

INTRODUCTION

- In 1998 God began this work with 4 original families; there is, in those first days, an special intimacy
 - we have had the privilege of seeing God add numerically; encouraging, but concerning as well
 - concerning in that we are in danger of becoming an institutional (used negatively); attending meetings, but separate
- Illustration: modern family with recognized order, scheduled meetings, but little interaction and real life together
- What does the Scripture say about this? We are the body of Christ, a living and connected organism
 - What biblical truths are to be at the forefront of our mind as we seek to be the body of Christ? – “being the body”

EXPOSITION**Ephesians 4:11-12**

- here the gifts are seen as offices of leadership given to the church, as opposed to individual gifts (later)
- I. **THE GIVER OF GIFTS – v.11a Christ Himself**
 - II. **THE IDENTITY OF THE GIFTS – v.11b apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors/teachers**
 - III. **THE DURATION OF THE GIFTS – v.13 Until the full maturity of the church**
 - IV. **THE PURPOSE OF THE GIFTS – v.12**
 - for (Gk. *pros*) the equipping (Gk. *Katartismos*) = repairing or restoring; process of adjustment that results in complete preparedness; to make someone adequate, sufficient for a task
 - the saints (Gk. *hagios*) = not a class of “super-believers”, but those who have been called by God’s grace and separated to Him
 - the question here is “what are they equipped for? What is the purpose of their equipping?”
- there are two major interpretations as to the connection of these phrases
 - first, that these three descriptions (separated by prepositions) are three parts of the teaching ministry’s work
 - this is certainly true, in that the formal ministry does all these things (equipping, ministering, edifying)
 - second, that this is a subordinate clause, explaining what the saints are being equipped for; I lean toward this interpretation for two major reasons
 - the prepositions used seem to indicate a main, then two subordinate clauses, rather three coordinate (list)
 - v.7 speaks of each one, and v.16 of how all the parts of the body does its part
 - for (Gk. *eis*) ministry (Gk. *diakonia*) = work of a servant; service; contribution, helping, supporting; to render help by performing certain duties, often of a humble or menial nature; the work (Gk. *ergon*) = occupation, task, labor
 - for (Gk. *eis*) building up (Gk. *oikodomay*; root *oikos* - building/house)
 - 1.) strengthening = stabilizing the materials that already exist; renovating and beautifying; proclaiming the character and faithfulness of God;
 - 2.) construction = adding on materials; making of saints through the proclamation of the Gospel
 - the body (Gk. *soma*) of Christ = 5:30; 1Cor12:27
 - focus is the local gathering of believers God’s has providentially collected together
 - we are in union with Jesus Christ by virtue of salvation; we are spiritually and eternally connected
 - salvation is more than individual, it is corporate; we are the bride; we are the body; we are the church; saved in community

APPLICATION

- A primary function of pastors is to equip you for the work of serving the body of Christ
 - We cannot do so by ourselves, we need all the saints; it is our responsibility to equip you...how? By teaching
- 1.) **The three fold motivation**
 - (1.) Christ-likeness - Mk10:45; to be conformed to the likeness of Christ (Rom8:29)
 - (2.) Serving Christ – Mt25:40; Eph5:30
 - (3.) Being served by Christ – reverse of above is true
 - 2.) **The individual responsibility**
 - everyone added to our body is equipped by the living Christ with grace and gift for the good of all
 - an addition means something we need is being given for our good
 - One backlash from “programmatic” background of churches is pendulum swing; can just cruise
 - this is a stewardship, whether you have 1 or 10 talents; having only one doesn’t excuse from using
 - sometimes it is the use of what is small that moves the Lord to grant greater talents to use and invest
 - It is a legitimate question for us to ask, “what are your gifts?” and “how are you serving the body of Christ?”
 - 3.) **The varied expressions (beginning next week)**

Non-Christian – this is a particular work for the saints; your first work is to believe on Him who God has sent

Conclusion: one of the ways we will keep from becoming merely institutional is by seeing every person as a part of ministry