

The New Testament Church
Releasing Gifts and Ministries – Ephesians 6:11-16; Romans 12:3-21
October 22, 2023

I How does God intend for the Church to minister to each other and the Community?

- A. The Church is identified as a bride and a city in the Bible – Rev. 21:2
 - 1. As a bride, the Church is to minister to its members – Ephesians 4:16 – it purifies itself

Note: Last week we learned that ***God’s covenant with us and each other is broad and deep enough to resolve any problem between people if we are willing to be broken and allow Him to move!***

- 2. As a city, the Church is to serve and by example, lighting its community – Mt. 5:13-16

B. God has designated five key ministry gifts to equip the Church – Ephesians 4:11-16

- 1. Apostles, pastors and teachers are primarily for the equipping of the bride
- 2. Apostles, evangelists and prophets are given primarily to point the church outward

C. The Biblical expectation is that leaders would work themselves out of a job!

- 1. The body is called to release these ministries, not just the leaders
- 2. God’s goal is that each believer would actively minister in some capacity

II What are gifts and ministries and how should they be released?

A. The Biblical pattern for releasing gifts and raising up leaders

- 1. Each believer is gifted (talents, abilities, unique expression) by grace to share – **Ro. 12:3-4**

- a. God does this directly with no involvement of the church or its leaders.
- b. Believers are exhorted to share testimonies, revelations, and fellowship (1st Cor. 14:26)
- c. This is best done in small groups like home meetings – that is its original context

- 2. Gifts may naturally grow into public ministries – but those require character qualifications

- a. Ministries endorsed by the church require confirmation.
- b. Character is formed with time, responding to the pressures of life – more like Christ
- c. Ministries in **Romans 12:6-7** are followed by **character qualifications (v. 8-21)**.

B. The pattern is thus the following, illustrated in the book of Acts

- 1. God gives the gift, and the believer begins to informally move in it, sharing with others
- 2. It is noticed by other believers, and they are blessed when receiving those gifts
- 3. Gifts become ministries organically, it is released behind the scenes – invest in people
- 4. Leaders recognize the gift, confirm the fact by the public laying on of hands

C. Qualifications of leaders are listed in the books of Titus and 1st Timothy.

- 1. These qualifications were given to the people, not just the leaders
- 2. The people first select, informally, “ordaining” (stretch the hand toward) functionally
- 3. They are then publicly confirmed by members as well as leaders.

D. The only way people can discern gifts and eventually confirm them is meeting together

- 1. Most of this discernment takes place in smaller home groups and equipping meetings
- 2. This is why we exhort each of you to relate to others in smaller groups of all kinds

III Training our Children – ***a bold example of walking in covenant with one another’s families***

A. The church is made up of individuals, not families, but families are also the foundation

B. One of the most intense areas of discipleship is when we train each other’s children

- 1. Our school is not just a safe place where children can learn the truths of God
- 2. It is a place where families can relate to one another in the training of children

C. Releasing gifts and raising up leaders begins in the home.

- 1. We are to raise our children with grace for their giftings
- 2. We are also to train their character that they might be able to occupy until He comes
 - a. All vocations are to be full-time Christian service
 - b. However, it requires character in order to be prepared to do so (walking like Jesus)