

Transition:

In many ways, the western Christian church has developed some very bad habits. In our division of clergy and lay-people, we have sometimes forgotten the roles and responsibilities given to each. Paul continues to plead for unity within the Body of Christ. And one of the ways God has chosen to unify the leadership of the Church is through the five-fold ministry.

Tell the story:

Summarize verses 1-16 the best as you can, don't stop and teach, try not to make points, just tell the story. Perhaps leave some parts out or make a mistake, just to see if your group catches it!

Rebuild the story:

Rebuild this section by asking questions. Have the group look for what was added or left out by looking in their Bibles and going back over the section. Then have someone else summarize the section as best they can – just like you modeled the first time.

Discussion Questions:

1. How can a Believer practically maintain “the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace?”
2. According to the Scriptures, do we choose which gift we want? Or is it appointed to us?
3. What is the purpose of God giving these gifts?

Fundamental:

Ministry Gifts – In verse 11, Paul lays out the five gifts “for the work of ministry”: apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds and teachers. An apostle is a delegate, messenger, one sent forth with orders. A prophet is one filled with the Spirit of God, who by God's authority and command in words of weight pleads the cause of God and urges salvation of people. An evangelist is a bringer of good news; a herald of salvation through Christ. A shepherd, also called a pastor, is the presiding officer, manager, director of any assembly; as Christ is the Shepherd of the Church. A teacher is one who teaches concerning the things of God and the duties of man. However, these gifts are not sufficient within themselves. They are clearly given to equip the saints (lay-people included) for the work of the ministry; for building up the body of Christ.

1. What is the danger of a church where the lay-people rely on the pastors/leaders to do all the work of the ministry?
2. How do you know which gift you have? Does it have to be one of these five? Can it come from the lists in 1 Corinthians 12 or Romans 12? Can you have more than one?
3. If a leader in one of these five gifts has a moral failure, can he/she be restored to ministry? If so, how?

Homework/Challenge:

1. Seek out wisdom from leaders that know you about your own gift(s) from the Holy Spirit. Pray and ask God to show you what part you play in the Body of Christ.
2. Please read Ephesians 5 in preparation for next week.

Discipleship Tip:

It is tough for a growing Christian to move from spiritual milk to meat. From being a consumer to realizing they have a gift given to them for the benefit of the Body. From being discipled to being a disciple-maker. Many immature believers will desire spiritual gifts that are more public and “popular.” Be honest with your people about spiritual gifts and that they are given by God for His purposes in His Church. May our pride not get in the way.

Prayer:

Pray that your people grow in maturity in Christ – that they view themselves as sons and daughters in God's eyes, not just tools to be used for the kingdom. But at the same time, God has designed us to find joy in serving Him through our spiritual gifts.