

The Fivefold Ministry

[3rd Edition – January 2010]

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INTRODUCTION TO THE FIVEFOLD MINISTRY

WHAT IS THE FUNCTION OF THE FIVEFOLD MINISTRY?

Ephesians 4:1-3 and 10-16 – To get all believers to function in their ministry.

Introduction

The day of the “Superstar Ministry” is over. God is today ready to move mightily through His body in the earth. The “early rain” fell on the day of Pentecost with wonderful results but, through the Prophet Joel, God also promises a “latter rain” which, according to the Prophet, will fall in the end time when Israel has returned to its country. Israel’s rain seasons proved that the “latter rain” that fell to make the fields ready for harvest was a much more powerful rain than the “early rain”. We had better prepare for a mighty, powerful rainstorm!

A. The greatest time in the history of man

The final restoration to God’s original plan, Acts 3:21; Romans 8:19-21

1. No single person can reveal Christ in all His glorious fullness.
2. But, about the body, it is said: if properly equipped we will become “a perfect man”.
Ephesians 4:13, “Reach to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” – that means Jesus again walking in our towns through His people.
3. God is ready because the time is ready. End-time Christianity will be a mighty revelation of Christ, through His body. Ephesians 5:27, “That He might present to Himself a glorious church, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy without blemish”.
4. The final picture of the end-time church – Revelation 19:7-8, As a perfect bride “arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright”. The fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. The Book of Acts will just be like a prelude to the wonderful, powerful, pure acts of the end-time church, “The Bride of Christ”.

THE TIME IS READY! – BUT ARE WE READY?

B. The greatest Leadership mistake

Ephesians 4:11 “He gave us some to be Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors and Teachers”. **Verse 12: “For the equipping of the saints for their ministry”**.

1. So the elevated “superstar ministries” have partly missed the point.
2. The faithful Pastor who works flat out day and night, letting the saints see only him and a few others work up there in front, has also missed the point. He gets stressed out – cannot cope properly with the workload – but he faithfully continues until he burns out. But surely the Master must be pleased with such a harassed, hardworking, dedicated servant? Or will He be?

Would it not please Him more to see him fulfil his task to

- a) Equip.
- b) Instruct.
- c) Hand out tools and get everybody to do their part in the work.

He should rather be like:

- i) The Architect: he does not work with the bricks, mortar and planks when constructing the house – if he should do so he would probably only put up one house in his whole lifetime. No – he instructs, supervises and equips gifted people and, in doing so, he can build many at the same time.
- ii) Look at the Apostolic Ministry Team of Paul, Silas and Team. They managed to build in many places – Ephesus, Corinth, Thessalonica, Phillipi, Lystra, Derbe, etc. They planted, equipped and ordained the local people and left them to do the work of the ministry and they would then return at a later date to water, weed and prune where necessary, etc.
- iii) The most successful minister is the one who can make himself **unneded** – not unwanted!
- iv) Please do not make this mistake in your ministry when around you, you have the greatest, most powerful resource – **“all the saints”**.

C. The greatest resource

1. All the Saints – what an incredible potential! You know what just 120 of this kind could do – “turn the world upside down”.
2. They are sitting there waiting for the ministry team to equip them to let each one of them blossom in their ministry.
3. It is a fact that most ministers only utilise about 10 to 20 % of the potential sitting there in front of them year in and year out.
4. A Victoria or a Kariba church? The great Zambezi River has a lesson to teach us in that at the Victoria Falls the mass of water falls with tremendous power and noise but, although spectacular, all that power is just wasted. At Kariba the same volume of water is utilised, through many channels, in the most wonderful way to give light, power and warmth to the whole southern part of Africa. That is also what the “Living Water” can do through any church if utilised through its many channels.
5. Don’t blame the saints.
 - a) In most places, throughout the generations, they have mainly been conditioned to be a passive audience who, like puppets, follow the instructions from the person in front – stand up, sit down, lift your hands, sing, worship, etc.
 - b) The **command** – yes – **the very purpose** of the leadership is to:
 - i) Equip the saints.
 - ii) Give them tools.
 - iii) Help each one to find God’s plan.

- iv) Create opportunities.
 - v) Release them into their special gift and ministry.
- c) The leader may complain – they are unwilling, uncommitted to that kind of activity – perhaps we made them like that through our wrong systems and teaching!
 - d) Remember – it took only one Prophet, in tune with the Holy Spirit, to raise and equip the whole valley of dead bones into a mighty, victorious army – Ezekiel 37:1-10.
 - e) Imagine if a king appointed officers for his army to equip, train and lead them in warfare but the officers just left the soldiers to hang around idly in the camp and they, themselves, went to war and got battered and beaten by the enemy! Would that please the king? No that is also unthinkable – it couldn't happen – well, it often happens in the Lord's army.
 - f) Let us change that and train, equip and use every “soldier” to reach his full potential.

D. The greatest example

1. In the book of Acts we find mainly laymen, equipped and led by the fivefold ministry, impacting the whole known world.
2. Their conditions were not half as good as ours:
 - a) They had no Bibles; only some Old Testament Scrolls kept in the Synagogue.
 - b) They had no buildings where they could gather.
 - c) No P.A. Systems to address the big crowds.
 - d) Poor road and transport systems.
 - e) Heavy persecution by the authorities, with thousands being martyred.

But nothing could stop them because they lived and moved in God's Divine Plan.

3. The leadership made sure that all the saints were properly equipped. Right from the start of the church, on the day of Pentecost, they lead all the converts through the Three Foundational Steps – Acts 2:38.
 - a) Step 1: Repent. Step 2: Be Baptised. Step 3: And you shall be filled with the Holy Spirit.
 - b) The newly converted people were taken through these three steps immediately, not with months or even years in between as is the case so often today – Acts 8:12 & 17; Acts 9:17-18; Acts 10:44-48.
 - c) They lead them to maturity – Acts 2:42 – “They continued steadfastly in the Apostles doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and in prayers”.
 - d) They were lead into leadership and the use of their gifts – Acts 2:46.
 - i) The young church met in the different homes. We know that in Jerusalem alone there must have been 15000 to 20000 believers and that would mean about 1000 house churches where they daily had communion and ministered to each other.

- ii) They ministered to each other both with practical and spiritual gifts.
- iii) They had meals together.
- iv) They had prayer meetings so powerful that their houses were shaken Acts 4:31.
- v) They had fellowship and a wonderful unity – Acts 4:32 – “Those who believed were of one heart and one soul, neither did anyone say that anything he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common”.

They could truly say: “We don’t **go to** church, we **are** the church”.

4. The Apostolic teams went to completely heathen cities, like Corinth which had 12 idol temples, one of them being the Temple of Aphrodite (the goddess of love) which had 1000 women priests who were sacred prostitutes. It was a harbour city filled with drunkenness, immorality and reckless living. But, in less than two years, they planted a vibrant church where all the spiritual gifts functioned and from their midst arose Elders and other leaders who could take charge so that the Apostolic team could move on to new places.
5. Luke writes about Ephesus in Acts 19:10, “They continued for two years, so all the people in Asia heard the word of Jesus, both Jews and Greeks”. What a powerful impact these Apostolic teams made!
6. Only when the church changed the God-given strategy and dropped some of the fivefold ministry gifts like the Apostle, Prophet and Evangelist, and started to promote the Bishop and later the priests (which is an Old Testament function) did the church start to decline rapidly. Church let us today once again get back to God’s Divine Plan and move with it.

E. The greatest Divine Plan

1. To let Jesus walk around in all His wonderful fullness and minister in every city, town and villagebut How? When the Body reveals Him in all His fullness.
2. To create this world-wide body is the task of the fivefold ministry – Ephesians 4:12-13. Jesus gave the fivefold ministry for one purpose – “To equip the saints for their ministry, to build the Body of Christ – to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ”.
3. What an amazing task! How can that be done?
 - a) Solomon’s Temple is an Old Testament type of this spiritual “building” that God is raising.
 - b) Each stone and article was carefully shaped and rightly placed by a team of chosen, specially gifted men.
 - c) For building the Body of Christ, God has chosen and given a building team of five different ministries.

If anyone wants to build a house, he doesn’t want a team of bricklayers – No, he wants carpenters, bricklayers, plumbers, electricians, painters, etc. The one is not more important than the other but they have different skills and gifts and so it is also with the fivefold ministry team.

4. The Lord requests special qualifications to be part of this building team – Ephesians 4:1. In the introduction to the fivefold ministry Paul writes
 - a) “I, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of your calling with all ...”

i) Humbleness	ii) Gentleness	iii) Patience
iv) Love	v) Unity	vi) Peace

 He doesn't want “big ruling generals” – no – it takes these six qualities to equip and build the saints for their ministry.
 - b) Look at the Apostle Paul – he says – “Follow me, as I follow Christ”.
This is to walk worthy of the calling.

5. There is one Body but it consists of many members with different functions. Romans 12:4-5.
 - a) Look at your body:
What a variety of different members. Big and small, soft and powerful, hidden and forward. Some with big movement and some with small movement, some with thick skin, some a bit touchy, etc. But they are all placed wonderfully in unity and harmony and they all have their special function – placed and equipped by the Lord Himself.
 - b) So it should also be in the spiritual body. 1 Peter 4:10 “As each one has received a gift, minister to one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God”.
 - c) The sad fact is that in the Body of Christ only ten to twenty percent function. If that were the case in the human body, it would be a total cripple with no possibility of doing anything.

6. May the fivefold ministry take their calling seriously and start to equip the saints.
 - a) Convict the saints that all members in a body have a function to fulfil just as in the human body.
 - b) Help each member to receive/discover their gifting and to develop them to full use.
 - c) Let them explore, experiment, seek and desire the different gifts and ministries.
 - d) The ministry team must evaluate and see where they are effective and where they flow.
 - e) Don't let people go on using gifts they don't have. We would never do that with natural gifts (we don't let anyone sing a solo or play an instrument in church unless they are gifted to do that!).
 - f) Pray for them, guide them, let the Prophets speak, lay hands upon them and release them into their ministry.
 - g) Create opportunities and structures for Body ministry.
 - i) The platform in front of a big congregation is not the place for experiments and beginners.
 - ii) Remember they met in “home churches” all over town and that is an excellent place to develop any gift and ministry, in a relaxed group of loving, supportive friends.

- iii) Remember also that the Prophets of old had students (sons) around them. People called and in training for that particular ministry. 2 Kings 2:3, 5, 7.
- iv) What about the Evangelist and the other ministries? Could they not also have students (trainees) around them?
A survey in one of Professor P. Wagner's books proves that in any local church about ten percent are evangelistically gifted – that means that in a church of 200 members we could have twenty burning evangelists! What a difference that would make!
- v) And so also with the other gifts and ministries. There are also a certain percent that would love to shepherd and care for those that the Evangelist brings in. They should be discovered, trained and equipped, etc.
- vi) Nobody functions well if they are out of place, much less if they are not guided into any function at all. Living here in KwaZulu-Natal you will find that if you plant an Apple tree it will never flower and bear fruit. It will just stand there – it does not belong here. But, transplant it back to the Cape Province and you will see it grow, flower and bear lots of fruit, as that is where it belongs. This is also true of people – plant them where they belong and they will be happy, effective and fruitful.

7. “Let everything be done decently and in order”, 1 Corinthians 14:40.

This is Paul's conclusion after three wonderful chapters on the gifts and ministries of the body. Many would put the emphasis on the last part of this verse (decently and in order) but actually the importance lies in “let everything be done” and functioning in the body and then the second part comes in which is to put order and decency to all these wonderful activities.

A symphony orchestra consists of about 100 very gifted and well-trained members. Although they all have different instruments and they all love their particular gift, they would never be allowed to just push ahead with their gift as that would end up being a terrible noise which would chase the audience away. No – they are strictly conducted and the result is a beautiful symphony filling the air!

By the Spirit, through the fivefold ministry, all these gifted people in the church could blend to a beautiful spiritual symphony and you would not have someone being a “lion” on the drums every now and then while another plays the “first violin” but everyone, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, will be happy about their part and people will flock to that kind of church “concert”.

F. The greatest result

1. When the church followed God's pattern of letting the fivefold ministry equip the lay people to do the ministry, the church had great success and expanded rapidly, as we have seen.
2. Only when they changed the God-given plan and exchanged some of the ministries for bishops, priests, archbishops and popes, did the church lose some of its effectiveness.
3. Let us return fully to the God-given pattern for His church so that the church can once again be raised up “as a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ”.

4. But have the lay people got time for this kind of commitment? Yes – just excite and equip them! You see – the world excites, trains and equips them with a golf club, a soccer ball, a computer, a TV, etc., and they have plenty of time for this. The truth is that there is no lack of people, time or talent but we need to inspire them and fill them with zeal for Jesus, then equip them and release them into their ministry.
5. The church will grown in three areas: i) Maturity; ii) Glory; and iii) Number. Ephesians 4:12-14.
 - a) Starting with maturity. “We shall no more be like children tossed around by strange doctrines and trickery (tricks of deceitful men) and cunning craftiness”. No – we will get the real stuff.
 - b) Leading on to glory. “To a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ”. Can you just imagine how that will be – glory unspeakable! When the Apostle John saw the glory of the risen Christ, he fell as dead to the ground, Revelation 1. Imagine then when the whole Body of Christ in a town portrays Jesus Christ in all His fullness of love, grace, power and glory.
 - c) There will be no problem with growing in number as people will flock in and fall on their face before Him.

An illustration of this can be likened to a TV advertisement in this country where hundreds of people walked from all corners to the middle of a field, wearing colourful clothing with a torch in their hand and as they found their right place, they formed the colourful logo of Volkswagen.

Can we make them all on fire, lead them to the right place so that they together portray Jesus Christ in all His Glory and Fullness?

**This is the high and holy calling of the Fivefold Ministry of Apostles,
Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors and Teachers.**

God-appointed leadership of His church

Lesson 1

The church – God's master plan

When a builder builds a house he has to follow the plan of the architect right down to the smallest detail, before the owner can approve his work. God has made a wonderfully detailed plan for the building of His church.

A. A wonderful building plan

1. An eternal plan.

Read Ephesians 3:9-11

- a) Here we clearly see that God planned the building of His church before anything else was created. Romans 16:25-26.
- b) We also see that God has a wonderful purpose for His church **now** and in the **future**, right into eternity. Revelation 21:9-11.
- c) The church is God's master plan which runs right through time and eternity.

2. A detailed plan.

Read Ephesians 2:19-22

- a) This scripture is one of the many detailed descriptions of how the church will be built.
- b) God does not leave anything to chance. His plans are wonderfully exact.
- c) **Example:** The building of the tabernacle of Moses was also a foreshadowing of the church. God repeatedly told Moses to make sure that he made everything as God had showed him on the mountain. Exodus 25:40, 26:30.
- d) God designed this tabernacle down to the smallest detail; every loop, hook, board, etc; every measurement was given by God.
- e) Likewise let us make sure that we do everything as He has instructed us in His Word with regard to building the church.

3. A plan for perfection.

Read Ephesians 5:27

- a) God's plan for His church is that it should reach perfection; it should be holy, without any spot or blemish.

- b) The final picture given of the church is one of a spotless bride, pure and holy. Revelation 19:7-9.
- c) The final picture given of the church is one of a spotless bride, pure and holy. Revelation 19:7-9.
- d) Notice the Word says, "His bride (the church) has made herself ready" with the wonderful gifts given to her by the Bridegroom (Jesus).
- e) By putting on, using and applying all the wonderful gifts from Jesus, the church will mature and be perfected.

B. Through the ministry gifts, God will raise the church towards perfection by His Spirit

1. What ministries?

Read Ephesians 4:11

- a) These ministries are the leadership of the church and are appointed by God. They are also called "the fivefold ministries".
- b) Notice that they are a team, working together for the same purpose, and they are all mentioned in the plural. (Apostles, prophets, etc.)
- c) They are the overall leadership, who have a very specific ministry. Together with the local leadership, the elders and deacons, they should lead the church forward.
- d) They are a team of equal standing, but with different individual ministries.

Illustration: When a house is to be built, a team of men with different skills are needed: bricklayers, carpenters, plumbers, electricians, etc. It is no good having a team of bricklayers only.

- e) In many churches today the team is limited to one or two ministries only: the pastor and the evangelist.

2. When and by whom were these ministries given?

Read Ephesians 4:7-11

- a) It is clearly stated that it is the glorified Jesus who gave these gifts (ministries) to the church.
- b) He gave them after He ascended to heaven.

Teacher's notes

The prophets referred to here are not the Old Testament prophets, and the apostles referred to are not the twelve apostles Jesus chose during His earthly ministry. The twelve were specially elected for Israel. Matthew 10:1-6. They are instructed to go to the people of Israel, and not to the heathen world.

Only when Israel rejected Christ did He send the apostles to the rest of the world, after His resurrection. Matthew 28:19 and Acts 1:8. It was difficult for the twelve apostles to understand. Acts 1:3-8 and Acts 10.

One day they will again take up a ministry to Israel, in the new kingdom. Luke 22:30.

3. The wonderful results of these ministries.

Read Ephesians 4:12-16

- a) **An active church, verse 12.**
 - i) Each member will be effective in his/her particular ministry.
 - ii) In this way, all aspects of church life will be expressed in a wonderful way.
- b) **A fulfilled church, verse 12.**
 - i) When each member is led to his/her ministry, everyone will be well equipped and will function, as they should. They will be happy and fulfilled.
 - ii) Negativity and criticism will vanish, and instead there will be joy, praise and yearning for more of God.
- c) **A united church, verse 13.**

United in faith, love and one purpose.
- d) **A stable church, verse 14.**
 - i) They will no longer be confused by strange doctrines and ideas.
 - ii) It will be a church with deep foundations in the truth of the Word of God.
- e) **A mature church, verse 13.**
 - i) No other organization has a higher standard to reach than the church. "...attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ".
 - ii) The Word here promises us that if we experience these five ministries in the church, we will reach this high standard.
 - iii) Verse 15 says, "...we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is Christ".

- iv) "In all things" means both spiritual things and practical things.
Read Colossians 3:17.
- v) To grow "into" Christ means that each member will grow in the understanding of who they are in Christ. **Read Colossians 2:6-10.**

C. These five ministries were clearly evident in the early church

1. A divine appointment.

Read 1 Corinthians 12:28

- a) God appointed and anointed men in the church with these ministries.
- b) They were not chosen by men, but by God through the Holy Spirit. Galatians 1:1 and Acts 13:1-3.

2. They were recognised for their particular ministry.

Read Acts 14:14

- a) It is clear in Scripture that the early church recognized these five ministries. Acts 15:32.
- b) The ministry was often mentioned in connection with the person's name. Acts 21:8-10.
- c) In the opening statement of most of Paul's letters, he declares "Paul....an apostle...."

3. How did this leadership function in the early church?

- a) **The local leadership are elders and deacons teams.**

Read Acts 6:1-7; 20:17-28 and 1 Peter 5:1-4

- i) It is very clear in the New Testament that each local assembly was led by a group of elders and deacons teams.
- ii) Remember that in the early church there were no church buildings.
- iii) Groups of believers gathered in homes and these home assemblies were led by elders and deacons teams.
- iv) So there could be many small home assemblies in an area. Acts 2:46, 8:3.
- v) In Jerusalem alone, there must have been hundreds of such home assemblies. Acts 4:4.

b) **What leadership function did the fivefold ministry team have?**

Read Ephesians 4:11-16

- i) By their ministry they unified these many groups, making the church a well-functioning body.
- ii) They moved around serving with their particular ministry among the many local groups (assemblies).
- iii) They travelled across the provinces, from nation to nation, joining the body of Christ together with their ministry.
- iv) The local elders and deacons teams cared for the flock in the place where they lived, i.e. their own local group.
- v) The pastor, who is one of the five in the fivefold ministry, had a much larger shepherding ministry and cared for a greater area, hand in hand with these local elders and deacons teams.
- vi) This was also so with the teacher, who worked for "the unity of faith" from assembly to assembly.
- vii) Together with the other ministries they enlarged the work, built up and equipped the saints; as we will see in the following lessons.

4. God's unchanging plan.

Read Ephesians 3:10-11

- a) The wonderful plan of God is unchanging from eternity to eternity.
- b) We would do well to seek to follow this plan right down to the smallest detail.
- c) Thus we could also see a mature church today, grown to "the whole measure of the fullness of Christ".

In the following lessons we will go through these ministries one by one.

Memory verse

Ephesians 3:21, *"...to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever! Amen"*.

The Ministry of an Apostle

Lesson 2

Introduction

In the following lessons we will only look at the New Testament record of leadership in the early church, without trying to pass judgement on any system working today in the different denominations.

A. What is an apostle?

1. **He is a man (ministry) given by Christ to the church.**

Read Ephesians 4:9-11

- a) An apostle is a man appointed by Christ through the Holy Spirit for an important leadership function in the whole church. Acts 13:2-3.
- b) Apostles were recognised and accepted in the early church wherever they went.

2. **The apostle had a very mobile ministry.**

Read Acts 8:14

- a) The word "apostle" in Greek is "apostolos" which means "he that is sent".
- b) In the early church they were sent out and guided from place to place by the Holy Spirit. Acts 16:6-10.
- c) From church history we learn that nearly all the apostles we know from Scripture travelled far and wide, some of them as far as India, Ethiopia and Spain.
- d) Everywhere they went they established and equipped the church.

3. **They always travelled in teams.**

Read Acts 20:4-6

- a) A team of several different ministries travelled together under the leadership of the apostles.
- b) Often we have the combination of apostles and prophets together. Acts 15:30-32, 40.
- c) Their wives also joined their teams. 1 Corinthians 9:5.

B. The importance of the apostle's ministry in the church

1. The apostle is always mentioned first in the New Testament.

Read 1 Corinthians 12:28

- a) This verse states, "...in the church God has appointed **first** of all apostles...."
- b) The word for "first" in Greek is "proton" which means firstly (in time, place, order or importance).

2. The apostle has a prominent place in the building of the church.

Read Ephesians 2:20

- a) "...build on the foundation of the apostles and prophets...."
- b) **Illustration:** In any building construction the foundation is of utmost importance. It is often out of sight but it keeps the whole building firm and together.

3. The early church recognized the apostolic ministry.

Read Acts 2:42

- a) This verse speaks of great dedication to the ministry of the apostles.
- b) We see clearly in the book of Acts that this ministry played an important role in the early church.

C. What is the actual ministry of an apostle?

1. The apostles have authority and a leadership position as part of the fivefold ministry in the churches as a whole (The body of Christ).

- a) **From the very start of the church they were seen as leaders.**
Read Acts 2:14. Remember there were 120 but Peter stood up with the other eleven apostles.
- b) **They had authority in matters of doctrine.**
Read Acts 2:42. The apostles must have formulated the doctrine in the early church.
- c) **They kept oversight over the whole work of the church.**
Read Acts 8:14. They were not asked to come to Samaria, they just heard about the revival and went there.
Read Acts 11:1-4. Peter gives an account to the apostles for his visit to Cornelius' house.
Read Acts 21:18. Paul's report about his third missionary journey to James the Apostle and leader in Jerusalem.

2. **The apostles, as part of the fivefold ministry, are responsible for keeping the church on the right track.**

a) **Read Ephesians 4:14.**

They made sure that the doctrine was kept pure and true. Galatians 4:19.

- b) They made sure that the doctrine was lived out everywhere. Paul's letters are a good example of apostolic caring for the whole church. Ephesians 3:14-21, Colossians 2:1-5.

3. **The apostles lay the foundation for new assemblies.**

Read 1 Corinthians 3:10

- a) The apostle Paul says, "As a master builder I laid the foundation".
- b) All the churches we know in the New Testament were planted by the apostolic ministry team.
- c) They visited, wrote letters to and cared for those churches in every way.

4. **The apostles received revelation from God.**

Read Ephesians 3:5

- a) Most of the precious truth we hold and love today was revealed to the New Testament apostles.
- b) To the Apostle Peter:
Acts 10:34-36. The gift of salvation is also for the Gentiles.
Acts 2:38. The believer's baptism.
- c) To the Apostle Paul:
1 Corinthians 11:23. The truth of the Lord's supper.
Ephesians 1:22-23. The body of Christ.
1 Thessalonians 4:15. The return of Christ and the rapture of the church.
- d) To the Apostle John:
The book of Revelation. Revelation about the future.
- e) What about today? Is there still more revelation to be received?
- i) Not outside of, or out of line with, the Word of God.
- ii) But God can reveal things from His Word, that we have not yet fully seen or understood.
- iii) God can also give revelation about people or situations.

5. The apostolic team must unite the whole body of Christ.

Read Ephesians 4:13

And as we all grow closer to God and mature in Him, we will come closer to reaching unity in the faith and in the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

6. The apostle should impart spiritual gifts to the believers.

Read Romans 1:11

- a) To equip the saints is one of the main tasks of the apostolic team. Acts 19:6.
- b) By prayer and laying on of hands they imparted the Holy Spirit and different spiritual gifts to the saints. Acts 8:14-17 and 2 Timothy 1:6.

7. The apostles appointed and ordained elders in all the churches.

Read Acts 14:23

- a) By appointing local leadership in all newly established assemblies, the apostles consolidated the work everywhere. Titus 1:5.
- b) Notice - it was done very carefully with prayer and fasting.

8. The apostles exercised discipline in the whole church.

Read 1 Corinthians 5:5

- a) The apostles watched over the purity of conduct and doctrine of the church. Acts 5:1-6.
- b) They were ready to discipline anyone who did not stay in the "light". 1 Timothy 1:19-20.

9. The apostles also had a strong preaching and teaching ministry.

Read 1 Corinthians 4:17

- a) Notice that Paul says, "I teach everywhere in every church".
- b) It was the ministry, rather than the organisation, that joined the churches together.

10. The apostles ministered under the anointing of the Spirit, with signs following.

Read Acts 5:12

- a) In many cases wonderful miracles happened as they ministered under the anointing of the Spirit. 2 Corinthians 12:12.

- b) Let us keep it in balance, however. We should not demand signs and wonders in order to accept a person as a true apostle.
- c) Remember, there were many apostles in the New Testament of whom we hear nothing remarkable.

11. We wish to emphasize that it is not only apostles who should fulfil all of the above functions of the church.

However, many of these functions are important to the apostolic ministry as part of the fivefold ministry because of the fact that they have the ministry of an oversight.

D. Leadership according to divine principles

1. Jesus clearly rejected the world's leadership model.

Read Mark 10:42-45

- a) Nobody should be elevated to be "lord" over others.
- b) The worldly manager or chief concept does not belong to the church of God.
- c) Jesus taught that a leader should be a servant, an example. John 13:14-15.

2. The early church followed the example of Jesus.

Read 1 Corinthians 4:1-2

- a) Paul says "that is the way men should look upon us, as servants and stewards".
- b) The introduction to the fivefold ministry in Ephesians 4 encourages us to walk worthy of the calling, in humility, gentleness and patience, preferring one another in love. Ephesians 4:1-2.
- c) The leadership in the church should never be a dictatorial rulership, but a team of men with different gifts and ministries. Philippians 2:3-5.
- d) They must be under the control of the Holy Spirit, so that God can do His work through them, equipping and guiding His church forward towards perfection.

Memory verse

Ephesians 2:19-22, "Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow-citizens with God's people and members of God's household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit".

The Ministry of a Prophet

Lesson 3

A. What is a prophet?

Everyone who prophesies is not a prophet.

1. The Bible gives four categories of people who prophesy.

a) The spirit of prophecy.

Read 1 Samuel 19:20

i) The spirit of prophecy is when the Spirit of God moves so mightily that everybody who is near is powerfully affected and could break forth and prophesy. Acts 19:6.

ii) It will perhaps be the only time in their lives they will do so.

b) The gift of prophecy.

Read 1 Corinthians 12:8-11

i) It is one of the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit.

ii) It is called the "greatest" of the nine gifts. 1 Corinthians 14:1-5.

iii) This gift is available for all believers according to the will of the Spirit.

iv) It is to be used in the local fellowship where proper leadership is present to test the message.

v) It has a threefold purpose: edification, exhortation and comfort.

c) The false prophet.

Read 2 Peter 2:1

i) The Bible gives a strong warning against false prophets.

ii) We are told that they will come and that there will be many in the end times. Matthew 24:11.

d) The prophet.

Read Ephesians 4:11

i) This is one of the fivefold ministries given by Jesus to the church. Acts 13:1.

- ii) This ministry is the one we will study in this chapter.

2. The definition of a prophet.

Read 2 Peter 1:21

- a) He is a man elected, called and anointed by God, recognized and ordained in the church for that ministry.
- b) The word "prophet" means "foreteller" or "inspired speaker".
- c) Some Bibles translate this word as "preacher" but there is much more direct inspiration hidden in the Greek word "prophetes".
- d) The prophets of old knew that they were God's mouthpiece and started their prophecies by saying, "Thus saith the Lord...."
- e) The Word states here that prophecy never came by the will of man (as preaching does) but men spoke God's message under the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

3. The prophets were part of the leadership.

Read Ephesians 4:11-16

- a) In the Old Testament the prophet was part of the leadership of God's people to help them to succeed in the plan of God. (Prophet, Priest, King.)
- b) In the New Testament the prophet is also part of the leadership of God's people to help them to function in God's master plan, "the body of Christ".
- c) The fivefold ministry is God's appointed government in His church. There must therefore be close co-operation amongst them.
- d) There seems to be a special relationship between the ministries of the apostle and prophet in the New Testament.
 - i) They formed the foundation of the church on the chief cornerstone (Jesus). Ephesians 2:20.
 - ii) They received revelation together. Ephesians 3:5.
 - iii) They travelled together, so the prophetic ministry was always there to direct, encourage and guide the team and the assemblies in different places. Acts 15:32,40.

B. What is the ministry of a prophet?

1. To equip the believers.

Read Ephesians 4:11-12

- a) "Equipping" will be in the area of revealing God's plan and purpose.
- b) The prophet should help and encourage people with revelation gifts.
- c) In the Old Testament there appear to have been "prophetic schools".
2 Kings 6:1-2.

2. The prophet should be a "guiding light" in the work and life of the church.

Read 2 Peter 1:19

- a) Prophecy is a light in a dark place, to give us direction. Acts 16:6-7.
- b) We must remember it is not the only light, but "a light" which must line up with other lights God has given us.
- c) Other lights are:
 - i) The Word of God.
 - ii) Confirmation through a group of God's servants.
 - iii) The inner conviction by the Holy Spirit.
 - iv) God-ordained circumstances.
- d) Before big decisions are made it is important to not just have one "light" but several "lights" from God which all point in the same direction.

3. The prophet will discover the enemy's movements.

Read 2 Kings 6:8-12

- a) In the Old Testament, the enemy around the people of Israel is a picture of the spiritual enemy around the people of God today.
- b) The prophet of old played a very important part in defeating the enemy.
- c) Through the New Testament prophets, the devil's schemes can be revealed and destroyed. Acts 21:10-11.

4. The prophet plays an important role in the calling of God's servants.

Read 1 Samuel 16:12-13

- a) When Paul and Barnabas were called as apostles, we read that there were prophets present. While they were worshipping and fasting the Holy Spirit said, "set apart for me Barnabas and Saul". Acts 13:1-3.
- b) Even Jesus Himself was pointed out to the people by a great prophet, John the Baptist. John 1:29.

5. The prophet can unveil doctrine to the church.

Read Ephesians 3:5

- a) The Word of God is a full revelation, but sometimes our eyes have been closed to some wonderful truths, which have been there all the time.
- b) The prophetic light can unveil such truths to the church.
- c) In Acts 15:32 the prophet also confirmed certain points of doctrine, where before there was disagreement.

6. The prophetic ministry will cleanse and perfect the church.

Read Ephesians 4:12-13

- a) A main part of the prophet's ministry in the Old Testament was to reveal sin among the people of God. 2 Samuel 12:7.
- b) The prophet will reveal Christ to the believers.
- c) The prophet can reveal error and false teaching which is slipping into the church.
- d) The prophetic ministry can guide and confirm projects and activities of the church, so we don't waste our time and strength on the wrong activities.

7. The prophet can (when God wants it) reveal future things.

Read Acts 11:28

- a) We know how clearly the Old Testament prophets predicted the coming of Christ, His ministry and death. All was fulfilled exactly.
- b) We see here two predictions of a New Testament prophet which both came to pass exactly as he had said. Acts 21:11.
- c) We have a whole prophetic book in the New Testament of which a great deal is still to be fulfilled (the book of Revelation).

C. How does the prophetic message come to the prophet?

1. A prophet is a person with a tuned spiritual ear.

Read 2 Peter 1:21

- a) "The one who has an ear, he will hear what the Spirit says to the churches". This word is repeated many times. Revelation 2:7.

- b) Prophets have a wonderful ability (gift) to hear what the Spirit of God is saying.

Illustration: Tell the people that all around them in the air there is beautiful music; there are many voices speaking in different languages. Can they hear it? No, we can hear nothing, but if we get a receiver (a radio) and tune it in the right way, we would all hear it.

- c) **The prophet is a spiritual receiver!**
 - i) The inspiration can come suddenly into the prophet's mind as a short sentence, and as he speaks forth more will be added by the inspiration of the Spirit.
 - ii) The message can also build up over a time like a burden which grows heavier and heavier until the right time of delivery. Psalm 39:3.
 - iii) The message can also come to the prophet in a vision or a dream as in the case of Daniel. Daniel 7:1.

2. How should the prophet deliver the message?

- a) **He must know whom to address.**

Read Acts 15:32

- i) Is it for the whole church?
- ii) Is it only for one or two? Acts 21:11.

- b) **He must know the right time to bring the message.**

Read 2 Peter 1:21

When the anointing is over him, and he is prompted by the Holy Spirit to speak.

- c) **The prophet must make sure that people know who is speaking.**

Read Acts 21:10-11

Let him start the message by saying:

"The Holy Spirit says..." or "Thus says the Lord..." or "God says that..." etc.

- d) **The prophet can use illustrations to emphasize the message.**

Read Acts 21:11 and Ezekiel 4:1

D. Scriptural advice concerning prophecy

1. Do not despise prophecy.

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:20-21

- a) That means we must listen carefully and with reverence.
- b) Encourage it and see it as very important in the life of the church.

2. All prophecy must be tested.

Read 1 Corinthians 14:29

- a) Tested means carefully weighed by other ministers.
- b) And it must be commented on so that people know how to react to the message.

3. Hold fast to what is good.

- a) Write it down and give it to the people concerned.
- b) Or even better keep the full message on a tape.
- c) When the message has been tested and found true, act upon it.

4. What about what is not good?

- a) A false prophet should be stopped right away and forbidden to speak in the church.
- b) A true prophet should be corrected in love with teaching when he makes mistakes, and encouraged to continue with this important ministry.

Memory verse

1 Thessalonians 5:20-21, “...do not treat prophecies with contempt. Test everything. Hold on to the good”.

The Ministry of an Evangelist

Lesson 4

A. What is an evangelist?

1. A man proclaiming "the good news" (the gospel).

Read Romans 1:16

- a) The word evangelist means "announcer of good news".
- b) Good news – because it is the only news which can save man from a lost eternity.

2. He is one of the fivefold ministries.

Read Ephesians 4:11

- a) The evangelist is a "high" leadership calling, equal to the other four, but with a very special gifting and task.
- b) This title should never be used lightly for any young person who is actively helping the pastor.
- c) It is a ministry highly regarded and backed up by the Lord. Matthew 28:18-20. Jesus says, "I will be with you always, with all my power and authority".

3. The evangelist is an ambassador for Christ.

Read 2 Corinthians 5:20

- a) Proclaiming and acting on behalf of the King.
- b) Pleading with people, "be reconciled to God".
- c) He has a burning compassion for the lost. The burden of Jesus. Matthew 9:36.

B. What is the ministry of an evangelist?

1. He must equip the believers.

Read Ephesians 4:11-12

- a) As a member of the fivefold ministry team he must equip the saints in his special area.
- b) That means inspire and train them to be living witnesses for Jesus.

- c) He should organize and arrange outreaches and activities where all the members are strongly encouraged to preach the gospel.

2. He must proclaim the gospel to the lost.

Read 2 Timothy 4:2, 5

- a) Paul here instructs Timothy to do the work of an evangelist, "be ready to speak in season and out of season".
- b) It means at any time and in any place. Jesus is a good example of this ministry:
He spoke in the marketplace,
at the seaside,
at the harbour,
at the dinner table,
in the mountains, etc.
- c) It means in any way. Use many different means to bring people to Christ (films, drama, music, etc.).

3. The evangelist should expect signs and wonders in his ministry.

Read Mark 16:15-18

- a) Signs and wonders are specially related to reaching out with the gospel.
- b) It is a promise from Jesus that signs should follow the preaching of the gospel.
- c) Jesus demonstrated it in His earthly ministry. Read Matthew 4:23. We should follow His example.
- d) The early church followed the example of Jesus and experienced the fulfilment of His promises. Read Acts 8:6-7.

4. The evangelist should arrange baptism for the new converts.

Read Acts 8:12

- a) In the early church new converts were baptized immediately, not days, weeks or months after conversion.
- b) In one case they were even baptized at midnight. Acts 16:25,33.

5. The evangelist must make sure that the church follows up every new convert.

Read Acts 8:14-17

- a) The evangelist should not do it himself but make sure that other ministries step in and care for the newly converted.

- b) **Illustration:** You would never leave a new-born baby in the bush without care – it would surely die.
- c) The same is the case with a spiritually new-born baby, it must have proper care. Acts 2:42.

6. The parable of "the good Samaritan" is a good example of the attitude and work of an evangelist.

Read Luke 10:30-35

- a) He had compassion for the lost.
- b) Even the ones who had fallen the deepest and whom the others despised.
- c) He was ready with the means – he brought it with him. An evangelist should carry a small Bible and gospel tracts with him.
- d) He used his own money and donkey.
- e) He brought the saved man to other people so that they could care for him.
- f) He returned to see how things were going.
- g) Jesus said to us, "Go and do likewise".

C. Let us study a New Testament evangelist (Philip)

1. Recognized as an evangelist.

Read Acts 21:8

- a) He was obviously known as, and called, Philip the evangelist.
- b) His ministry was clear both to himself and others.
- c) He was probably also known as the evangelist because he was promoting and equipping the church for evangelism.

2. His family life.

Read Acts 21:9

- a) From this verse we understand that he must have had a good family life.
- b) He had obedient children who were active in the faith.
- c) This seems to be a requirement for any leadership position in the early church. 1 Timothy 3:4-5 and Titus 1:6.

3. His personality and conduct.

Read Acts 6:3

We know that Philip in his youth was chosen as one of the seven deacons. This indicates several things about his personality.

- a) He must have been an open, outgoing person.
- b) He must have been a good, upright man.
- c) He must have been a practical and helpful man to be given that ministry.
- d) He was wise and full of the Spirit of God.

4. His ministry.

Read Acts 8:6-7, 12, 14 and 26-40

- a) He was very open and responsive to the prompting of the Lord, verse 26.
- b) He was not possessive of his ministry. He gladly entrusted "his revival" to the hands of the apostles, verse 14.
- c) He was not too "great" to run in the hot dusty desert after a chariot, to win just one person, verses 29-30.
- d) He knew the Scriptures well, verse 35.
- e) He ministered under God's anointing and power, and so signs and wonders happened and people were healed and delivered, verse 7.
- f) He baptized his converts before he went on, verses 12 and 38.
- g) He ministered in many different cities, verse 40.

5. Conclusion.

- a) Philip gives us a wonderful profile of an evangelist.
- b) No two persons are alike, but in Philip's life and ministry there is a good example for anyone with a call to evangelistic ministry to follow.

Memory verse

2 Timothy 4:5, *"But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry"*.

The Ministry of a Teacher

Lesson 5

A. What is a "teacher" in the church?

1. Definition.

- a) He is a man specially gifted by God to expound and clarify God's Word, character, eternal plans and purposes to the church.
- b) It is not a position a person could study for at college or university.
- c) However, a man with this calling and gift would be eager to study God's Word, character and principles in every possible way.

2. It is one of the "fivefold ministries".

Read Ephesians 4:11

- a) The purpose of equipping, maturing and protecting the saints rests heavily on this ministry.
- b) This ministry is not just for one local church, but should move from assembly to assembly in the body of Christ.
- c) There are other local teachers given e.g. in the ministry of the elders.
1 Timothy 3:2.

3. A double ministry.

Read Acts 18:11

In Scripture we see that in some cases both the apostles and pastors functioned with a teaching ministry. 2 Timothy 4:2.

B. The ministry of a teacher

1. The teacher must cultivate the church.

Read 1 Corinthians 3:6

- a) To cultivate means to help it to grow.
- b) Spiritual growth largely happens through the expounding of the Word of God. Without solid food the church remains immature, babies in Christ. Hebrews 5:12-14.
- c) The one planted in the Word of God will be like a tree planted by the river. Psalm 1:2-3.

- d) He will grow, be fresh and bring forth fruit.
- e) Apollos the teacher is described here as a gardener who waters and nurtures the church to growth.

2. The teacher should lead the church towards perfection.

Read Ephesians 4:12-15

- a) What a high goal for the ministries; to bring the church "to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ".
- b) Colossians 1:19 tells us that in Christ dwells the whole fullness of God.
- c) Verse 15 says: "we will in all things (or in every way) grow up into Him".
- d) In all aspects of our lives, the ministries should help us to be more and more like Jesus.

3. The teacher must protect the church.

Read Acts 20:29-32

- a) Right from the beginning the devil has tried to spoil the church with false doctrine.
- b) The Bible warns us and says, "Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth...."
- c) The Bible speaks about at least three kinds of false doctrine:
 - i) Doctrines that suit our evil desires. 2 Timothy 4:2-4. These could be doctrines that misuse the grace of God. Teachings that take a liberal view of homosexuality, divorce, etc.
 - ii) False human doctrines. Colossians 2:22. Here we are warned against burdens, rules and regulations that people put on each other, things the Word of God does not demand. It could be rules for food, the keeping of special days, etc.
 - iii) Doctrines of demons. 1 Timothy 4:1.
This is where Christ is no longer at the centre, where people mix heathen worship with Christianity, etc.
- d) But the Apostle Paul commits us to God and His Word, which is able to keep us and build us up, verse 32.
- e) So the teacher has a great responsibility. "Then we will no longer be infants blown here and there by every wind of teaching". Ephesians 4:14.

4. The teacher must equip others to teach.

Read Ephesians 4:11-12

- a) In any church there is teaching at different levels, for example:
 - i) Teaching for newly converted.
 - ii) Teaching in home fellowships.
 - iii) Teaching in Sunday School.
- b) The teaching ministry should go in and help to train people for all these functions.
- c) The teacher could prepare material and notes for the different teachings in the church.
- d) The teacher should help and watch over all teaching in the church, that it remains sound and Biblical.

C. Let us study a New Testament teacher (Apollos)

1. His personality and conduct.

Read Acts 18:24-28

- a) It is clear that Apollos was a leader greatly loved and favoured among the churches. 1 Corinthians 1:12.
- b) He was a trusted and helpful man. Acts 18:27.
- c) He was not too proud to be corrected on certain points in his teaching where he was not right, verse 26.
- d) He was willing to learn more, verse 26.
- e) He had a wonderful gift of speaking and expressing himself clearly, verse 24.
- f) He studied the Word of God and knew it very well, verse 24.

2. His ministry.

Read Acts 18:24-28

- a) He spoke boldly with great authority and power, verse 26.
- b) He taught fervently in the Spirit, and accurately about the things of the Lord, verse 25.
- c) It is very important for a teacher that he is accurate and well-founded in the Word of God, verse 25.

- d) He also publicly, strongly refuted any false doctrine coming from the Jews, verse 28.
- e) His ministry took him from church to church, to different provinces and countries. Acts 18:24, 19:1, Titus 3:13.

3. Conclusion:

Apollos is a good example of a teacher in the Word. May God raise more teachers "with a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures", who will teach accurately the things of the Lord.

Memory verse

2 Timothy 4:2, *“Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage – with great patience and careful instruction”*.

The Ministry of a Pastor

Lesson 6

A. What is a pastor?

1. He is a shepherd of God's flock.

Read John 21:16

- a) The Greek word for pastor is "poimen" which simply means shepherd.
- b) It was Jesus who called His followers lambs and sheep.
- c) How to be a shepherd of sheep is something we know quite well.
- d) Many things can be learned from the practical shepherd and applied to the spiritual shepherd.
- e) God also used the practical shepherd work as a training ground for several of the great leaders of God's people in the Old Testament. One good example is Moses.

2. The pastor is one of the fivefold ministries.

Read Ephesians 4:11-12

- a) This probably means shepherd responsibility for a greater part of the body of Christ.
- b) In lesson one, we saw that the New Testament church structure was different from the one we have in most places today.
- c) They gathered in homes, so in Jerusalem alone there must have been hundreds of such "home churches".
- d) These were led by elders (local shepherds).
- e) The pastor was probably the one uniting, feeding and leading the whole body forward in the same direction.
- f) As part of the fivefold ministry team the pastor also has the responsibility of equipping.
- g) He is to raise, train and equip all these local elders (shepherds).
- h) He is to see and meet the needs of the "sheep" by making way for the other four ministries.

Example: If he sees error creeping in to some part of the church, he should point it out to the teacher and let this minister solve the problem.

B. The divine pattern for the pastor (shepherd) ministry

1. The shepherd psalm is a divine pattern for all shepherds to follow.

Read Psalm 23:1-6

- a) **Verse 2. The good shepherd leads his sheep to "the green pastures".**
 - i) The pastor must lead his flock to fresh, relevant spiritual food.
 - ii) He does not need to produce it himself – that is why God has given different ministries and gifts to the church.
- b) **Verse 2. He makes them to lie down.**
 - i) When an animal lies down, it means it is satisfied. It lies down to chew what it has received.
 - ii) If a pastor can achieve this, his flock will never "break the fences and run from camp to camp". They are satisfied, healthy, strong and active.
- c) **Verse 2. He leads them beside the still waters.**
 - i) To the experience of cleansing and forgiveness. John 4:10.
 - ii) To the experience of the fullness and flow of the Spirit. John 7:37.
 - iii) It is the pastor's duty to lead the flock into these wonderful experiences.
- d) **Verse 3. "He restores my soul", "He leads me in paths of righteousness".**

The pastor is responsible for the restoration to a holy, sanctified life of any sinner who has repented.
- e) **Verses 4-5. When trials and temptations attack the flock.**

The shepherd must be there with support and comfort, preparing the table of the Lord's blessings and promises.
- f) **Verse 6. His task is to lead them right through into eternal life in the presence of the Lord.**

2. Jesus is a wonderful example of a good shepherd (pastor).

Read John 10:11-16 & 27

- a) **Verse 14, "I know my sheep".**

- i) A pastor must know each "sheep" in his care, their home and work situation, their problems and temptations.
 - ii) Remember the pastor works closely together with the elders. (They are also shepherds but on a very local level.)
 - iii) The pastor and the elders of the different groups form a shepherd team.
 - iv) In that way each member will be known and cared for in the best way.
- b) **Verse 14, "My sheep know me".**
- i) There must be a close relationship between the shepherd and his sheep.
 - ii) A pastor should never be elevated to a "high" position where it is difficult to approach him.
 - iii) He must be among the people, warm and friendly and serving them.
- c) **Verse 27, "My sheep hear my voice".**
- i) They will listen and obey because they trust the shepherd.
 - ii) That is why a pastor should always be very careful with what comes from his tongue.
- d) **Verse 27, "My sheep follow me".**
- i) A pastor cannot push his flock into anything, he must walk the way himself in front of the sheep and then they will follow him.
 - ii) This puts a great responsibility on a pastor to live a holy life and to step into all of God's promises.
- e) **Verse 11, "The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep".**
- i) A pastor must be prepared to "lay down his life for the sheep".
 - ii) That could mean his privacy, his own comfort, his own plans, sometimes a night's sleep, etc.
 - iii) The pastor should always remember that his own family (wife and children) are a very important part of his flock.
 - iv) They are a part of himself, if he neglects them he can spoil everything including his own ministry.
- f) **Verse 12. The shepherd must protect the sheep against the wolf.**
- i) He protects them from anything that could harm them.

- ii) He knows that the "wolf" can even look like an angel of light. 2 Corinthians 11:14.
 - iii) He also knows that the "wolf" can appear through "brothers" the sheep know very well. Acts 20:29-30.
 - iv) The pastor must always be alert for the work of the devil among the believers, in whatever form it may appear.
 - v) The natural shepherd would deal quite harshly with the wolf and so must the pastor.
- g) **Matthew 18:12. The shepherd must find the lost sheep.**
- i) The shepherd must go and find the backslidden members.
 - ii) He must go to where they are and not wait until he sees them again. He must "seek and find" the backslider.
 - iii) When he finds the lost sheep he must "carry" it home, back to the flock.

C. Conclusion

1. We have seen how the pastor and the elders have the same ministry but on different levels, namely to shepherd the flock of God.
2. The same rules that apply to the pastor apply to them. Let us remember this when we look at the elders in the next lesson.

Memory verse

John 10:11, *"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep"*.

The Elders and Deacons

Lesson 7

Introduction

We have now gone through the fivefold ministries, so to complete the Biblical leadership structure we will look at the offices of elders and deacons/deaconesses.

A. What is an elder?

1. A mature man.

Read 1 Timothy 3:2-7

- a) The word elder has nothing to do with the age of a person.
- b) It refers to spiritual maturity and respectable living.

2. The local leadership.

Read Acts 14:23

- a) They were the local overseers and leaders. Each group and assembly had elders appointed among them. Titus 1:5.
- b) They co-operated closely with the pastor who had an overall shepherding ministry.

3. The word "elders" is always found in plural.

Read Acts 20:17

- a) That means that there should always be several elders in each assembly.
- b) They should be chosen from men with different gifts and skills, so that together they can form an effective leadership team.

4. The elders have a shepherding ministry.

Read Acts 20:17&28

- a) In these two verses there are three different Greek words for elders.
- b) Remember all three words refer to the same men.
 - i) "Poimen" meaning shepherd, verse 28.
 - ii) "Episkopos" meaning overseer, verse 28.
 - iii) "Presbuteros" meaning elders, verse 17.

- c) This clearly indicates their leading, shepherding role in the assembly.

B. The ministry (duty) of the elders

1. The local shepherd ministry.

Read 1 Peter 5:2

- a) Shepherd the flock that is under your care.
- b) We were told in the previous lesson what it means to "shepherd".
- c) Here the elders are told to do it with great willingness and eagerness.
- d) "Serving as overseers" means as leaders of the local assembly.

2. They must be good examples.

Read 1 Peter 5:3

- a) The flock will always follow the example of the leader, so he must show them the way with his own life.
- b) Be an example in the following areas:
 - i) Live a holy life.
 - ii) Live according to the Word and with prayer.
 - iii) Be faithful in giving to the Lord.
 - iv) Be punctual in everything.
 - v) Do everything in the name of Jesus.

3. To teach and instruct in sound doctrine.

Read Titus 1:9

- a) An elder does not necessarily need to be able to teach from a pulpit.
- b) This teaching and instruction could be done one to one or in small groups.
1 Timothy 5:17.

4. They should counsel the members.

Read James 5:13-19

- a) Go to their homes, counsel them and pray for them.
- b) In case of sickness they should anoint the sick with oil.

5. **They must guard the flock against the wolf.**

Read Acts 20:28-31

- a) The elders are the ones close to the sheep and can therefore discover the work of the enemy at an early stage, and can step in with help and discipline.
- b) The elders should then, if needed, alert the fivefold ministries so that they can take action in this little local assembly.

C. The personal qualifications for leadership in the church

1. **A general standard.**

Read 1 Timothy 3:1-7

- a) The Word of God gives a very high standard for those people who are going to be leaders in the church. Titus 1:5-9.
- b) These rules are given as a standard by which to choose elders and deacons and therefore surely also apply to any other leading ministry.

2. **They must have a burning love for Jesus.**

Read John 21:15-17

- a) When Jesus called Peter to care for His sheep He asked him three times, "Do you love Me?"
- b) I think we can call this the first qualification for any ministry in the church.

3. **They must be Spirit-filled.**

Read Acts 6:3

- a) When the deacons were to be elected, one of the qualifications was that they must be full of the Spirit and wisdom.
- b) The deacon's ministry is a spiritual/practical ministry, so surely this qualification also applies strongly to all the other ministries.

4. **It must not be a newly converted person.**

Read 1 Timothy 3:6

- a) In New Testament days people seem to have "grown up" much quicker than today.
- b) When a church was planted in a new place, the ministries worked there for a year or two, then elders were elected out of the flock.

- c) The ministries continued to visit the place regularly as the church grew stronger.

5. His behaviour must be blameless.

Read 1 Timothy 3:1-7

- a) He must have a good reputation in every way. He must be sensible, temperate, gentle, hospitable, one who loves what is good, upright, holy and self-controlled.
- b) He must not be quarrelsome, violent, a drunkard, overbearing, quick-tempered, greedy for gain or a lover of money. Titus 1:5-9.

6. His family situation.

- a) He must be the husband of one wife (whom he should love and honour).
 - i) This means that he cannot have more than one wife at the same time.
 - ii) It also means that divorce and remarriage to another woman after his salvation disqualifies a man for spiritual leadership.
- b) His home must be under his control and leadership.
 - i) That means that his children must be under his control and discipline. It doesn't mean that they will never fall in any sin, but it means that they are not living in constant rebellion.
 - ii) He must manage his household well, which also implies financial management, so he is faithful with the family tithes to the Lord. He is not involved in dishonest gain, does not create debts everywhere, etc.
 - iii) The Word clearly states that if a man cannot manage his own household, how will he take care of the house of God?

D. The ministry of deacons

1. What is a deacon?

Read Acts 6:1-7

- a) The Greek word is "diakonos" and means servant, helper, waiter.
- b) The deacon ministry should take care of all the practical things in the church.
- c) It is obviously a very important ministry because much trouble and quarrels can result if the practical side is not running smoothly.
- d) This ministry was in fact introduced because of quarrelling in the church.

- e) But we also see from the first seven deacons that they had a strong spiritual ministry and leadership role together with the elders team. Acts 6:8; 8:5-8.

2. What is the ministry of a deacon?

- a) They should manage the distribution of help from the church to the poor and needy.
- b) They should minister at the "tables", that is the communion table and also other gatherings where the church meets and has meals together.
- c) They could keep the church accounts.
- d) They should handle all the practical matters in the church in close co-operation with the rest of the local leadership.
- e) They also have a strong spiritual ministry; notice Stephen and Phillip.

E. The deaconesses

1. What is a deaconess?

Read Romans 16:1-2

- a) The deaconess is, in line with the deacon, a serving, helping ministry in the church done by "sisters".
- b) They are not necessarily the wives of the deacons, as some translations put it, but sisters chosen for their spiritual and practical qualities. 1 Timothy 3:11.

2. What is the ministry of a deaconess?

There are many areas in the church where the ministry of the "sisters" is especially valuable.

- a) In visiting and caring for the sick, the poor and the old people.
- b) In dealing with, and caring for other sisters in the church.
- c) In handling and ministering to the children.
- d) In proclaiming and reaching out with the gospel.
- e) They should, together with the deacons, serve at the "tables"; both the "Lord's table" and on other occasions when the believers are eating together.
- f) They should function as "mothers" in the church.

F. How are elders, deacons and deaconesses appointed?

1. God is the one who calls.

Read 1 Corinthians 12:28

- a) God, by the Holy Spirit, is the one who calls all to ministries and offices in the church.
- b) The burden and the ability and gifts for the ministry are given by God.

2. They are chosen and appointed and ordained by the fivefold ministry team.

Read Acts 6:6

They have to be chosen according to the rules clearly given in the Word. 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9.

Conclusion:

These five ministries and three offices are the New Testament leadership team of the church of God.

Memory verse

1 Peter 5:2-3, "Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers – not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock".

The Ministry of all the Believers

Lesson 8

Introduction

The fivefold ministry is given to guide and equip each member in their place and function in the body of Christ.

A. What is the ministry of the believers?

1. To reveal Jesus Christ.

Read Ephesians 4:12-13

- a) The saints must be equipped for the work of their ministry so that the body of Christ may be built up.
- b) Not just in part, but "to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ".
- c) That means that the whole universal church should be an expression of Christ in all His glory and fullness on earth.
- d) But it also means that in every town and place where the church of Christ is present, Jesus should be revealed in all His fullness.
- e) The fullness of Jesus Christ means:
 - i) The fullness of His character, love and compassion should be revealed in the church fellowship and to the world, as a drawing power to bring them from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of God.
 - ii) The fullness of His message and word must sound clearly from the church.
 - iii) The fullness of His actions and deeds. Jesus says, "The works that I do you will do also and even greater works because I go to My Father". John 14:12.

2. To be a royal priesthood on earth.

Read 1 Peter 2:9

- a) That means a holy, separated people: "God's own special people".
- b) The church should minister unto the Lord as a royal priesthood.
 - i) Bring "sacrifices" of praise and worship.
 - ii) "Burn incense" of prayer and intercession.

- iii) Hear His voice and do His perfect will on earth.
- c) The church should minister unto the people.
 - i) The message of God's Word.
 - ii) God's righteousness.
 - iii) The power of the blood of Jesus.
 - iv) God's grace and forgiveness.

B. How can this ministry be achieved?

Each member must function.

Read Ephesians 4:16

1. Verse 16 says "according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body".
2. Each church member must be helped (by the ministries) to find his/her place and function in the body.
3. **Illustration:** In the human body each member has a function and they are all very important. If some members in the human body are just sitting there without any function, we would call such a person a cripple.
4. In the body of Christ each member has a function; each one has received a gift. **Read 1 Peter 4:10 and 1 Corinthians 12:11.**
5. Romans 12:4, "but all members of the body do not have the same function".
6. **Illustration:** In the human body there is such a variety of members all with different functions and gifts: We have big and small members, soft and powerful members, hidden (shy) and forward members, etc. some with big movement, some with small movement, some loud, some quiet, some a bit rough, some very sensitive, etc.

But in spite of this there is a wonderful harmony in the human body because a spirit of unity and love binds the whole body together.

7. The very same should be the case in the body of Christ.

Read 1 Corinthians 12:14-27

C. The powerful example of the early church

1. **The ministries made sure that all the saints were properly equipped.**

Read Acts 2:38-47

- a) Right from the day of Pentecost the ministries made sure that all new believers were equipped for service. Each new believer had experienced:
 - i) A proper repentance and deliverance.
 - ii) Baptism in water immediately.
 - iii) Baptism in the Holy Spirit.
 - iv) Then new believers joined the fellowship and devoted themselves to:
 - (a) The apostles' doctrine.
 - (b) The fellowship.
 - (c) The breaking of bread.
 - (d) Prayer.
 - (e) Meeting together as believers daily.
- b) It was no wonder that these believers grew and matured quickly into wonderful instruments in the hand of the Lord.

2. The apostolic ministry teams started new works.

Read Acts 19:8-10

- a) These ministry teams went to completely heathen cities and after two years or less a healthy church was planted.
- b) They would then leave these new believers, after having appointed elders and other ministries, who could take charge as they went on.
- c) They constantly kept in contact by letter and visits, further equipping and maturing the saints.

3. Ministry should produce ministry (a spiritual father/son relationship).

Read 1 Timothy 1:2 and Titus 1:4

- a) The apostle Paul calls these two men his true sons in the faith.
- b) He nurtured, trained and equipped them into ministry in the church.
- c) The apostle Barnabas helped the young Mark along after his failure and trained him to be a useful servant. Acts 15:39.
- d) This principle is already found in the Old Testament.
 - i) Moses had his Aaron whom he trained and equipped.
 - ii) Elijah had his Elisha whom he trained and equipped.
 - iii) Elisha seems to have had a whole group of "students" around him, a kind of "prophet school".
- e) Perhaps ministries today should have one or more trainees in their care?

4. The church as a powerful army.

Read Ephesians 6:13

- a) **Illustration:** Only if each soldier in the army is well-trained and well-equipped will this army have any effect against the enemy.
- b) The early church was such a well-trained, well-equipped army, and that is why they had such a powerful effect on the enemy camp. Acts 17:6.

D. Conclusion

1. In the average church today only about 10% of the members are active. What a challenge to make all 100% active and equipped for their ministry!
2. This, according to Ephesians 4:11, is the work of the fivefold ministry.
3. So let us pray that God again will raise up these ministries in the whole body of Christ.

Memory verse

Ephesians 4:11-13, *“It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ”.*