

I. Introduction.

- A. The church is important to God. Mt. 16:18 I Tim. 3:15
- B. Our mission is to build a community of gospel-centered people as we:
  1. Worship God in spirit and truth (John 4:24; Acts 2:42).
  2. Serve one another by exercising our spiritual gifts (I Cor. 12:4-6; Eph. 4:11-16).
  3. Proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ to the world (Mt. 28:18-20; Acts 1:8).
  4. Live out a biblical worldview in all spheres of life (Jer. 29:7; Mt. 5:13-16).

II. The church grows when our leaders equip every saint (member). 4:11-12a

- A. The triumphant ascended Christ has given leaders as His gifts to the church. v. 7-10
- B. The apostles and prophets were foundational for the church. v. 11a 2:20 3:5 Acts 2:42
- C. 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 Titus 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. We should appreciate the leaders God has given us. He. 13:17 I Th. 5:12-13
- D. 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. All of the saints need to be trained for ministry. Mt. 4:21 I Th. 3:10 Ga. 6:1-2
  4. The church has a primary role in equipping people to serve Christ.
  5. Elders shouldn't send unequipped people out to do ministry. 1 Tim. 3:6
- E. How do the elders equip the saints? Acts 20:20
  1. By faithfully proclaiming the Word publicly. v. 13-15 II Tim. 3:16-4:2
  2. By ministering the Word individually. Gal. 6:1f 1 Thess. 5:14
  3. Through training designed to equip people for specific ministries.
  4. By personally mentoring people in ministry (discipleship). Mt. 28:18 II Tim. 2:2 Luke 9:1ff
  5. By setting an example in service. I Tim. 4:12 John 13:13-15 1 Co. 11;1 4:16
  6. By giving people freedom to participate in and initiate ministry.
  7. By delegating ministry. Exodus 18:13ff 2 Tim. 2:2 Acts 6:3
  8. By making members aware of ministry needs. II Co. 8-9
  9. By recruiting members to meet particular needs. Mt. 10:1f 21:1-2 Mark 6:37
- F. What harm results when leaders try to do all the work of ministry?
  1. Others are robbed of the blessing and privilege of using their gifts to serve God.
  2. A few men (or one man) can't do all things well. I Cor. 12:14,19-21
  3. The leaders neglect their primary calling. Acts 6:2-4
  4. The development of new leaders is inhibited.
  5. The congregation develops a spectator mentality.
  6. Leaders (and their families) burn out. Ex. 18:13ff
- G. If you desire to be a leader in the church, learn to be an equipper.
- H. Church, look to your leaders to equip you.

III. The church grows when every believer is engaged in works of service. v. 12b

- A. Who does the work of ministry and builds up the body?
1. Some teach that the leaders equip the saints, do the work of ministry and build up the body (the battle of a comma). Why would someone hold this interpretation?
  2. Our understanding is that saints who have been equipped by the leaders do works of service resulting in the building up of the body. 4:16,7 Acts 6:1-2 II Co. 8:4  
I Co. 12:5,7 I Pe. 4:10-11 Ro. 12:7 He. 6:10 Re. 2:19
- B. God wants you to use your spiritual gifts to build up the body.
1. You and your spiritual gifts are Jesus' gift to His church. 1 Co. 12:7
  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
  5. What kinds of gifts has God given – teaching and serving? I Pe. 4:10-11 Ro. 12:4-8
- 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
- D. Whatever service you perform, serve wholeheartedly. I Pe. 4:10-11 I Tim. 4:14-15  
John 15:5
- E. Don't make excuses for not serving. Ga. 6:2,9 II Ti. 4:6-8 Mt. 24:13 Js. 5:7f
- F. In order to fully use your gifts, you must be fully committed to the church body.  
Heb. 13:17 I Co. 12:12 I Pe. 5:3 Mt. 18:15f
- G. How can you know what your gift is?
1. What are your desires and interests? I Tim. 3:1 I Cor. 12:31
  2. What are you good at? How has God gifted you?
  3. What do other people, especially your elders (equippers) say about your gifts?
  4. Where is there a need in the body?

IV. The result of equipping and serving is that the church grows. v.12c-16 Col. 2:19 Acts 2:47

V. Concluding applications.

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?