

When God Builds up His Church

Eph.4:8-14

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Every house or building begin with a foundation; they are as strong as their foundation.

The Bible tells us that Jesus promised to build his church and that the gates of Hell would not overcome it. **Matt.16:18**. The church belongs to Jesus because he is his architect, engineer, designer. It was his idea to build it. ***Have you ever wondered how Jesus began to build his church? What did he do to build it?*** Paul tells us on **Ephesians 2:19-20** that God's house was **built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets**, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.

The church started with the preaching of the apostles and prophets in the first century. The preaching and teaching of the apostles and prophets was the foundation Christ used to build his house. *Their preaching about the resurrected Christ was the foundation upon the church was built.* Jesus had told his apostles that they would be empowered by the Holy Spirit to carry out his mission. Jesus built his church by empowering his people to accomplish his task.

Eph.4:8-14 Paul reminds us again how Christ built the church and for what purpose. Christ gave gifts to people to accomplish his purposes in building up his church. (v.11) *It was Christ who gave the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ (the church) may be built up.*

Let me introduce you to another list 1 Cor.12:27-30

- Apostles
- Prophets
- Teachers
- Workers of miracles
- Healing
- Help
- Administration
- Speaking in tongues.

Apostles and prophets are always listed in this order; they were the foundation of the church at its early stage. At the church in Antioch there were a lot of prophets and teachers. **Acts 13:1**

These were functions (roles) rather than titles. In other words, they were prophets because they prophesied; they were apostles because they were sent out.

In our text, Eph.4:11-12

Christ gave these roles, these gifts to people to build up his body, the church.

Apostles

Prophets

Evangelists

Pastors (shepherds)

Teachers.

Of all these gifts, the easier for most people to understand is teachers because pastor or shepherds most church people don't understand this role yet.

Apostles: Jesus chose 12 whom he sent out to preach. (Sent on a mission); they planted new churches through their preaching of the gospel, overseeing and training.

Prophets: the ability to communicate God's truth in a way that calls people to a right relationship with God. Prophets were the mouth of God "*Thus says the LORD*" The preachers.

Evangelists: one who shares good news, the ability to help non-Christians to take the necessary steps to becoming a follower of Jesus.

Pastors (shepherds): the divine ability to care for the personal needs of others by nurturing and mending life issues. To guard, lead and protect the flock John 10 Paul appointed shepherds to oversee the congregations.

Teachers: Divine ability to study and learn from Scriptures primarily to bring understanding and depth to other Christians.

There are so many people in churches across the country who still view these roles as titles. In some places, people expect the pastor to have all the gifts, to preach and teach and establish churches, run food programs; etc. This mentality is obviously erroneous when we look at Scripture. In some denomination, he/she is the CEO of the company; we have titles such as senior minister or reverent. Farther getting away from the biblical role of this God-given gift. A person may have multiple gifts, another person just one, God gives to each person according to their ability and God places them where he wants them.

Why did God give these gifts to the church? V.12 To prepare (equip) people for the works of service, this is what built the church two thousand years ago and continues to build it even today.

Notice that these gifts were given to people, so these people would equip others to serve, to do ministries. Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers were not doing all the ministries in the community. They were equipping others to serve; they empowered others to put in practice their gifts and get connected in the body of Christ.

What curriculum did they use for the training and equipping? The Bible, the Holy Scripture. God gave gifts to people to build his church. He gave them a manual (guide) for such training. Without God's word there is no discipleship, there is no equipping.

2 Tim.3:14-17

How did Jesus build his church? He gave some to be apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers to equip the saints for ministries.

God breathed out Scripture, the Bible, to teach us, rebuke us, correct us and train us in what he expects us to do, so that we become thoroughly equipped for every good work.

These were just some of the first gifts God gave the church; there are many more. You have been gifted to serve in some capacity in his body. Do you know what gifts do you have? We are all part of the body of Christ, his church and he is building it with the abilities he has given to us.

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