



ALL IN

[COMMITTED TO DISCIPLESHIP]

Eph. 4:11-16

And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, ¹² to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, ¹³ until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, ¹⁴ so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. ¹⁵ Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, ¹⁶ from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

Focus Point: *A disciple of Jesus will be fully engaged in the work of ministry as defined by Christ, not our culture.*

THREE “R’S”

1. Responsibilities

The apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds (pastors)/teachers or church leaders: Equip the saints.
Equipping – fixing or mending something broken (i.e. fishing nets), here in Eph. refers to supplying that which is lacking.

The saints (believers in the church): Do work of ministry.

What does “work of ministry” look like?

Ministry will be based on the unique aspects of the gifts of leadership in how they equip.

Apostles: We don't have apostles such as the 12 or even the Apostle Paul. However, they do help to establish churches by laying a foundation built on the Gospel. This would include leadership, vision and overall building on the Gospel.

Prophets: Main focus is prophetic, but that is subject to Scripture. Their equipping would be based on God's word, encouragement and care through edification.

Evangelists: Proclaiming the Gospel, training others do the same, helping to develop disciples, not just make converts and organizing ways to impact the lost with the Gospel.

Shepherds/Pastors/Teachers: Developing ways to care for the multiple needs within the church, casting and building direction and vision, making sure saints are well instructed concerning doctrine and its implementation in daily life.

Gifts identified in Scripture:

Rom. 12:4-8

For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, ⁵ so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. ⁶ Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; ⁷ if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; ⁸ the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.

1 Cor. 12:7-10

To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. ⁸ For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the *utterance of knowledge* according to the same Spirit, ⁹ to another *faith* by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, ¹⁰ to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues.

1 Peter 4:11

Whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies.

This implication is that we all need each other.

Leaders need saints to fulfill the work of the ministry. Saints need leaders to be fully and biblically equipped to do works of ministry.

A church absent of leaders that effectively equip will be disorganized and ill-equipped. A church in which saints do not take on the work of ministry, will be an anemic church where needs go unmet and hurting people receive no care.

2. Reason

Main reason is for the building up of the church.
Building up refers to encouraging or strengthening.

This ensures that the church is healthy.

Protects the leaders and church from having a dictator(s) or leaders who burn out.

Ensures that the multifaceted needs are actually met.

This approach was instituted by Christ, Himself.
Multiple needs are met through multiple gifted and equipped saints who do the work of the ministry.

John 14:12-14

Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father. ¹³ Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴ If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it.

3. Results

There will be unity of faith. This is Christian faith as founded upon the Gospel of Jesus, not a joining of other religious systems that reject Christ and accept other “paths” to God or eternal life.

The knowledge of the Son of God contains two elements:

Information or doctrine concerning the person of Jesus.
How well do you understand the major or central doctrines of the faith? Here are two tests:

1. Can you teach children these concepts so they can understand without watering down the message?
2. Can you respond to challenges levied against the faith by going to God's word?

Relational in knowing Christ, experiencing Him and waling with Him.

There will be a maturing into manhood or becoming a spiritual adult, into the measure of the stature of Christ, growing up in every way into Him who is the head.

The context of the “growing up” is corporate, not individual. It includes the individual (as is of course necessary), but the immediate thrust is the body as a whole.

Growing up into Christ or becoming an adult is contrasted with v.14:

So that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.

“tossed to and fro by waves, carried by every wind”
image of an unanchored boat being driven, battered
and ultimately destroyed by the storm.

“human cunning, craftiness in deceitful schemes”
intentional misuse of God’s word for one’s own sinful
purposes. Where we get our word for “dice” as in
gambling, here it would be like loaded dice with the
intent of robbing the victim of all their money, bringing
financial ruin.

THE CHALLENGE

1. Truth“ing” in Love

This is not about delivering a critique sandwiched in between two compliments. It is referring to speaking Gospel truth in love.

The literal translation is truthing in love. This speaks of how we live, not just what we say.

Truth or love should never be focused on by ignoring the other, rather they should operate together.

Truth becomes hard if not softened by love. Love becomes soft if not strengthened by truth. Paul calls us to hold the two together, which should not be difficult for Spirit-filled believers, since the Holy Spirit is Himself “the Spirit of truth” and His firstfruit is love.

John Stott

Love is the context and truth is the content.

Mark 2:3-5, 11

And they came, bringing to him a paralytic carried by four men. ⁴ And when they could not get near him because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him, and when they had made an opening, they let down the bed on which the paralytic lay. ⁵ And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, “Son, your sins are forgiven.”

¹¹ “I say to you, rise, pick up your bed, and go home.”

2. The whole not the individual

Paul paints a picture of the corporate reality, not of individual preference. Christ requires that we serve Him based on His terms, not our own.

Mark 10:17-22

¹⁷ And as he was setting out on his journey, a man ran up and knelt before him and asked him, “Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” ¹⁸ And Jesus said to him, “Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone. ¹⁹ You know the commandments: ‘Do not murder, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor your father and mother.’” ²⁰ And he said to him, “Teacher, all these I have kept from my youth.” ²¹ And Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, “You lack one thing: go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.” ²² Disheartened by the saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

1. What are you currently doing as a disciple in the church?
2. How or with what attitude are you doing it?
3. Do you limit the ways in which you will serve as a disciple based on your own preferences and desires?
4. In what ways are you seeking out to be equipped?
5. Do you serve and follow as a disciple in the context of love?