

I. Introduction.

- A. The church is important to God. Mt. 16:18 I Tim. 3:15
- B. The church has important functions: worship, evangelism, and service. Jo. 4:23-24
Mt. 28:18f Acts 1:8
- C. The triumphant, ascended Christ has given gifts to his church. 4:7-8

II. Our leaders are to equip every saint (member). 4:11-12a

- A. The Apostles and prophets were foundational for the church. v. 11a 2:20 3:5
- B. God has given us Pastor-Teachers. (Elders/Overseers). v. 11b
 - 1. Grammatically it is clear that these two words refer to one office. I Tim. 3:2 Ti. 1:9
 - 2. This office is the same as that of Elder/Overseer. Acts 20:28 I Pe. 5:4 I Ti. 3:1f
 - 3. Within the local church there is to be a plurality of Pastor-teachers (Elders).
Acts 14:23 Titus 1:5 I Pet. 5:1f
 - 4. Respect, love, and appreciate the leaders God has given us. I Th. 5:12-13 He. 13:17
- C. A primary function of the Pastors (Elders) is to equip the saints for works of service.
 - 1. The leaders of the church are not expected to do all the work of ministry.
 - 2. Who are the “saints”? 1:2
 - 3. The saints need to be prepared for ministry. Mt. 4:21 I Th. 3:10 Ga. 6:1
- D. How do the Elders equip the saints?
 - 1. By faithfully proclaiming (and applying) the Word. v. 13-15 II Tim. 3:16-4:2
 - 2. By ministering the Word individually: counsel and instruction. Ga. 6:1 Acts 20:20
 - 3. Through training designed to equip people for specific ministries.
 - 4. By mentoring people in ministry (discipleship). Mt. 28:18 II Tim. 2:2
 - 5. By setting an example in service. I Tim. 4:12 John 13:13-15
 - 6. By giving people freedom to participate in and initiate ministry.
 - 7. By making members aware of ministry needs. II Co. 8-9
 - 8. By recruiting members to meet particular needs. Mt. 10:1f 21:1-2 Mark 6:37
- E. What harm results when leaders try to do all the work of ministry?
 - 1. Failure to equip and delegate is a failure to equip and lead.
 - 2. Others are robbed of the blessing and privilege of using their gifts to serve God.
 - 3. A few men (or one man) can't do all things well. I Cor. 12:14,19-21
 - 4. The leaders neglect their primary calling. Acts 6:2-4 .
 - 5. The development of new leaders is inhibited.
 - 6. The congregation develops a spectator mentality.
- F. Look to your leaders to equip you.

III. Every believer is to be engaged in works of service. v. 12b

- A. Some interpret this text to mean that the Pastor-teachers equip the saints, and Pastor-teachers do the work of ministry, and Pastors-teachers build up the body.
 - 1. Why would someone hold this interpretation? *A fight over a comma. (KJV)*
 - 2. Paul's use of different prepositions “for (*pros*) the equipping of the saints unto (*eis*) the work of service, unto (*eis*) the building up of the body of Christ” shows his thought is not coordinate, but sequential.

3. The word for ministry (*diakonia*) refers to ministry (service) in which all believers are engaged. Acts 6:1-2 II Co. 8:4 I Co. 12:5 I Pe. 4:10 Ro. 12:7 He. 6:10 Re. 2:19
4. Each of us is gifted for service by Christ. 4:7 I Cor. 12:7 I Pe. 4:10-11
5. Each of us participates in building up the body of Christ. 4:16

B. God wants you to use your spiritual gifts to build up the body.

1. What kinds of gifts has God given? I Pe. 4:10-11
2. Your gift belongs to us and is to be used for our edification. I Cor. 12:7 14:4,26
3. The body is harmed when any part does not function properly. v. 16 I Cor. 12:18f
4. You will give account to God for your stewardship. I Pe. 4:10 Luke 12:42f

C. In order to properly use your gift, you must have the heart attitude of a servant.

Mark 10:41-45 Jo. 13:1f I Pe. 4:10-11

1. Serve in a Christlike way. Mark 10:41-45 John 13:1f
2. We fail to properly use our gifts because we are self-centered.
3. Servants recognize needs and meet them.

D. Whatever service you perform, serve wholeheartedly. I Pe. 4:10-11 I Tim. 4:14-15

E. Don't make excuses for not serving.

1. *I live too far away.*
2. *Someone else will do it.*
3. *I'm in an especially busy time in my life.*
4. *I have served in the past and I am tired.* Ga. 6:9 II Ti. 4:6-8 Mt. 24:13 Js. 5
5. *I am afraid of over-committing.*

F. In order to fully use your gifts, you must be fully committed to the church body.

1. Why are people reluctant to commit to a local church?
2. Is church membership biblical? I Co. 12 Acts 5:14 2:47 Heb. 13:17 I Pe. 5:3
3. Membership has its privileges.

G. How can you know what your gift is? I Tim. 3:1 I Cor. 12:31

IV. The result of equipping and serving is that the church body is built up. v.12c-16 Co. 2:19

A. The church body grows in maturity. v. 13,15-16

B. Churches in which leaders fail to equip and saints fail to serve will remain weak. v. 14

V. Concluding applications.

Benediction: Heb. 13:30-21

Discussion Questions.

1. Who are the Pastor-teachers?
2. What is the function of our Pastor-teachers?
3. How specifically can our Pastor-teachers carry out their duty?
4. Who is to do the work of ministry in the church?
5. What is a spiritual gift?
6. Do you know what your spiritual gift is? If not, how can you learn?
7. What does the Bible teach about how our gifts are to be used?
8. Why is it important to be a member of a church?
9. What would our church be like if everyone was as committed to service as you?