

The Building and Maintenance Service of the Church

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I. Introduction. Text: Ephesians 4:11-12.

II. Figures Paul likens to the church.

A. A body.

B. A building for God.

C. A mixed metaphor of a building growing.

III. Each Christian has a vital part in what The Spirit is building--this dwelling place for God.

A. Functions that are essential for the body:

1. Apostles.

a. They form foundations--the basic structure--like a skeleton.

b. Both Apostles and prophets are foundation layers.

c. These are first in historical sequence. (I Corinthians 12)

d. The Apostles were sent out with a special authority.

e. The job of an Apostle was to declare the whole truth about Jesus Christ--the foundation.

f. The Apostolic gift today is the gift to pioneer new churches.

2. Prophets.

a. They are like the nervous system that helps to make the body active.

b. The gift of a prophet differs from that of an Apostle in that an Apostle's word has authority. The prophetic word explains the Apostle's word.

3. Evangelists.

a. They correspond to the digestive system--they take outside food and make it something living.

b. These work together with teaching pastors to work with individuals in the church.

c. All Christians are expected to evangelize, but not all Christians have the particular gift.

d. Any Christian can witness (tell what has happened to you), but an evangelist is able to proclaim the great truths of the cross and resurrection more effectively.

4. Pastor-teachers.

a. They correspond to the circulatory system that feeds the body and cleanses it.

b. These were also called elders.

c. These are to rule through example.

B. Every Christian is in the ministry without exception.

C. All the gifts are greatly needed in the church.

Application questions:

1. What is the relationship between an Apostle's word and a prophet's in the New Testament?

2. How would you respond to someone who says that he or she does not evangelize because he or she does not have the gift of evangelism? Explain.

3. Which of the foundation gifts stood out to you? What struck you about it?
