

THE WORK OF THE CHURCH

I. GOD GIVES EACH CHRISTIAN GRACE – Ephesians 4:7

The grace God gives you results in unique gifts and abilities He wants you to have, and then use for the good of the church. The measure of grace God gives you relates to the faith that He gives you. Romans 12:3-6

II. CHRIST EARNED THE RIGHT TO GIVE YOU THESE GIFTS - Ephesians 4:8-10

Christ came down to earth, died on the cross, was raised from the dead, proclaimed His victory, and then ascended into heaven, appearing before God as a conquering king, with the result that He could give spiritual gifts to believers on earth.

III. CHRIST GIVES LEADERSHIP GIFTS TO PEOPLE IN THE CHURCH – Ephesians 4:11

A. Apostles – this refers to one who is sent out, who is on a mission. Apostles, in a strict sense, refer to the 12 apostles. They saw Jesus Christ, helped lay the foundation of the church, declared God's word, and did signs and wonders, which authenticated their role.

B. Prophets – this refers to ones involved in local churches contrasted with the apostles who were involved in many churches. Their purpose was to proclaim or explain God's word. Both these offices, the apostles and prophets, disappeared with the completion of the New Testament, which took place around 90 AD. 1 Corinthians 14:1-3

C. Evangelists – these believers are uniquely gifted to preach the gospel, and to reach the lost with the gospel. These saints have a heart for the lost, and a unique ability to boldly and clearly share the gospel.

D. Pastors and teacher – this refers to one person, a person who is a pastor and a teacher. These men are to shepherd the sheep, feed them, watch over them, care for them and protect them (Acts 20:17, 28, 1 Peter 5:1-2, 1 Timothy 3:1-2). All churches need pastors and teachers, and evangelists.

IV. THE PURPOSE OF THE LEADERS OF THE CHURCH – Ephesians 4:12

The primary work of the pastor-teachers and the evangelists is to equip the saints to do the work of service, and specifically, to build up the body of Christ. The believers in the church are to be workers, helping the church to spiritually grow, both in character and in numbers. Acts 9:31

V. THE RESULT OF THE CHURCH BEING BUILT – Ephesians 4:13-16

A. There will be a unity of the faith. The church will be in agreement with regard to the basic doctrines of the church - God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, our hope, salvation, the church, and God's word. Ephesians 4:4-6, 1 Corinthians 1:10

B. A knowledge of the Son of God. This knowledge is not just in the head, but also in the heart, a knowledge, a relationship with Jesus Christ Himself. In a healthy church, the saints have a good relationship with Jesus Christ. Ephesians 1:17

C. The believers are to be mature, not child-like. In the church, there will be spiritual adults, ones who are spiritually mature, possessing faith, love, holiness and godly character. They will have a godly purpose and direction in life.

D. The believers are Christ-like. God wants each believer to have the character of Christ, the truth of Christ, and the purpose of Christ in his life. Ephesians 5:1

E. The believers aren't swayed, aren't affected by false teaching, by error, by evil people who have ill intent, and who don't speak the truth.

F. The believer speaks the truth in love. He not only knows the truth, but he speaks the truth, and he speaks the truth in a loving way.

G. The believers are not loners, off doing their own thing, but are connected to, are fitting together with other members in the church.

H. All this *"causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love."*

NOW TO HIM WHO IS ABLE TO DO FAR MORE ABUNDANTLY
BEYOND ALL THAT WE ASK OR THINK,
ACCORDING TO THE POWER THAT WORKS WITHIN US,
TO HIM BE THE GLORY IN THE CHURCH AND IN CHRIST JESUS
TO ALL GENERATIONS FOREVER AND EVER.

Ephesians 3:20-21

SOME QUESTIONS TO ANSWER:

1. What is the main thing that you believe God wants you to learn from this lesson?
2. Do you see that God has given you grace to help build the church? How has He done this?
3. What are the two main leadership gifts needed for the church? Why are they important?
4. What is the primary purpose of the leaders of the church? How do you they do this?
5. What is your relationship with Jesus Christ like? How can it improve?
6. What are spiritually mature Christians like? What are immature Christians like?
7. Are you connecting with other members of the church? In what ways?