

The Five Primary Ministries

Jesus Gave Gifts

We spend a lot of time and effort teaching on Jesus' words to His disciples in the opening of the book of Acts when He told them to wait in Jerusalem on the promise of the Holy Spirit. This is important and needs to be emphasized; however, we also need to concentrate on what happened when Jesus ascended into Heaven. We find these details in the book of Ephesians.

Therefore it says, "WHEN HE ASCENDED ON HIGH, HE LED CAPTIVE A HOST OF CAPTIVES, AND HE GAVE GIFTS TO MEN." ([Ephesians 4:8 NASB](#))

These are the ascension gifts of Jesus given to us after His crucifixion; therefore, their intended purpose pertains to the Church Age and the new covenant.

The gifts are listed in these categories:

And He gave some *as* apostles, and some *as* prophets, and some *as* evangelists, and some *as* pastors and teachers, ([Ephesians 4:11 NASB](#))

These are gifts of men given by the Lord to His people and each one provides an aspect of the ministry of Jesus continuing in the earth. These five categories of men: apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors (shepherds), and teachers, represent Jesus ministering through a person. It is Jesus as apostle working through a man that makes him an apostle. It is Jesus as prophet working through a man that makes him a prophet and so it is with the other ascension gifts. They are gifts of Christ, which are headship gifts not gifts of the spirit, which are ministry gifts.

Their purpose is clearly stated in the next verse.

for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; ([Ephesians 4:12 NASB](#))

There are two aspects to their expected work:

1. equip the believers to do their job
2. build up the body of Christ

The next verse tells us how long the Lord expects these equipping gifts to be operative:

until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. ([Ephesians 4:13 NASB](#))

That means that these gifts function until these three great goals are attained:

1. come into the unity of the faith and knowledge of the Son of God
2. unto maturity
3. unto completion, fullness

The next verse tells us the alternative for God's people if the five-fold equipping gifts don't function properly, i.e., not as the Lord intended.

As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; ([Ephesians 4:14 NASB](#))

The alternative if the equipping functions do not operate:

1. spiritual retardation—growing older without maturing spiritually
2. instability—tossed about by every fad doctrine or trickery
3. deception—prey to deceitful scheming and craftiness

However, if the five-fold equipping ministries function properly and are received by the people, there are some wonderful results as given in the next verse:

but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all *aspects* into Him who is the head, *even* Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love. ([Ephesians 4:15-16 NASB](#))

The end results of the work done by the five-fold ministry:

1. we grow up into Him in all ways
2. completeness—the whole body fitted together
3. unity—the body functions as a body
4. strength—fitted and held together
5. each part doing its job—every joint supplies according to its proper function
6. the body grows and builds itself up

To achieve the results described requires the full functioning of all five primary ministry gifts of Jesus. Without the full five ministries, we, by default, receive the alternative and become unstable, deceived, spiritually retarded people lacking the power to overcome the trials and tribulations that come with the implanted Word. We remain ignorant of the ways of God and, therefore, fail to accomplish His purpose in the earth by falling short of fulfilling the work He prepared for us before the foundation of the world.

The Functions of the Five Primary Ministries

Apostles

Apostle means “one sent forth”. This implies that there is one who is doing the sending as well as the one sent. Jesus made this clear.

"Truly, truly, I say to you, a slave is not greater than his master, nor is one who is sent [apostolos—apostle] greater than the one who sent him. (John 13:16 NASB)

In the original “one who is sent” is *apostolos* which is apostle. Therefore, the apostle is not greater than the one who sent him. There is also an implication that the apostle (the “sendee”) is responsible to the “sender”, that is, the one who sends the apostle maintains responsibility for the apostle.

Categories of Apostles

There are three categories of apostles. The first two categories occurred before Pentecost and the third after Pentecost. The first two categories are unique and will never have any more additions.

The first category is the Apostle of the Father. Jesus is the only member of this class.

Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest of our confession; [\(Hebrews 3:1 NASB\)](#)

As the Apostle of the Father, Jesus was sent by Him for a specific work. (All apostles are sent to do a particular job or work). Jesus was sent forth from the Father as an apostle; but He returned to the Father as High Priest.

The second category of apostles are those sent or appointed by Jesus. This is also a unique class since these apostles have prophetic application and placement in God's purpose as shown in the Book of Revelation.

Jesus summoned His twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every kind of disease and every kind of sickness. Now the names of the twelve apostles are these . . . [\(Matthew 10:1-2 NASB\)](#)

These twelve Jesus sent out after instructing them . . . [\(Matthew 10:5 NASB\)](#)

And He called the twelve together, and gave them power and authority over all the demons and to heal diseases. And He sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to perform healing. (Luke 9:1-2 NASB)

Before Jesus commissioned the twelve, they are called disciples; after He sent them out, the twelve are called apostles.

The third class of apostles are those included in the ascension gifts of Jesus. It is important to see that these were only given after Jesus ascended to the Father. This should eliminate the arguments about whether or not the apostolic functions are for today.

We need to distinguish between these gifts of Jesus and the gifts of the Holy Spirit as listed in I Corinthians 12:8-11. These gifts are manifestations of the Spirit, while the ascension gifts are manifestations of Jesus. One must be baptized in the Holy Spirit to operate in the gifts of the Spirit; however, it is not necessary (although, it would be prudent) to be baptized in the Holy Spirit to operate as one of the ascension gifts.

A person may have any or all of the gifts of the Spirit operating in his life but not be appointed by Jesus in any of the five primary ministries. For example, a person can have the gift of prophecy and prophesy on a regular basis, but still not be a prophet. We need to be clear about this in order to eliminate confusion in this area.

The third category of apostles are those sent forth by the Holy Spirit. We see the first appointment of the third class of apostles at Antioch.

Now there were at Antioch, in the church that was *there*, prophets and teachers: Barnabas, and Simeon who was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. While they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia and from there they sailed to Cyprus. (Acts 13:1-4 NASB)

Jesus, through the Holy Spirit, selected Barnabas and Saul for a work. After acknowledgment and commissioning by the others, they were sent out by the Holy Spirit. After being sent out, these two are then called apostles (Acts 14:4; 14). Prior to being sent out they were prophets and teachers, but the act of sending them out caused them to become apostles.

The sender (in conjunction with the Holy Spirit) was the local church at Antioch represented by the prophets and teachers, who were probably the elders. However, just because Barnabas and Paul had been sent out didn't mean that their relationship with the church in Antioch was no longer of any importance.

Apostles are sent for specific purposes or work that is assigned by the Holy Spirit. When

Barnabas and Paul completed the work that they were sent to accomplish, they returned to Antioch and gave account of all that had been done.

From there they sailed to Antioch, from which they had been commended to the grace of God for the work that they had accomplished. When they had arrived and gathered the church together, they *began* to report all things that God had done with them and how He had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles. (Acts 14:26-27 NASB)

This shows that there is an ongoing relationship between the apostles and the local church which sent them out. The local church acknowledged and endorsed the apostles, which reveals a responsibility for them. The apostles were not autocrats; but, instead, were subject to the discipline of the local church that sent them forth. The commissioning local church could withdraw its endorsement of its apostles if their morals, ethics, or conduct became questionable and they refused correction from the elders that sent them out. However, while the sending Church is responsible for the morals and conduct of them apostles, this doesn't mean that the local Church directs them. That is the exclusive prerogative of the Holy Spirit.

Others Called Apostles

There are a number of others in the New Testament who are called apostles; but, due to inconsistency in the translations (especially the King James), the Greek word for apostle is not always translated as “apostle” but is sometimes translated as “messenger”. Here are two examples of this.

As for Titus, *he is* my partner and fellow worker among you; as for our brethren, *they are* messengers [*apostlos—apostles*] of the churches, a glory to Christ. (2 Corinthians 8:23 NASB)

But I thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger [*apostolos—apostle*] and minister to my need; (Philippians 2:25 NASB)

In these scriptures Titus is called an apostle of the churches and Epaphroditus is called an apostle from the Philippian Church.

Because of the tremendous apostolic work done by Paul, we tend to think that anyone who is an apostle must also do such powerful work. But, in spite of the way we think, not all apostles are of the same ability or stature as Paul.

For I consider myself not in the least inferior to the most eminent apostles. (2 Corinthians 11:5 NASB)

From this verse we can see that there are some eminent apostles, which also implies that there are some who are not so eminent. As with other ministries, there is a wide range of abilities and consecration resulting in varying degrees of success of the apostolic work.

Paul also mentions a couple of other apostles which he considered to be outstanding.

Greet Andronicus and Junias, my kinsmen and my fellow prisoners, who are outstanding among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me. ([Romans 16:7 NASB](#))

Again, these two were outstanding among the apostles, which implies that there were others that were ordinary or even mediocre apostles.

The Calling of an Apostle

Many have searched the Scriptures looking for an apostolic gift and have not found one. This is because there isn't an apostolic gift. An apostle is a person and it is the person of an apostle that is given by Jesus to His people. As such an apostle has to be called by the Lord and commissioned or appointed by the Holy Spirit with an acknowledgment and a sending out by the local Elders.

Paul, a bond-servant of Christ Jesus, called *as* an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, ([Romans 1:1 NASB](#))

for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle and a teacher. ([2 Timothy 1:11 NASB](#))

For this I was appointed a preacher and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying) as a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth. ([1 Timothy 2:7 NASB](#))

We saw the pattern for how this was done when we looked at Acts Chapter 13. Since this is the only detailed example in the Scriptures about people being sent out as apostles, we can assume that all that we need to know about the methodology is contained in these scriptures. There is no indication that the Lord has changed His methods since then. We should expect the same procedures to apply today.

We should notice in Acts 13 that it was the prophets and teachers that were assembled and it was from this group that Paul and Barnabas were selected by the Lord. The implication is that apostles only come forth from those who already have a proven ministry as prophets and teachers. They didn't stop being prophets and teachers but the sending forth as apostles added a new dimension and responsibility to their ministries.

We should also notice that they were sent forth as a team. Apostles always functioned in the plural and sometimes their teams were quite large. Even when Paul and Barnabas split up as a team over the issue of John Mark, they assembled new teams. Barnabas took John Mark as part of his team and Paul took Silas (later adding Timothy). Paul refers to his apostolic team in the first verse of I Thessalonians.

Paul and Silvanus and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace. ([1 Thessalonians 1:1 NASB](#))

Most people don't realize it, but all three of these (Paul, Silas, and Timothy) wrote the book of Thessalonians together. While we only think of Paul as an apostle, all three of them are referred to as apostles in the second chapter of Thessalonians.

nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others, even though as apostles of Christ we might have asserted our authority. (1 Thessalonians 2:6 NASB)

Another example of apostolic teams is in Acts 8. This chapter about Phillip in Samaria is the pattern for the work of the Evangelist, which will be discussed later. For now, notice that Phillip worked alone. He didn't have a team, just the power of God. He preached Christ, performed miracles, healed the sick, cast out devils and baptized those who believed in water. This describes the fullness and the limits of the Evangelist's ministry. After baptizing the believers, Phillip moved on by the direction of the Holy Spirit.

When those in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received Christ under Phillip's ministry, they sent two apostles, Peter and John, to pray for them to receive the Holy Spirit. To complete God's work in Samaria required one evangelist and two apostles. (You can also contrast the fact the evangelist went but the apostles were sent.)

In Galatians 2 we have an example of the meeting of two apostolic teams. Paul, Barnabas, and Titus went to Jerusalem to meet with a second apostolic team of James, Peter and John. The apparent purpose of the meeting was to discuss Paul's calling to the Gentiles and to express the gospel of grace which Paul was preaching. The two teams parted in complete unity concerning God's working among the Jews and the Gentiles.

Based on a careful reading of the Word, it appears to be unscriptural for an apostle to act alone. As a matter of fact, apostles, prophets and shepherds are always referred to in the plural, never as a singular ministry. Why? Because, of the five primary ministries, these three deal with church order and government. This is so important that the Lord doesn't entrust it to only one person. Plurality is God's safety feature. If we would just obey this principle, it would save us from a lot of the problems that we have today.

Requirements for an Apostle

Because of an emphasis on the grace of God in the new birth and our walk with Him, we sometimes neglect the fact that we have to qualify for ministry and leadership.

but I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified. (1 Corinthians 9:27 NASB)

For what did Paul think he could be disqualified? Not eternal life but rather his reward.

Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is *to be* revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. If any man's work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward.

If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire. (1 Corinthians 3:12-15 NASB)

Our reward is based on the quality of our work. Paul did not want to be disqualified because of inferior work.

If Paul thought that disqualification could apply to him, then the rest of us had better pay attention!

All of the five primary ministries have qualifications that have to do with our character and the manner in which we live.

Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. (Ephesians 4:1-3 NASB)

Walking worthy begins with humility to which we add gentleness and patience. These are some of the primary attributes of the character of Jesus and are absolutely required before Jesus will allow us to function in any of the primary ministries.

Paul emphasizes character when he speaks of the signs of an apostle.

The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with all perseverance, by signs and wonders and miracles. (2 Corinthians 12:12 NASB)

Perseverance, which is a character trait, is the primary sign of true apostles. The miraculous signs are secondary. (We tend to reverse this and look at the miracles first.) More than anything else, an apostle has to persevere in the purpose and calling of God because he is resisted from every side.

The Function of an Apostle

The work of an apostle combines the functionality of all of the other five primary ministries with the working of miracles, signs and wonders. In any given situation the apostolic ministry could be hard to distinguish from the other ministries. However, there is a specific function of apostles that is not applicable to any other ministry.

According to the grace of God which was given to me, like a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building on it. But each man must be careful how he builds on it. (1 Corinthians 3:10 NASB)

The word that is translated “wise” also means “skilled”, which is probably a better translation in this context. “Master builder” is one word in the original, *architekton*, from which we get “architect”. So, the apostles are the “skilled architects” of God's building program. They function as the supervisors of the building of the Temple of the Living God, as architects of the Church.

It is the architects which lay out the building plans and interpret them for the workers. The plans not only specify shape and function, but they also specify the proper building materials. That is what apostles do. They set up and maintain church order. The seal of apostolic ministry is a completed, functioning *ekklesia*—assembly of God's people.

Paul told the Corinthians that the Church of Corinth was his validation as an apostle.

If to others I am not an apostle, at least I am to you; for you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord. (1 Corinthians 9:2 NASB)

A fully functioning, properly established, completed local Church is proof positive of one's apostolic calling. (Getting a building and starting a “work” is not necessarily a properly established church. In most cases, this does not follow God's building plans. There are many “works”, which we call “church” that God doesn't recognize as His Church.)

Prophets

A “prophet” is “one who speaks forth” on behalf of God and by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. This is not necessarily a prediction of the future.

God makes revelation of His plans and counsel to His prophets.

Surely the Lord GOD does nothing Unless He reveals His secret counsel To His servants the prophets. (Amos 3:7 NASB)

Elijah said in I Kings 17:1 ..."As the LORD, the God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, ...". Essentially, the prophet stands before God; that is where he receives revelation of His plans. Then in I Kings 18:1 God tells Elijah to “go show yourself to Ahab...” The message cannot be separated from the man. God uses men not methods to accomplish His purpose.

In Jeremiah 23:15-32 we have a contrast between true and false prophets. While a lot of details are given, the essentials are simple: the true prophet stands in the counsel of the Lord and delivers the word of the Lord, while the false prophet delivers a message out of the deception of his own heart.

The Prophetic Transition to the New Testament

Under the Old Covenant, the prophets were God's only representatives in the earth. However, this changes under the New Covenant.

God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. (Hebrews 1:1-2 NASB)

Previously God spoke in the prophets in various manner and ways, but, God now speaks

to us in Jesus Christ. Jesus is The Prophet. In Revelation 19:10 we are told that "...the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." This is the arena of New Testament prophecy: what Jesus has done, is doing, and will do.

The operation of the prophetic has been extended under the New Covenant from just a few to the entire people of God. The coming of the Holy Spirit gave access to the gifts of the Spirit, which includes the Gift of Prophecy. All of God's people under the anointing of the Holy Spirit can prophesy (I Corinthians 14:31); but Jesus only gave "some" as prophets. Just giving prophecies does not make one a prophet.

Examples of New Testament Prophets

Now at this time some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. One of them named Agabus stood up and *began* to indicate by the Spirit that there would certainly be a great famine all over the world. And this took place in the *reign* of Claudius. (Acts 11:27-28 NASB)

While these scriptures name Agabus as a prophet, there are other New Testament prophets who were with him when he came to Antioch from Jerusalem. In Acts 13:1 there are five named as prophets and teachers.

Judas and Silas, also being prophets themselves, encouraged and strengthened the brethren with a lengthy message. (Acts 15:32 NASB)

Both Judas and Silas are called prophets in this passage.

If you add these up then there are ten New Testament Prophets named. In our look at apostles, we discovered that the Bible named at least 14 apostles after the day of Pentecost. However, as we will discover when we look at the evangelist's ministry, there is only one evangelist named in the New Testament. So, scripturally we have 14 apostles, 10 prophets, and 1 evangelist. However, in our modern church we have multitudes called evangelists and nobody willing to call someone apostle or prophet. Doesn't this sound like we have something backward here?

The Ministry of the Prophet

Basically, New Testament prophecy is for the believer not the unbeliever.

So then tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe but to unbelievers; but prophecy *is for a sign*, not to unbelievers but to those who believe. (1 Corinthians 14:22 NASB)

Prophets are normally members of groups such as the group that Agabus was with when they came from Jerusalem to Antioch.

Prophets submit their message and ministry to the other prophets for their judgment (1 Corinthians 14:29). This agrees with the New Testament picture of all believers as interdependent members of one body.

Teachers

The meaning of “teacher” is essentially “interpreter of scripture”.

Teachers are third in the functional order of responsibility in the Church.

And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, *various* kinds of tongues. (1 Corinthians 12:28 NASB)

These three, apostles, prophets, teachers, all are responsible for the ministry of the the Word of God and are typically mentioned in the plural. God doesn't entrust His Word to only one ministry or one interpretation. Notice, also, that His Word takes preeminence over miracles and healing.

These three function together in this manner:

An apostle has a special task: establishing and ordering churches;

A prophet has a special message: a word individually received from God to be delivered at a specific time and place;

A teacher expounds God's Truth generally, but has no special message individually received.

Teachers are frequently linked with one of the other primary ministries: II Timothy 1:11—an apostle and a teacher; Acts 13:1—prophets and teachers (compare Acts 15:32); Luke 20:1—Jesus was teaching and evangelizing.

Two Levels of Teachers

A teacher as represented by the five primary ministries would be to the whole body in all places making the teacher a mobile or traveling ministry. An example of this type of teacher is Apollos.

Now a Jew named Apollos, an Alexandrian by birth, an eloquent man, came to Ephesus; and he was mighty in the Scriptures. This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he was speaking and teaching accurately the things concerning Jesus, being acquainted only with the baptism of John; and he began to speak out boldly in the synagogue. But when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately. And when he wanted to go across to Achaia, the brethren encouraged him and wrote to the disciples to welcome him; and when he had arrived, he greatly helped those who had believed through grace, for he powerfully refuted the Jews in public, demonstrating by the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ. (Acts 18:24-28)

NASB)

What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, even as the Lord gave *opportunity* to each one. I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth. (1 Corinthians 3:5-6 NASB)

Apollos watered what Paul had planted. The Achaia believers had come to Christ through supernatural grace. Thereafter, their faith needed to be established through understanding of the scriptures. This is achieved by systematic, public exposition of scripture.

An evangelistic ministry, many times, comes quickly after conversion; but, a teaching ministry takes time to develop.

The second type of teaching ministry is at the local level: to the members of the local flock.

The elders who rule well are to be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching. (1 Timothy 5:17 NASB)

holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict. (Titus 1:9 NASB)

One of the requirements for an elder is that he be able to teach (I Timothy 3:2). This doesn't mean he has to be what we call a "pulpit personality", but, rather that he be able to teach in a counseling manner with one on one application.

Two Categories of Teachers

Within the two types of teachers we also have two categories of teachers: originators (developers) and duplicators.

The originators develop revelatory scriptural understanding of doctrine and application. This is done in conjunction with apostles and prophets and is subject to judgment and correction by them.

The duplicators receive the teaching from others and duplicate it for those with which they associate, usually the local assembly of God's people.

The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. (2 Timothy 2:2 NASB)

Every ministry is responsible to reproduce that which God has given them.

Evangelists

The evangelist is the only one of the five primary ministries which appears to operate alone without being part of a team. This may be because the message of the evangelist is Christ and Christ only. There is very little chance of error if one is preaching salvation in Christ only and, as people believe, baptize them in water. Some have called them God's paratroopers who drop behind enemy lines and wreck havoc with the enemy's plans.

The only detailed example we have of an evangelist's ministry is in Acts chapter 8 with the work of Phillip, the evangelist. He is the only person named in the New Testament as an evangelist. The noun is used only 3 times: Ephesians 4:11; Acts 21:8; 2 Timothy 4:5 but the verb form of evangelist, that is, to evangelize is used about 50 times: e.g. Luke 4:18; Acts 8:25; Romans 1:15; 1 Corinthians 1:17; 2 Corinthians 10:16; and others.

As we look at the Scriptures concerning Phillip as the pattern evangelist, we will find that very few of today's ministers who call themselves evangelists actually do the work of an evangelist.

Philip began as a Deacon (Acts 6:5) but developed into the pattern evangelist (Acts 21:8) of the New Testament (see also 1 Timothy 3:13 concerning Deacons). His evangelistic ministry is described in detail in Acts chapter 8.

Philip went down to the city of Samaria and *began* proclaiming Christ to them. The crowds with one accord were giving attention to what was said by Philip, as they heard and saw the signs which he was performing. For *in the case of* many who had unclean spirits, they were coming out *of them* shouting with a loud voice; and many who had been paralyzed and lame were healed. So there was much rejoicing in that city. (Acts 8:5-8 NASB)

Phillip did several things as an evangelist:

1. He proclaimed Christ;
2. He performed miracles;
3. He cast out demons; and
4. He healed many.

This produced certain results in the people of Samaria.

But when they believed Philip preaching the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were being baptized, men and women alike. (Acts 8:12 NASB)

The people believed and they were baptized. In other words, they became Christians by our definition today. This is where the ministry of the evangelist ends—with water

baptism.

When Philip, the evangelist, completed his ministry in Samaria, the Jerusalem church sent Peter and John.

Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent them Peter and John, who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. For He had not yet fallen upon any of them; they had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. [\(Acts 8:14-16 NASB\)](#)

The Samaritans became Christians under the ministry of Philip, the evangelist; but they received the Holy Spirit under the ministry of Peter and John. So we see that the evangelist has a very specific job—to bring people to Christ (through preaching, signs, wonders, healing, and deliverance) and baptize them in water. If the evangelist proceeds into other areas such as the baptism of the Holy Spirit, he is exceeding his job function. Part of the problem in the modern Church is that too few people actually know their job functions and the parameters within which they are to operate.

The Evangelist is not listed in 1 Corinthians 12:28 as a ministry within the local assembly because the evangelist's ministry is to the unconverted.

Shepherds

Basically, the ministries of the Apostles, Prophets, Teachers, and Evangelists are trans-local, that is, mobile or itinerant; whereas, the Shepherd's ministry is resident locally. As such, they are restricted to a given locality and function within the local body in that locality.

There is some confusion about local leadership due to translation issues and traditions. In the New Testament there are three Greek words used for the local leadership which are translated by five English words which tradition has given different meanings.

1. "*Presbuteros*" equals Elder.
2. "*Episkopos*" equals Overseer (KJV sometimes translates as "Bishop")
3. "*Poimen*" equals Shepherd (once in KJV as "pastor")

These different words all denote one and the same ministry or function.

From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called to him the elders of the church. [\(Acts 20:17 NASB\)](#)

"Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. [\(Acts 20:28 NASB\)](#)

The elders were made overseers to shepherd the church of God. In other words, their *qualification* for ministry was elder, their *ministry* was to shepherd; and their *work* was oversight.

Other scriptures which reflect the same truth:

For this reason I left you in Crete, that you would set in order what remains and appoint elders in every city as I directed you, *namely*, if any man is above reproach, the husband of one wife, having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion. For the overseer must be above reproach as God's steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain, but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled, holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict. (Titus 1:5-9 NASB)

(The KJV translates *episkopos* as “bishop” instead of “overseer” thus adding to modern confusion and helping create an artificial position and authority for bishops.)

For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls. (1 Peter 2:25 NASB)

(Translation inconsistencies in this verse: *episkopos* is translated by NASB as “Guardian” and the KJV as “Bishop” when it is actually “overseer”.)

Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as *your* fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed, shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to *the will of* God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; (1 Peter 5:1-2 NASB)

Again, the elders shepherd the flock and exercise oversight. Notice from these scriptures that elders are always mentioned in the plural.

Other scriptures which mention elders in the plural: Acts 14:23; Acts 20:17; Titus 1:5; James 5:14; Philippians 1:1; I Thessalonians 5:12; Hebrews 13:7, 17, 24.

Relationship of Apostles and Shepherds

The Shepherds or Elders are the vital link between the mobile ministries and the local church.

It is the apostles that appoint the first elders of a local church not the people. Until elders are appointed, the order of the local church is incomplete.

When they had appointed elders for them in every church, having prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed. (Acts 14:23)

NASB)

For this reason I left you in Crete, that you would set in order what remains and appoint elders in every city as I directed you, (Titus 1:5 NASB)

The transition from a group of disciples into a functioning church is the appointment of the elders by the apostles. The elders then became the ones responsible for the local assembly.

When an apostle resides or is associated with a local church, within that church his function is that of a co-elder.

Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as *your* fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed, (1 Peter 5:1 NASB)

The Shepherds or elders are required to acknowledge an apostle's ministry before it is received.

I wrote something to the church; but Diotrephes, who loves to be first among them, does not accept what we say. For this reason, if I come, I will call attention to his deeds which he does, unjustly accusing us with wicked words; and not satisfied with this, he himself does not receive the brethren, either, and he forbids those who desire *to do so* and puts *them* out of the church. (3 John 1:9-10 NASB)

I know your deeds and your toil and perseverance, and that you cannot tolerate evil men, and you put to the test those who call themselves apostles, and they are not, and you found them *to be false*; (Revelation 2:2 NASB)

The local leadership is responsible for the protection and care of the flock. They were to test the apostles and other mobile ministries as part of their job.

The Ministry of the Shepherds

It is not an accident that those responsible for the local assembly are called shepherds. The natural function of a shepherd caring for the sheep is a powerful picture of the care that the Lord intends for His people.

Jesus is the *pattern shepherd*. John 10:11-16, 27 presents the main aspects of a shepherd's work:

1. To lay down his life for his sheep,
2. To know his sheep individually,
3. To be personally knowable and known,

4. To speak and lead.

Our best presentation of the shepherds' spiritual functions in the scriptures is in the negative.

"Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel. Prophesy and say to those shepherds, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "Woe, shepherds of Israel who have been feeding themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flock? "You eat the fat and clothe yourselves with the wool, you slaughter the fat *sheep* without feeding the flock. "Those who are sickly you have not strengthened, the diseased you have not healed, the broken you have not bound up, the scattered you have not brought back, nor have you sought for the lost; but with force and with severity you have dominated them. (Ezekiel 34:2-4 NASB)

Because the shepherds have not done these things and are receiving judgment for it, then we can assume that God expects the shepherds to perform these functions as part of their calling:

1. Feed the flock,
2. Strengthen the sickly,
3. Heal the diseased,
4. Bind up the broken,
5. Round up the scattered, and
6. Search for the lost.

From these verses we can see that the shepherds of Israel had become self centered, more concerned with their own needs than the needs of the flock. They used the flock for their own purposes.

The modern church is filled with those who call themselves shepherds but are not so called by the Lord. We are living in the days of the foolish shepherds.

The LORD said to me, "Take again for yourself the equipment of a foolish shepherd. "For behold, I am going to raise up a shepherd in the land who will not care for the perishing, seek the scattered, heal the broken, or sustain the one standing, but will devour the flesh of the fat *sheep* and tear off their hoofs. (Zechariah 11:15-16 NASB)

Again, the foolish shepherd takes the position of shepherd without fulfilling the obligations of a shepherd. Does that sound like many of our so-called shepherds in today's Church?

Expression of Jesus

These five main ministries bring forth the fullness of the ministry of Jesus in the earth. There should be complete unity between each one function in these ministries. As a matter of fact, they should be the example of the seven areas of unity mentioned in Ephesians.

There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all. (Ephesians 4:4-6 NASB)

The 5-fold ministry operates structurally and deals with the Kingdom work of the Father. It is in the 5-fold ministry that the work of the Father (the Kingdom) is joined to the work of Jesus (the Church) to bring a unified whole to the purposes of God. The Church is in the process of becoming the Temple of God (built of living stones) for the Kingdom (rule of God). We have this in a mystical form now. It doesn't find full expression until the New Heavens and the New Earth.

The 5-fold ministries are men who have become tools of Jesus to establish His Kingdom and to build His Church. Because of this, there are certain requirements necessary for those who would enter these ministry areas. Jesus didn't enter His ministry until He understood His work in relation to the Father's purpose; until He could express the Father's heart to the point that He could tell His disciples that when they saw Him, they saw the Father. Do you think that anything less would be required of those who would express various aspects of the ministry work of Jesus?

I believe that anyone who would enter the 5-fold ministry must have developed a father's heart and an understanding of the work that the Father wishes to accomplish. This would eliminate those who would abuse the positions of authority that is entailed and eliminate those who have incorrect motivations for ministry.