as religious titles of honour or personal address. The New Testament describes the calling and the work without creating a hierarchy around the worker.

Each Function Supplies a Different Need

The five functions are not identical. Apostolic ministry carries the Gospel forward, establishes works and provides wider spiritual direction. Prophetic ministry declares God's truth, bringing warning, exhortation and clarity according to Scripture.

Evangelistic ministry places particular emphasis upon proclaiming salvation and reaching those who need Jesus Christ. Pastoral ministry cares for the flock, feeding, guiding and guarding

believers, while teaching ministry explains the Word and helps establish believers in sound doctrine.

The differences are important because no single ministry supplies every need of the Church. Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 12:20-21**:

> *"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."*

The same principle applies to ministry functions. A person serving in one area should not behave as though every other function is unnecessary. Apostolic work does not remove the need for teaching, evangelistic work does not remove the need for pastoral care, and teaching does not remove the need for carrying the Gospel outward.

Christ supplies different ministries because His body requires different forms of service. The functions complement one another rather than compete.

The Five Serve One Head

The ministries differ, but they do not have five different sources. Jesus Christ is the source of them all. They should therefore never compete for recognition, create separate followings or become centres of personal loyalty.

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."*

Christ must have the preeminence. A genuine ministry does not make the minister the centre, but directs attention towards Jesus Christ and helps the members of His body understand, serve and remain faithful to Him.

These functions also depend upon His life within those who serve. Ministry is not simply the performance of a religious role through natural ability. Christ works through the believers He calls, and the effectiveness of ministry depends upon His life, truth and direction.

Jesus Christ gave five distinct ministry functions to serve the needs of His body. Apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor and teacher describe the work He entrusts to believers; they are never religious titles. Each function supplies a different need, while all remain servants under the one Head, Jesus Christ.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How do the five ministry functions meet different needs in Christ's Church?

Personal Reflection

Which of the five ministry functions do you understand or value least, and why?

Action Step

Examine that preference and describe how you will appreciate the particular need Christ meets through that ministry.

THE APOSTOLIC FUNCTION — SENT FORTH

BACK TO CONTENTS

The first ministry function named by Paul in Ephesians chapter 4 is that of an apostle. Like the other ministry functions, apostle is not a religious title. It describes a work and calling given by Jesus Christ.

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

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

The apostolic function is closely connected with being sent forth in the work of the Gospel. It reaches outward, helps establish the work of Christ and provides spiritual direction as the Gospel enters new places and congregations are established.

An Apostle Is One Sent Forth

The Greek word translated *"apostle"* is APOSTOLOS. It carries the meaning of one who is sent forth with a commission. This meaning directs attention away from religious rank and towards mission.

An apostle is sent. The word does not describe a person who has climbed to the highest position in a religious hierarchy. It describes someone entrusted with a work that requires going forth in obedience to Christ.

Jesus gave this outward direction to His disciples. He said in **Mark 16:15**:

> *"And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."*

The apostolic function therefore has a strong missionary character. It carries the Gospel beyond established boundaries, helps establish new works and strengthens the Church as the Gospel spreads.

Scripture also applies the word "Apostle" to Jesus Christ Himself. The writer of Hebrews wrote in **Hebrews 3:1**:

> *"Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus;"*

Here Scripture identifies Jesus as "the Apostle" because He was sent. Paul wrote in **Galatians 4:4**:

> *"But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,"*

Jesus Christ was sent forth to accomplish the purpose of God. He proclaimed the truth, sowed the Word and established His Church.

Jesus said in **Matthew 16:18**:

> *"And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."*

Christ remains the true Builder and Head of the Church. Apostolic ministry never replaces Him. Those sent in apostolic service work under His authority and participate in the work that belongs to Him.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why should an apostolic worker never be treated as the builder and head of a new church?

Personal Reflection

When a new congregation grows, have you credited a gifted worker more readily than Jesus Christ?

Action Step

Identify that tendency and express thanks to Christ while encouraging a worker as His servant rather than the source of spiritual life.

Apostolic Ministry Was Not Limited To The Twelve

The original twelve apostles were personally chosen during the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ. However, the New Testament use of the word apostle was not limited to those twelve men.

Paul provides the clearest example. Paul wrote in **Galatians 1:1**:

> *"Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;)"*

Paul was not one of the original twelve, yet Scripture plainly identifies him as an apostle. Notice again the language: he was *"Paul, an apostle."* Apostle was not used as a religious title placed before his name, but identified the ministry to which he had been called.

Barnabas was also identified with apostolic ministry. Luke wrote in **Acts 14:14**:

> *"Which when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out,"*

The verse directly calls both Barnabas and Paul *"the apostles."* James, the Lord's brother, is also included among the apostles in Paul's account.

Paul wrote in **Galatians 1:19**:

> *"But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother."*

Paul also refers to Andronicus and Junia in connection with the apostles. Their example provides further evidence that apostolic ministry was not limited to the original twelve.

Paul wrote in **Romans 16:7**:

> *"Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen, and my fellowprisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me."*

Junia was a woman, and Paul describes Andronicus and Junia as being *"of note among the apostles."* Her inclusion is important because it also brings us to the wider New Testament evidence concerning women serving within the ministry of the Church.

Women Serve in Ministry Functions

Women are not excluded from ministry functions within the body of Christ. The New Testament records women actively serving, teaching, helping establish believers and carrying recognised responsibilities within the Church.

Paul wrote in **Galatians 3:28**:

> *"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."*

This establishes the spiritual equality of those who are in Christ. Men and women are equally members of His body, equally born again, equally indwelt by Christ and equally dependent upon Him as their Head.

Men and women serve within the same body under the same Head and according to the calling Christ gives. The same principles of service, order, submission and accountability apply to every believer. When Christ gives a ministry function, that function is a responsibility of service and never a position of spiritual superiority over another member of His body.

Priscilla provides a clear example of a woman participating in the instruction of another believer. She served alongside her husband Aquila when they heard Apollos preaching at Ephesus.

Luke wrote in **Acts 18:26**:

> *"And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly."*

Priscilla participated with Aquila in explaining the way of God more fully to Apollos. They were serving together according to the truth God had given them.

Paul also commended Phebe for her recognised service within the Church. Paul wrote in **Romans 16:1-2**:

> *"I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea: That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also."*

The word translated *"servant"* is DIAKONOS, a word associated with service and ministry. Paul openly commended Phebe as a woman who served the Church and had been a help to many, including Paul himself.

Junia, Priscilla and Phebe together show that women were active participants in the ministry of the New Testament Church. They served according to the calling and responsibility God had given them within His body.

A woman serving in ministry remains a sister within the body, just as a man serving in ministry remains a brother. Neither becomes part of a higher spiritual class, and neither should receive a religious title.

Christ calls, Christ gives the function, and the believer serves according to the place He has given within His body. Ministry function is determined by God's calling, not by religious tradition, and the function must never become a title.

The examples of Paul, Barnabas, James, Andronicus and Junia demonstrate that the apostolic function cannot be defined simply as belonging to the original twelve apostles. Scripture uses the word apostle more broadly for others who were sent forth in recognised ministry.

We should therefore recognise the historical circumstances of the original twelve without turning them into a higher spiritual class. Their calling took place within those circumstances, but apostolic ministry was not limited to them.

Apostolic Work Plants and Establishes

Paul's own ministry shows the nature of apostolic work. He frequently travelled into areas where the Gospel had not yet been established. He preached Jesus Christ, saw people saved, helped establish congregations and continued to strengthen those works through visits, teaching and correspondence.

Paul described one aspect of that ministry with the language of planting. He wrote in **1 Corinthians 3:6-7**:

> *"I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase."*

Paul planted and Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. This is an important safeguard against making apostolic ministry appear spiritually superior. Paul recognised his responsibility, but immediately directed attention to God as the One who produced the increase.

He used another picture a few verses later. Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 3:10-11**:

> *"According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."*

Paul described himself as a *"wise masterbuilder,"* but he was not the foundation. Jesus Christ was the foundation. The apostolic worker may plant and help establish a congregation, but the people do not belong to the apostle. They belong to Jesus Christ.

Apostolic ministry must therefore never produce personal kingdoms, ministry empires or followers centred upon a human personality. The one sent forth serves the One who sent them.

The Apostolic Function Continues

Some teach that apostles belonged only to the first century and that apostolic ministry ended when the original apostles died. Scripture does not state that the apostolic function ceased while the other ministry functions in Ephesians 4 continued.

Paul lists apostles together with prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. These ministries were given for the equipping of the saints, the work of the ministry and the edifying of the body of Christ.

Paul also wrote in **Romans 11:29**:

> *"For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance."*

God knew what His Church would require when He established these ministry functions. His understanding is not limited by time.

The Psalmist wrote in **Psalm 147:5**:

> *"Great is our Lord, and of great power: his understanding is infinite."*

God did not establish His Church without knowing what it would need in later generations. The apostolic function continues because the work connected with it continues.

The Gospel still needs to be carried into new places. New works still need to be established, congregations still need strengthening, and the Church still needs believers who are sent forth beyond the boundaries of one local congregation to labour in the wider work of the Gospel.

The continuation of apostolic ministry does not mean that later apostolic workers share the same historical circumstances as the original twelve. Neither does it give anyone the right to assume religious rank, claim unquestionable authority or use apostle as a title of honour or personal address.

The ministry remains service, and the apostle remains a servant. Jesus Christ remains the Head.

The apostolic function is the ministry of one sent forth by Jesus Christ in the wider work of the Gospel. It is seen in planting, establishing and strengthening the work of Christ beyond the limits of one local congregation. The New Testament shows that this function extended beyond the original twelve and remains part of Christ's provision for His Church. Apostle describes the work; it must never become a religious title.

Personal Response

Key Truth

What does it mean for an apostolic worker to be sent forth by Jesus Christ?

Personal Reflection

Have you been persuaded by an apostolic title without examining the Gospel work and service behind it?

Action Step

Look at an example of someone sent forth in the Bible and explain how you will judge ministry by faithful work rather than status.

THE PROPHETIC FUNCTION: DECLARING GOD'S TRUTH

BACK TO CONTENTS

The second ministry function named by Paul in Ephesians chapter 4 is that of a prophet. As with every ministry function, prophet is not a religious title. It describes a work entrusted by Jesus Christ for the benefit of His Church.

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:"*

Prophetic ministry serves the Church by declaring God's truth, bringing exhortation, warning and spiritual clarity, and, where God gives such knowledge, speaking concerning things to come. This ministry must always remain under the authority of Jesus Christ and be judged by the written Word of God.

Prophets Served Within the New Testament Church

Prophets were recognised as an active ministry function within the early Church.

Luke wrote in **Acts 11:27-28**:

> *"And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch. And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar."*

Luke speaks of *"prophets"* in the plural, with Agabus being one among a number of believers functioning in prophetic ministry. In this instance, the prophetic message concerned a future event. Agabus spoke of a coming famine, and Luke records that it later occurred.

The New Testament also records prophets serving alongside teachers.

Luke wrote in **Acts 13:1**:

> *"Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul."*

Prophets and teachers were operating together within the congregation at Antioch. One ministry did not replace the other.

Prophetic ministry also included exhortation and strengthening.

Luke wrote in **Acts 15:32**:

> *"And Judas and Silas, being prophets also themselves, exhorted the brethren with many words, and confirmed them."*

The words *"exhorted"* and *"confirmed"* are important because their prophetic ministry strengthened the brethren. This shows that prophecy cannot be reduced simply to predicting future events. Prophetic ministry can also declare, apply and press home the truth in a way that strengthens, warns and establishes the Church.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How did prophetic ministry strengthen the brethren through exhorting and confirming them?

Personal Reflection

Have you expected prophecy to be mainly prediction, rather than also exhortation, warning and comfort?

Action Step

Explain what your expectation overlooked and how it changes the way you receive sound prophetic ministry.

Prophecy Declares and Applies God's Truth

The prophetic function has sometimes been understood almost entirely as foretelling future events. Scripture shows that foretelling can occur, as with Agabus, but prophetic ministry is broader than prediction.

Paul described the effect of prophecy within the Church in **1 Corinthians 14:3**:

> *"But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort."*

Three purposes appear in this verse: edification, exhortation and comfort. Prophetic ministry builds up, calls believers to respond faithfully to truth, and strengthens and encourages them. The prophet therefore serves the Church by bringing the truth of God to bear upon present spiritual needs.

This must not be confused with inventing new doctrine. The Bible remains the standard, and no prophetic message can contradict Scripture and then claim special authority because someone says it came from God. No ministry function has authority to place personal revelation above the written Word.

Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 14:29**:

> *"Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge."*

Prophetic ministry was not above examination. What was spoken was to be judged. This guards the Church against accepting every spiritual claim simply because someone attaches the words *"God told me"* or *"the Lord showed me."*

The prophetic function must remain accountable to Scripture because God does not contradict His own Word. A genuine prophetic ministry will direct people towards truth already established in Scripture rather than creating another source of doctrine alongside the Bible.

The Prophetic Function Continues

Paul included prophets in the same list as apostles, evangelists, pastors and teachers. Scripture does not state in these verses that prophets would disappear while the other ministry functions continued.

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

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

Paul also acknowledged prophetic ministry when instructing the Corinthians, while placing it clearly under the authority of the written teaching.

Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 14:37**:

> *"If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord."*

A person claiming prophetic ministry was required to recognise the authority of the teaching Paul had written. Prophetic ministry therefore remains subject to the Word.

Paul also wrote in **Romans 11:29**:

> *"For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance."*

The prophetic function belongs to the ministry Christ gave His Church. Its purpose remains relevant because the Church still needs warning, exhortation, confirmation and spiritual clarity.

Continuing prophetic ministry does not mean that every claim of prophecy is genuine. Jesus warned that false prophets would exist.

Jesus said in **Matthew 7:15-16**:

> *"Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?"*

The existence of false prophets does not prove that the genuine function has ceased. It shows the need for discernment. The Church must neither accept every claim nor reject the function Christ has given, but must judge faithfully according to Scripture.

The Prophet Points People to Christ and His Word

Prophetic ministry must never become personality-centred. A person functioning prophetically does not become an unquestionable spiritual authority, does not stand between Jesus Christ and His people, and must never use prophet as a religious title. The function is service, and the prophet remains a brother or sister within the same body.

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 principle governs prophetic ministry as surely as every other ministry. The message must point beyond the messenger. The purpose is not to impress people with spiritual knowledge, predictions or personal claims of revelation, but to strengthen the Church in truth and direct believers towards Jesus Christ.

Prophetic ministry must also never make believers dependent upon a person for private direction in every area of life. Every born-again believer possesses the Spirit of Christ and has access to the written Word. Prophetic ministry can warn, exhort, confirm and strengthen, but it does not replace the believer's responsibility to know Scripture, walk with Christ and exercise spiritual discernment.

Paul wrote in **1 Thessalonians 5:20-21**:

> *"Despise not prophesyings. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good."*

These instructions belong together. The Church should not despise genuine prophetic ministry, but neither should it accept prophetic claims without examination. Jesus Christ remains the Head, Scripture remains the standard, and the prophet remains a servant.

The prophetic function serves the Church by declaring and applying God's truth through edification, exhortation, comfort, warning and, when God gives such knowledge, foretelling future events. This function continues within the Church, but every prophetic message must remain subject to Scripture and centred upon Jesus Christ. Prophet describes the work; it must never become a religious title.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why must a prophetic message remain subject to the Bible and centred on Jesus?

Personal Reflection

Have you accepted or rejected a prophetic claim too quickly because of the speaker's confidence or reputation?

Action Step

Examine one claim against the Bible and the truth of Jesus Christ, then state what you will believe or challenge.

THE EVANGELISTIC FUNCTION: PROCLAIMING THE GOSPEL

BACK TO CONTENTS

The third ministry function named by Paul in Ephesians chapter 4 is that of an evangelist. As with apostle and prophet, evangelist is not a religious title. It describes a particular work of service given by Jesus Christ.

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

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

The evangelistic function is centred upon proclaiming the Gospel and calling people to salvation in Jesus Christ. Its emphasis is outward. The evangelist carries the good news to those who are unsaved, spiritually searching or in need of being brought back to the truth of Christ.

An Evangelist Announces Glad Tidings

The Greek word translated *"evangelist"* is EUANGELISTES. It carries the thought of one who announces glad tidings or proclaims the Gospel. The function is therefore defined by the message being carried: the evangelist proclaims Jesus Christ.

This ministry is not simply public speaking, religious enthusiasm or the ability to attract a crowd. Its purpose is to bring the saving message of the Gospel clearly before people so that they may respond to Jesus Christ. The Gospel itself remains the centre.

Paul wrote in **Romans 1:16**:

> *"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."*

The evangelist does not create the power of the Gospel because the power belongs to God. The evangelistic function serves by faithfully carrying that message to those who need to hear it.

This calling must also come from Christ. A person does not become an evangelist by adopting the word as a title, developing a public reputation or being given a position by a religious organisation.

Evangelist describes the work. It must never become a religious title.

Philip Shows the Work of an Evangelist

Philip provides the clearest New Testament example of this ministry function. Luke later identified him directly.

Luke wrote in **Acts 21:8**:

> *"And the next day we that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto Caesarea: and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was one of the seven; and abode with him."*

Philip is described as *"Philip the evangelist."* The expression identifies the work for which he was known. It does not establish Evangelist Philip as a religious title.

Acts chapter 8 shows what that work looked like. Luke wrote in **Acts 8:5-8**:

> *"Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them. And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed. And there was great joy in that city."*

The central statement is simple: Philip 'preached Christ unto them.' The evangelistic function is Jesus-centred. Philip did not build his message around himself. He preached Christ.

His work in Samaria was public and reached many people. The Gospel was carried into a new area, people responded, and the work expanded. When word reached Jerusalem that Samaria had received the Word, further ministry followed.

Luke wrote in **Acts 8:14**:

> *"Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John:"*

This shows the different ministry functions working together. Philip's evangelistic labour reached people with the Gospel, while other ministry followed as the work became established.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How do different ministry functions work together when the Gospel is proclaimed?

Personal Reflection

Have you cared more about hearing the Gospel preached than about people receiving teaching and pastoral support afterwards?

Action Step

Name the part of ministry you have neglected and identify a useful way to support the continuing care of believers.

The Work Can Be Public or Personal

Philip's ministry also shows that evangelistic work is not limited to large meetings. After preaching to the people of Samaria, Philip was directed towards one individual travelling from Jerusalem.

Luke wrote in **Acts 8:30-31**:

> *"And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest? And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him."*

The Ethiopian was reading Scripture but did not understand what he was reading. Philip began with that Scripture and directed him to Jesus.

Luke wrote in **Acts 8:34-35**:

> *"And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man? Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus."*

Again the centre is unmistakable: *"preached unto him Jesus."* In Samaria, Philip preached to a city, while on the road he preached to one person. Both were evangelistic ministry.

This shows that the work of an evangelist cannot be measured by crowd size. One person hearing the Gospel clearly is not less important than a large public gathering. The function is to carry the message of salvation wherever Christ directs.

A Distinct Function With an Outward Emphasis

Every believer has a responsibility to bear witness to Jesus Christ, but this does not mean that every believer carries the specific ministry function of an evangelist. Paul demonstrated this distinction when instructing Timothy.

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

> *"But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry."*

Timothy was told to *"do the work of an evangelist."* This shows that evangelistic work can form part of a wider ministry responsibility, even where evangelism is not the person's primary function.

At the same time, **Ephesians 4:11** specifically identifies evangelists among the ministries Christ gives to the Church. Some believers therefore carry a particular calling and responsibility in this area. Their ministry tends to reach outward beyond the immediate needs of an established congregation.

They may preach in new places, speak to those who have not heard the Gospel, awaken concern for salvation or bring the Gospel into communities where the work of Christ needs to be established or renewed. That outward emphasis complements the other ministry functions.

The evangelist reaches, the pastoral function cares, the teaching function establishes believers in truth, and the apostolic function helps extend and establish works. These ministries support one another rather than compete.

The evangelist must therefore not become isolated from the wider body or act as though bringing people to an initial response is the whole work of the Church. Those who are born again need continued teaching, care, fellowship and opportunities to serve. Likewise, established congregations must not become so inward-looking that they lose concern for those who still need salvation.

Evangelistic ministry helps keep the Gospel moving outward. Most importantly, the work remains centred upon Jesus Christ. The evangelist does not bring people into dependence upon an evangelist, but brings people to Christ.

The evangelistic function is the ministry of proclaiming the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ. It may operate before large groups or in personal conversation, as Philip demonstrated in Samaria and with the Ethiopian. Every believer should bear witness to Christ, but some are specifically called to this ministry function. Evangelist describes the work; it must never become a religious title.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why must evangelistic ministry clearly proclaim salvation in Jesus Christ?

Personal Reflection

When explaining your faith, have you relied on religious expressions rather than plainly presenting Jesus Christ and salvation?

Action Step

Identify what is unclear in your explanation and prepare a simple account of the Gospel that you can share in a real conversation.

THE PASTORAL FUNCTION: CARING FOR THE FLOCK

BACK TO CONTENTS

The fourth ministry function named by Paul in Ephesians chapter 4 is pastoral ministry. Pastor is not a religious title. It describes the work of caring for, feeding, guiding and protecting the people of God.

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 pastoral function is particularly concerned with the continuing spiritual care of believers within a congregation. Those serving in this function do not own the flock and do not stand between the believer and Jesus Christ. The Church belongs to Christ, and He alone remains its Head and Shepherd.

Pastor Means Shepherd

The Greek word translated *"pastors"* in **Ephesians 4:11** is POIMEN, meaning shepherd. Although the word is translated *"pastors"* in this verse, it is normally translated *"shepherd"* elsewhere in the New Testament. This immediately helps us understand the function.

A shepherd cares for the flock. Peter used the same word when speaking of Jesus Christ.

Peter wrote in **1 Peter 2:25**:

> *"For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls."*

Jesus Christ is the *"Shepherd and Bishop of your souls."* The pastoral function must therefore always remain beneath His headship. A believer serving pastorally does not become the spiritual owner of a congregation or the final authority over its members. The people belong to Jesus Christ.

Jesus also spoke of Himself as the one Shepherd of His people.

Jesus said in **John 10:16**:

> *"And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd."*

There is one Shepherd, and pastoral ministry serves within that reality. The person carrying pastoral responsibility cares for people who already belong to Christ and continually directs them towards Him.

The related Greek verb POIMAINO carries the thought of tending or shepherding. It includes feeding, guiding, guarding and caring for the flock. Pastoral ministry therefore involves much more than preaching a weekly message. It is a continuing responsibility for the spiritual welfare of God's people.

Personal Response

Key Truth

What does shepherding involve beyond bearing the name 'pastor'?

Personal Reflection

Have you viewed pastoral care mainly as public preaching and overlooked personal care, guidance or protection?

Action Step

Identify one need you have overlooked and explain how you can encourage faithful shepherding or show Christ's care yourself.

Feeding, Guiding and Protecting the Flock

One of the clearest responsibilities of pastoral ministry is feeding the flock with the Word of God.

Peter 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."*

The flock belongs to God, and that truth governs the entire pastoral function. The instruction is *"Feed the flock of God."* Pastoral ministry provides spiritual nourishment through the Word, helping believers become established in truth, mature in understanding and equipped for service.

Paul gave similar instruction to the overseers at Ephesus.

Luke recorded Paul's words in **Acts 20:28**:

> *"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."*

Pastoral care includes oversight, but oversight must be understood through the language of shepherding rather than domination. The shepherd watches, feeds, guides and protects.

Paul warned these same overseers that danger could enter the flock through false teaching.

Paul continued in **Acts 20:29-30**:

> *"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."*

Pastoral ministry therefore carries a protective responsibility. Those caring for a congregation must be alert to teaching that would draw believers away from the truth. Protection does not mean controlling every thought or decision of another believer. It means faithfully teaching Scripture, recognising spiritual danger and warning the flock when necessary so that believers remain faithful to Jesus Christ.

Pastor, Elder and Bishop Describe Function

Religious systems have often turned words such as pastor, elder and bishop into ranks and titles within a hierarchy. That is not the New Testament pattern. These words describe aspects of ministry responsibility.

Paul wrote in **Titus 1:5**:

> *"For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee:"*

A few verses later, while continuing the same discussion concerning those serving in leadership, Paul wrote in **Titus 1:7**:

> *"For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre;"*

The language moves from elders to bishop without establishing a higher religious rank. The word translated *"bishop"* carries the thought of an overseer, while *"elder"* carries the thought of maturity and recognised responsibility.

Peter himself demonstrated that these terms were not titles of rank.

Peter wrote in **1 Peter 5:1**:

> *"The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed:"*

Peter, who also served in apostolic ministry, described himself as *"also an elder."* Ministry functions can therefore overlap in responsibility without forming a hierarchy.

A believer may serve pastorally and exercise oversight. Another may carry apostolic ministry while also being recognised as an elder. These words describe the work being done rather than a ladder of religious authority. They must never become titles placed before a person's name.

There is no Pastor, Bishop or Elder as a religious title within the body of Christ. There are believers who pastor, oversee and serve as elders according to the responsibility Christ has given them.

Pastoral Leadership Serves by Example

Pastoral ministry carries real responsibility, but that responsibility must never become lordship over the congregation. Peter's instruction is explicit: *"Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock."*

The person serving pastorally must lead through faithful example. Character, humility and faithfulness matter because the life of Christ within must be expressed through the way the flock is cared for.

Peter also identifies Jesus Christ as the Chief Shepherd.

Peter wrote in **1 Peter 5:4**:

> *"And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away."*

Jesus Christ remains the Chief Shepherd. Peter's words *"when the chief Shepherd shall appear"* are not referring to a future physical return of Jesus Christ to the earth. They point to the time when the believer's earthly life is finished and we shall see Christ as He is.

John wrote in **1 John 3:2**:

> *"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."*

Paul spoke in the same way as he approached the end of his physical life.

Paul wrote in **2 Timothy 4:6-8**:

> *"For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."*

Paul connected his approaching *"departure"* with the crown that awaited him. While we presently live in this physical body, Jesus Christ dwells within us as Spirit. When our earthly life is finished, we shall see Him as He is.

Those serving pastorally are therefore accountable to Jesus Christ for the manner in which they care for His people.

This also prevents the pastoral function from becoming the controlling office over all other ministries. Apostolic, prophetic, evangelistic, pastoral and teaching functions are not arranged as a ladder of rank. They serve different needs within the same body.

Paul wrote in **Ephesians 5:21**:

> *"Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God."*

Mutual submission applies within ministry as well as throughout the body. Those serving pastorally need the contribution of other ministry functions, just as those other functions benefit from pastoral care. No ministry stands alone, and no believer becomes spiritually superior because of the responsibility Christ has entrusted.

Pastoral ministry is particularly concerned with the continuing spiritual care of the flock. It feeds believers with the Word, guides them in truth, watches for spiritual danger, protects against false teaching and helps maintain order and unity within the congregation. Yet the flock always belongs to Jesus Christ.

The pastoral function is the work of shepherding God's people through feeding, guiding, protecting and caring for the flock. Jesus Christ remains the Shepherd and Head of His Church, while those serving pastorally care for His people under His authority. Pastor, elder and bishop describe functions and responsibilities; they must never become religious titles or ranks within the body of Christ.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How does pastoral ministry feed, guide, protect and care for God's flock?

Personal Reflection

Have you resisted sound pastoral counsel because you preferred your own view or felt uncomfortable being corrected?

Action Step

Consider that response honestly and describe how you will receive faithful guidance while remaining accountable to Christ's Word.

THE TEACHING FUNCTION: ESTABLISHING BELIEVERS IN TRUTH

BACK TO CONTENTS

The fifth ministry function named by Paul in Ephesians chapter 4 is teaching. Teacher is not a religious title. It describes the work of instructing believers in Scripture, explaining doctrine clearly and helping the Church become established in truth.

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:"*

Teaching ministry helps believers understand what the Scriptures say, how biblical truths fit together and how the Word applies to their lives. Its purpose is not to make people dependent upon a teacher, but to establish them more firmly in Jesus Christ and His Word.

Teaching Is a Distinct Ministry Function

Pastoral ministry includes teaching, but pastoral and teaching functions should not automatically be treated as identical. Paul wrote concerning the qualifications of an overseer in **1 Timothy 3:2**:

> *"A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach;"*

An overseer should therefore be *"apt to teach."* However, the ability and responsibility to teach within pastoral ministry does not remove the distinct teaching function Christ has placed within His body.

Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 12:28-29**:

> *"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. Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles?"*

Paul separately identifies apostles, prophets and teachers, and then asks, *"Are all teachers?"* The answer is clearly no. Every believer should know the truth and be able to share what

Christ has taught them, but this does not mean every believer carries the specific ministry function of teaching.

Some are particularly called and equipped to explain Scripture and establish others in doctrinal understanding. The Greek word DIDASKALOS means a teacher or instructor, with the emphasis upon imparting understanding. As with every other ministry word, teacher describes the function and must never become a religious title.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why are some believers particularly equipped to explain the Bible to others?

Personal Reflection

Have you valued a speaker's confidence or style above the careful explanation of the Bible?

Action Step

Identify that habit and explain how you will listen for truth, check the Bible and value teaching that establishes believers in Christ.

Teachers Explain the Scriptures

The early Church needed believers who could explain the Scriptures carefully and show how God's purpose was fulfilled in Jesus Christ. This became especially important as the Gospel spread among Gentiles, many of whom did not possess the same background knowledge of the Old Testament Scriptures as Jewish believers. They needed clear instruction to understand the promises, prophecies and patterns that pointed to Christ.

Teachers were recognised within the congregation at Antioch. Luke wrote in **Acts 13:1**:

> *"Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul."*

Prophets and teachers were serving together within the congregation at Antioch. Their different functions contributed to the same body.

Apollos provides another helpful example of the importance of careful Scriptural instruction. He already possessed significant knowledge of Scripture, but Priscilla and Aquila helped him understand the way of God more completely. After receiving that instruction, Apollos was able to demonstrate from Scripture that Jesus was the Christ.

Luke wrote in **Acts 18:27-28**:

> *"And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him: who, when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace: For he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, shewing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ."*

The phrase *"shewing by the scriptures"* describes an important part of teaching ministry. The teacher does not ask people simply to accept personal opinion. The Scriptures are opened, truth is explained and Jesus Christ is revealed through the Word.

Teaching Brings Clarity and Stability

Teaching is more than repeating information. Its purpose is understanding. A person may hear many sermons and still remain uncertain about what Scripture actually teaches. Good teaching carefully explains the Word so that believers can understand doctrine, recognise error and become established in truth.

Paul instructed Timothy in **2 Timothy 2:15**:

> *"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."*

Teaching ministry requires careful handling of Scripture. The teacher must not force personal ideas into the Bible or build doctrine upon isolated phrases. Scripture must be understood according to its context and in harmony with the rest of the Word.

Paul also warned Timothy concerning the importance of sound doctrine. Paul wrote in **2 Timothy 4:2-3**:

> *"Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;"*

Teaching therefore has a protective function. False doctrine often grows where Scripture is poorly understood. Clear teaching helps believers recognise the difference between the Word of God and religious tradition, popular opinion, persuasive personalities or private interpretation.

The purpose is not to produce believers who simply repeat what a particular teacher says. Healthy teaching produces believers who understand the Scriptures well enough to examine what they hear and remain settled in truth.

The Teacher Serves the Word and the Body

Teaching ministry must always remain under Jesus Christ. A teacher does not become the source of truth. The Word remains the authority, and Jesus Christ remains the Head.

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 principle governs teaching ministry. The teacher serves Christ by helping others understand His Word. The ministry fails when attention moves from Scripture to the personality, opinions or reputation of the teacher.

A genuine teacher should make Scripture clearer, not make the believer increasingly dependent upon the teacher. Pastoral and teaching functions also complement one another. Pastoral ministry provides continuing care, guidance and protection, while teaching ministry gives particular attention to doctrinal understanding and Scriptural clarity.

Neither function is superior to the other. Both serve the body.

Teaching is especially important where confusion, false doctrine and religious tradition have obscured the meaning of Scripture. The Church needs believers who can patiently and accurately explain the Word, helping others understand what God has revealed and how Scripture points to Jesus Christ. Yet knowledge alone is not the final purpose.

Truth must be understood so that it can be believed, lived and expressed through the life of Christ within the believer.

The teaching function serves the Church by explaining Scripture, clarifying doctrine and establishing believers in truth. Teachers help God's people understand the Word so that they can recognise error, grow in discernment and remain centred upon Jesus Christ. Teacher describes the work; it must never become a religious title.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How does teaching establish believers in truth and doctrinal understanding?

Personal Reflection

Which truth about ministry still confuses you, and has that uncertainty affected your attitude towards others?

Action Step

Study the relevant verses, identify your unanswered question and explain how a sound explanation would change your understanding or service.

THE FIVE FUNCTIONS CONTINUE IN THE CHURCH

BACK TO CONTENTS

The five ministry functions given by Jesus Christ were not temporary arrangements for the first century. Apostolic, prophetic, evangelistic, pastoral and teaching ministry continue because the needs they serve continue within the Church.

Paul wrote in **Ephesians 4:11-13**:

> *"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:"*

Paul connects the ministry functions with the continuing needs of the body. Believers still need equipping, ministry still needs to be carried out, the Church still needs edifying, and believers still need growth in unity, knowledge and maturity.

Christ Gave the Functions for the Needs of His Body

Jesus Christ knew what His Church would need when He gave these ministry functions. His provision was not limited to the needs of one generation.

The Psalmist wrote in **Psalm 147:5**:

> *"Great is our Lord, and of great power: his understanding is infinite."*

God's understanding is infinite. He did not establish apostolic, prophetic, evangelistic, pastoral and teaching functions without knowing what His people would require in later generations.

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."*

The words *"God hath set"* are important. These functions were placed within the Church according to God's purpose. Scripture does not present them as temporary arrangements that the Church was later free to discard.

The needs remain. The Gospel still needs to go outward, congregations still need to be established and strengthened, and believers still need warning, exhortation and spiritual clarity. The unsaved still need to hear the Gospel, the flock still needs care and protection, and the Scriptures still need to be taught clearly.

The continuing needs of the body demonstrate the continuing relevance of the functions Christ gave.

Scripture Does Not Separate the Five Into Temporary and Permanent Functions

Some religious teaching accepts evangelists, pastors and teachers as continuing ministries while rejecting apostles and prophets as belonging only to the first century. That distinction is not made in Ephesians chapter 4.

Paul places all five together: apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. He gives one purpose for their combined operation: the equipping and edifying of the body of Christ. Scripture does not state in these verses that apostles and prophets would cease while the other functions continued.

The New Testament also shows that apostolic ministry extended beyond the original twelve and that prophets functioned throughout the early Church alongside teachers and other ministries.

Luke wrote in **Acts 13:1**:

> *"Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul."*

Different functions were operating together within the same body. Nothing in these verses suggest that one function possessed greater spiritual worth than another. Neither does the continuation of these ministries justify religious titles.

Apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor and teacher continue as functions of service, not as titles of rank or personal honour.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why do apostolic, prophetic, evangelistic, pastoral and teaching functions continue as service?

Personal Reflection

Have you given a person more authority because of a title rather than recognising faithful service under Christ?

Action Step

Name the assumption and correct it by considering the work, character and biblical responsibility connected with that function.

The Gifts and Calling of God Are Without Repentance

Paul wrote in **Romans 11:29**:

> *"For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance."*

This principle agrees with the continuing ministry functions Christ has given to His Church. God's calling originates in His purpose, and He does not make careless decisions and later discover that the provision He gave His Church was unnecessary.

The five functions therefore remain part of His provision for the body. This does not mean that every person who claims a ministry function has genuinely been called by God. Religious claims must still be tested by Scripture and by the work Christ is actually producing through the believer.

A person calling themselves an apostle does not make them one. Adopting prophet, evangelist, pastor or teacher as a title does not establish a divine calling. The function must be recognised through the work Christ has entrusted and through faithfulness to His Word.

The same principle applies in every generation. Christ calls, Christ gives the responsibility and Christ works through the believer. Human titles add nothing.

This also protects ministry from becoming dependent upon religious institutions. A denomination cannot manufacture a divine calling, and an organisation cannot abolish a function Christ continues to give. The authority remains with Jesus Christ.

The Purpose Continues While the Body Needs Equipping and Edifying

Paul explains why Christ gave these functions. They are for *"the perfecting of the saints," "the work of the ministry,"* and *"the edifying of the body of Christ."* These purposes have not disappeared.

The Church still contains believers at different stages of maturity. New believers still need instruction, while mature believers still need encouragement, warning and continued growth in understanding. New areas still need the Gospel, and established congregations still need care and sound teaching.

Paul continued in **Ephesians 4:14-15**:

> *"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:"*

False doctrine and spiritual immaturity have not disappeared. Neither have the need for Gospel outreach, pastoral care, clear teaching, apostolic ministry or prophetic ministry. The functions Christ gave therefore continue to serve the body according to the needs for which He gave them.

Their continuation must never be confused with the continuation of religious hierarchy. The New Testament does not require a class of people carrying apostolic, prophetic, pastoral or other titles. It requires the functions to operate as Christ gives them.

The work continues, but the functions must never become titles of honour or rank. Jesus Christ remains the Head.

Apostolic, prophetic, evangelistic, pastoral and teaching ministry continue because the purposes for which Christ gave them continue. The Church still needs the Gospel carried outward, truth declared, the lost reached, the flock cared for and believers established in Scripture. These are continuing functions of service under Jesus Christ, never religious titles or ranks within His body.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why does the Church still need Gospel proclamation, care, equipping and sound teaching?

Personal Reflection

Which present need of the Church have you noticed but assumed was beyond your concern?

Action Step

Choose a way you can support a faithful worker meeting that need, and explain how this will express Christ's concern for His body.

THE MINISTRIES WORK TOGETHER

BACK TO CONTENTS

Jesus Christ did not give the five ministry functions so that they would compete for influence or establish separate areas of spiritual importance. Apostolic, prophetic, evangelistic, pastoral and teaching ministry are different functions serving the same body under the same Head.

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 functions differ, but the purpose is shared. Each contributes something necessary to the strengthening and effective operation of the Church.

Different Functions Serve the Same Body

The body of Christ requires different kinds of ministry because its needs are varied. Apostolic ministry carries the Gospel outward and helps establish and strengthen works. Prophetic ministry declares truth, warns, exhorts and brings spiritual clarity, while evangelistic ministry concentrates particularly upon proclaiming salvation and reaching those who need Christ.

Pastoral ministry gives continuing care to the flock, while teaching ministry explains Scripture and helps establish believers in sound doctrine. These functions are not competing ministries. They complement one another and serve the same body.

Paul used the human body to explain this principle. He wrote 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:"*

One function cannot rightly say to another, *"I have no need of thee."* A congregation needs more than evangelistic outreach because those who receive the Gospel also need teaching and pastoral care. A congregation also needs more than teaching because the Gospel must continue to move outward.

Pastoral care remains necessary, but pastoral ministry does not replace prophetic warning, apostolic work or evangelistic outreach. The different ministries help provide balance within the body.

There Is No Hierarchy Among the Functions

The order in which ministry functions appear in Scripture must not be turned into a system of spiritual rank. 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."*

The word *"first"* does not create a religious title or establish an apostle as spiritually superior to another believer. Paul is describing God's placement and the different operations He has established within the Church.

The same principle applies throughout the ministry. A person serving apostolically does not rule over someone serving pastorally, and a person serving pastorally does not become the absolute authority over teachers, evangelists or prophets. A teacher does not become spiritually superior because of greater knowledge, and a prophet does not become superior because of a spiritual message.

Every function remains under Jesus Christ. Paul wrote in **Ephesians 5:21**:

> *"Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God."*

Mutual submission belongs within ministry as surely as within the wider body. Those carrying ministry responsibilities must be willing to hear, receive and work with one another. A person

who believes that their function places them beyond correction or beyond the contribution of others has misunderstood the purpose of ministry.

There is one body and one Head. The functions serve within that order.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How do the five functions serve within Christ's order for His body?

Personal Reflection

Have you favoured one ministry function so strongly that you have resisted cooperation with another?

Action Step

Identify that imbalance and propose a specific way two ministries can cooperate to strengthen Christ's people.

Each Function Strengthens the Others

The ministry functions become most effective when they work together rather than independently. An evangelist may preach the Gospel and see people born again. Teaching ministry can then help those believers understand Scripture more clearly, while pastoral ministry provides continuing care and guidance.

Prophetic ministry may warn the Church concerning spiritual danger or bring a truth sharply before the congregation. Teaching ministry can then explain that truth carefully and establish believers in Scriptural understanding.

Apostolic ministry may carry the Gospel into a new area and help establish a congregation. Evangelistic work can reach people in that area, while pastoral and teaching functions help strengthen the developing congregation. This is not a rigid sequence because the functions can overlap, and one believer may serve in more than one area.

Barnabas, for example, appears in Scripture in connection with both teaching and apostolic ministry. The important point is that the ministries support the same purpose.

Paul wrote in **Romans 12:4-5**:

> *"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."*

The words *"members one of another"* show interdependence. Ministry is not independent activity. The apostolic worker needs the contribution of teachers, the teacher needs the care and balance supplied through other ministries, and the pastoral worker needs evangelistic ministry to help keep the Gospel moving outward.

Each function benefits from the operation of the others.

Christ Remains the Centre of Them All

The unity of the ministry functions does not come from organisational control. It comes from Jesus 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."*

Christ must have the preeminence in every ministry. When ministries become centred upon personalities, competition follows. When believers gather around human names, divisions develop, and when ministry functions become religious titles, hierarchy begins to replace service.

The remedy is not to remove genuine ministry, but to keep every ministry beneath the headship of Jesus Christ. Apostolic, prophetic, evangelistic, pastoral and teaching ministry all serve Him, and each function also serves the same people: the body of Christ.

No ministry owns the believers it serves, and no congregation belongs to an apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor or teacher. The Church belongs to Jesus Christ. The life within every genuine minister is also His life, so ministry works properly when Christ expresses His care, truth, Gospel, guidance and instruction through the members He has called.

The five ministry functions work together because they come from the same Christ and serve the same body. None forms a higher rank, none should dominate the others, and none may become a religious title. Their different functions complement one another so that the Church is strengthened, equipped and edified under the one Head, Jesus Christ.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why should the five ministry functions work together under the same Christ?

Personal Reflection

Which ministry function do you tend to consider more spiritual or important than the others?

Action Step

Examine why that judgement is wrong and encourage someone whose different ministry serves a need you have undervalued.

LEADERSHIP BY EXAMPLE, NOT FORCE

BACK TO CONTENTS

Every ministry function carries responsibility, but biblical leadership is never based upon force, domination or personal rank. Those who serve in ministry lead by showing the way, living faithfully before others and remaining themselves under the authority of Jesus Christ.

Matthew wrote in **Matthew 4:19-20**:

> *"And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. And they straightway left their nets, and followed him."*

Jesus led, and they followed. His leadership was not built upon religious title or human status. He showed the way and called others to walk in it.

Leadership Shows the Way

Paul used similar language when writing to the Corinthians. Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 11:1**:

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

Paul did not place himself between the believer and Jesus Christ. His example was worth following only as he himself followed Christ. A person serving in ministry must never become the destination of another believer's faith, but must point beyond themselves to Jesus Christ.

Jesus said in **John 14:6**:

> *"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."*

Jesus Christ is the way. Apostolic, prophetic, evangelistic, pastoral and teaching ministry can guide people, warn them, instruct them and demonstrate faithful service, but none of these functions replaces Christ.

Leadership therefore begins with the leader being led by Jesus Christ. The person who teaches must submit to the Word being taught, the person who cares for the flock must remain under the Shepherd, and the person sent forth in ministry must remain obedient to the One who sent them. The person who calls others to faithfulness must first walk faithfully before them.

The Ox Pulls Rather Than Pushes

The ox provides a memorable picture of ministry leadership. Oxen were commonly placed under a yoke to pull a plough or turn a grinding wheel, using their strength by pulling forward under the direction of their master.

The ox pulls rather than pushes.

This provides a useful illustration of leadership within the Church. A true minister leads from the front through service, labour and example rather than pushing people from behind through pressure and control.

The Old Testament also records the danger of an ox that pushed with its horn. Moses wrote in **Exodus 21:29**:

> *"But if the ox were wont to push with his horn in time past, and it hath been testified to his owner, and he hath not kept him in, but that he hath killed a man or a woman; the ox shall be stoned, and his owner also shall be put to death."*

This verse concerns responsibility for a dangerous animal, but the contrast also provides a useful illustration of ministry. An ox working properly under the yoke pulls, while an ox using its strength to push can injure. The same distinction can be applied to leadership.

Spiritual strength should be used to serve, carry responsibility and help move the work of Christ forward. It must not be used to intimidate, dominate or pressure the people of God. A ministry function does not give someone permission to push believers through fear, personality or religious authority.

The stronger the influence, the greater the responsibility to use it in service.

Example Must Replace Domination

Peter directly instructed those serving as elders concerning the manner in which they were to care for God's people. Peter 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."*

Peter's instruction is clear. Those who oversee are not to be *"lords over God's heritage,"* but are to be *"ensamples to the flock."* Biblical leadership therefore does not remove oversight or responsibility, but governs the way that responsibility is exercised.

The leader teaches, but does not become master of another person's faith. The leader warns, but does not control through fear. The leader gives direction, but does not create a religious hierarchy. The leader carries responsibility, but remains a servant among the brethren.

This principle applies to every ministry function. Apostolic, prophetic, evangelistic, pastoral and teaching workers must all serve by example. The function changes, but the principle does not.

The life of Christ within the believer must govern the manner in which ministry is exercised. Leadership is not an external performance of authority, but Christ expressing His humility, truth, care and service through those He has called.

This also explains why religious titles are contrary to the spirit of New Testament ministry. A title draws attention towards rank and position, while biblical ministry directs attention towards responsibility and service.

The minister does not need a title to establish authority. Faithful service demonstrates the calling, sound doctrine demonstrates faithfulness, character demonstrates maturity, and the fruit of the ministry shows whether the work is genuinely strengthening the body.

Biblical leadership shows the way rather than forcing people along it. Like the ox pulling under the yoke, those who serve in ministry carry responsibility through labour, humility and example. They are never lords over God's people, never elevated by religious titles, and never the source of another believer's faith. Jesus Christ alone remains the Head, and true ministry leads by serving under Him.

Personal Response

Key Truth

What does leadership by example look like instead of leadership by force?

Personal Reflection

When have you used pressure or personal authority where a faithful example would have served people better?

Action Step

Identify the habit you need to change and explain how you will lead by humble example under the life of Christ within.

CONCLUSION: CHRIST MINISTERS THROUGH HIS SERVANTS

BACK TO CONTENTS

Jesus Christ has given different ministry functions to His Church so that His body may be strengthened, equipped, protected and established in truth.

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 come from Christ. Apostolic ministry is sent forth in the wider work of the Gospel, prophetic ministry declares and applies God's truth, and evangelistic ministry proclaims salvation in Jesus Christ. Pastoral ministry feeds, guides and protects the flock, while teaching ministry explains Scripture and establishes believers in sound doctrine.

Each function supplies a different need, but none creates a higher spiritual class. Apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor and teacher are ministry functions. They must never become religious titles.

The same principle applies to elder, bishop and deacon. These words describe responsibilities and service rather than titles of religious rank. Brother and sister describe relationship within the body and must not become religious titles either.

Jesus said in **Matthew 23:8**:

> *"But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren."*

All who are born again belong to the same body under one Head. Men and women may serve according to the ministry function Christ has given them. The New Testament records women such as Junia, Priscilla and Phebe actively serving within the Church. Ministry is determined by God's calling and placement rather than by religious tradition.

These ministry functions also continue because the needs for which Christ gave them continue. The Gospel still needs to be carried outward, and the Church still needs truth declared, souls reached, believers cared for and Scripture clearly taught.

Paul wrote in **Romans 11:29**:

> *"For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance."*

The continuation of ministry does not mean the continuation of religious hierarchy. Those who serve must remain servants, and no ministry function gives a believer the right to dominate others, become master of another person's faith or stand between Christ and His people.

Peter wrote in **1 Peter 5:3**:

> *"Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock."*

Biblical leadership leads by example. The five functions therefore work together rather than compete with one another. Apostolic, prophetic, evangelistic, pastoral and teaching ministry all serve the same Lord and the same body.

The source of genuine ministry is not religious position, personality or human ability. It is Jesus Christ working through His people.

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 captures the spirit of every ministry function. Christ is Lord. We are servants.

Jesus Christ calls, equips and works through believers according to the place He has given them within His body. The function identifies the work, but it never elevates the worker.

The five ministry functions exist so that Jesus Christ may serve, strengthen and build His Church through the believers He calls. Every genuine ministry remains beneath His headship, subject to His Word and centred upon Him.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How does Christ serve and build His Church through those He calls?

Personal Reflection

Do you think of a minister as someone to depend upon, or as a servant who points you towards Jesus Christ?

Action Step

Examine one expectation you place upon ministry and describe a practical way to support a minister without making that person your spiritual source.

MODULE CONCLUSION: CHRIST WORKING THROUGH HIS BODY

BACK TO CONTENTS

This module has brought together three closely connected truths: the Holy Spirit dwelling within the believer, the gifts through which the Spirit operates, and the ministry functions Christ gives for the strengthening of His Church. All three must be understood from the same foundation: Jesus Christ Himself.

Every born-again believer receives the Spirit of Christ at the new birth. The Holy Spirit is not another divine Person separate from Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ dwells within His people as Spirit, and His indwelling life is the source of spiritual life, service, gifts and ministry.

Paul wrote in **Romans 8:9**:

> *"But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."*

The believer does not receive Christ first and then wait for another Spirit later. At the new birth, the believer receives the Spirit of Christ and is brought into the one body. From that one Spirit come many different operations.

Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 12:4-7**:

> *"Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal."*

The gifts differ, but the Spirit is the same. Spiritual gifts are not independent powers possessed by individuals. They are manifestations of the one Spirit working through the members of Christ's body for the good of others.

No gift makes a believer spiritually superior, creates a religious rank or gives a person the right to dominate another member of the body. The same principle governs ministry functions.

Jesus Christ gave apostolic, prophetic, evangelistic, pastoral and teaching functions so that His people may be equipped, strengthened, protected and established in truth.

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 words describe functions of service, not religious titles. Apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, teacher, elder, bishop and deacon must never become titles of rank or personal honour within the body of Christ. Brother and sister describe relationship and must not become religious titles either.

Jesus Christ alone is Master, and His people are brethren. Men and women serve according to the ministry function Christ gives them. The New Testament records both men and women actively serving within the Church, so ministry is determined by God's calling and placement rather than by religious hierarchy or human tradition.

The gifts and ministry functions also work together. One believer may serve publicly while another serves quietly. One may teach, another encourage, another give, another care, another evangelise, and another serve apostolically or prophetically. Yet all remain members of the same body.

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."*

Every joint supplies, and every member has a place. The ministry functions do not replace the members, and the members do not operate independently of the Head. The supply comes from Jesus Christ.

This is the central truth of the entire module.

Christ dwells within His people.

Christ gives the gifts.

Christ gives the ministry functions.

Christ works through the members.

Christ remains the Head.

The Church therefore does not need another Spirit, another source of spiritual life or another level of religious authority between Christ and His people. Jesus Christ is sufficient. The believer possesses the Person, the gifts are His operations, the ministry functions are His means of service, and the body belongs to Him.

The Holy Spirit, the gifts and the ministry functions must all be understood through Jesus Christ dwelling and working within His born-again people. There is one Spirit, one body and one Head, and through the many members Jesus Christ continues to strengthen, equip and edify His Church.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How do the indwelling Spirit, spiritual gifts and ministry functions fit together under Jesus Christ?

Personal Reflection

Which teaching about gifts and offices has most challenged your attitude towards service or leadership?

Action Step

Name the change in your thinking and choose a specific response that strengthens another member through the life of Jesus Christ within you.

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 apostolic, prophetic, evangelistic, pastoral and teaching functions to His Church. How do they serve His body without creating ranks among believers?

2. Understanding

How do the work of being sent, declaring God's truth and proclaiming the Gospel differ? Explain why each must remain under Christ's direction and serve the same body.

3. Personal Reflection

Which ministry function have you misunderstood or valued too little? Explain what its faithful service gives the Church and what has changed in your view.

4. Response to Truth

How should you respond to faithful pastoral care and teaching? Describe how these ministries can help you receive care, understand the Bible and serve others more faithfully.

5. Action Step

Identify one ministry function you have undervalued or one need in the Church you have overlooked. What must change in your understanding, and how will you support that ministry for the good of Christ's people?

6. Early Response

Have you begun the response identified in Question 5? If so, explain the support you gave and any change in your attitude. If not, explain what has made it difficult to begin.

7. Ongoing Practice

What will help you continue to value all five ministry functions as service under Christ rather than titles of honour? Explain how you will test a minister's work by the Bible and its benefit to the Church.

8. Doctrinal Clarity

Why should the Church still receive all five ministry functions while it needs Gospel proclamation, care and sound teaching? Explain why continuing these functions gives no minister greater spiritual worth or authority above the Bible.

9. Living the Truth

In a ministry responsibility you hold or observe, how can a leader guide by example rather than force? Describe how two different functions could work together to meet a real need.

10. Final Response

Bring together Christ dwelling in believers, the Spirit's gifts, and the five ministry functions. What has become clearer to you about service in His body, and what will you now do to strengthen others under His headship?