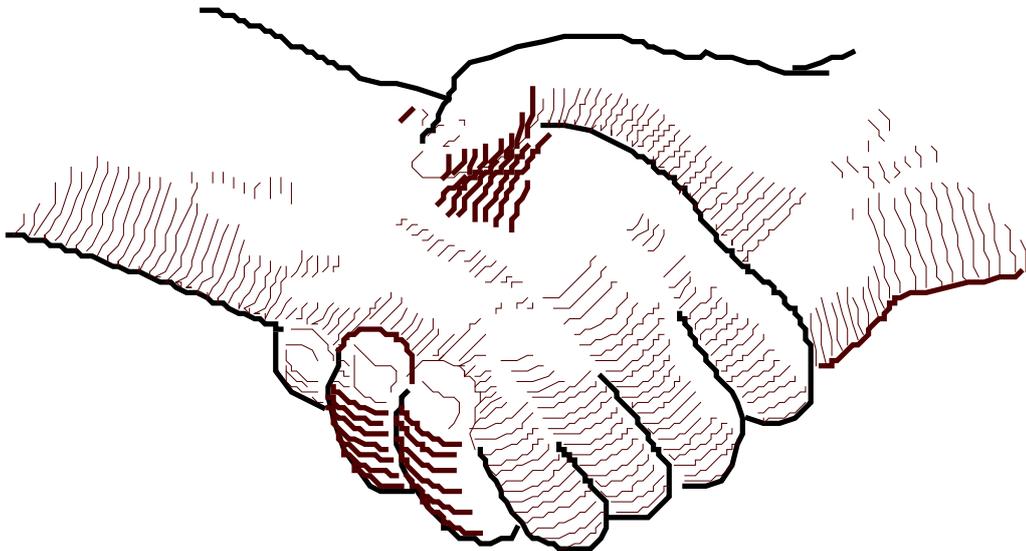


**CRUSADE COLLEGE OF MINISTRY - VIC
CERTIFICATE OF MINISTRY**

**MODULE 5
UNIT 2**

**THE MINISTRY AS A
GIFT FROM CHRIST**



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1. INTRODUCTION

Jesus has given people as gifts to the church.

“It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, 12 to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ...” Ephesians 4:11-16

The gifts are given for the purpose of:

- Equipping the saints for the work of ministry (v.12)
- For the edification of the body of Christ (v.12)
- To bring the body to maturity (v.13)
- To bring stability into the body through sound teaching of Scripture. (v.14)
- To bring the body into a healthy relationship with Christ (v.15)
- To bring the body into healthy relationships with each other “every joint supplies” (v.16)
- To bring growth and cause the body to minister love and care to itself.

And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers... 1 Cor 12:28

Two things to note:

1. The five ministry gifts, also known as ascension gifts are given by God not man.
2. They are set in the church

2. THE CHURCH AS GOD SEES IT

Although the word "Church" is generally used today in reference to a denomination, or sometimes a building, the Bible nowhere uses the word in this way.

The words "church" and "churches" are derived from the Greek word 'ekklesia' which simply means "**A Called Out Assembly**".

2.1 Heaven’s view of the church is twofold:

1. The one universal church comprising of all born again believers of all nations and all generations.
2. The local church or congregation meeting regularly in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

Denominations are chiefly the result of successive rediscoveries of truth since the Reformation. We often think in terms of many different denominations, but God sees the church on earth only in two forms, that is the Universal church and the Local church.

Activity: From the following examples in Scripture, indicate which view of the church is in mind.		
Reference	Scripture	Which view? Local or Universal
Mat. 16:18	"I will build my Church"	
Mat. 18:15-17	"Tell it to the Church"	
Eph. 5:25	"Christ loved the Church"	
Acts 2:47	"added to the Church daily"	

The word "church" as used in Scripture then, never refers to a denomination or a church building, but to either the Universal or Local Church which is a "called out" body of people.

THE CHURCH IS PEOPLE

A Clergy fraternal met on a weekday morning to hear a distinguished speaker. Over coffee he asked some of the ministers where their churches were. An Anglican said that his was at the top of High Street. A Methodist answered that his church was halfway down Broad Street on the right. A Pentecostal looked at his watch and said with a smile, "Right now they are at work all over the town." Perhaps nothing will forward evangelism more effectively than regaining the consciousness that the church is people, and not a building.

2.2 The New Testament Church

The New Testament presents the church as being sovereign, self governing and self propagating. While local churches of similar faith and experience may prefer to group together for the furtherance of their particular vision, it is important that we never lose sight of the fact that the only church organisation the Bible recognises is that which functions within the local church.

All other organisation is formed for the convenience of these churches and as a means of coordination, not control.



2.3 A symbol of the New Testament Church

A symbol of the New Testament Church structure is found in Revelation 1. Here the Apostle John has a vision of the risen Lord amongst seven candlesticks.

Verse 20 tells us these represent seven **local** churches, the seven stars are the seven angels (ministries) of those seven churches.

Here we see an inspiring picture with Jesus as the only head over the Church universal. **His leadership is also expressed in each local church.** For each, He has a purpose and a plan.

The ministry of each local church is held in His hand. As such the Lord seeks to manifest Himself in and through each local church to fulfil God's plan.

Finally, consider the above symbol in contrast with the Old Testament candlestick, which had seven arms but had to be made out of one piece of gold, no joins were allowed.

This speaks of central control or government, which was God's Old Testament plan as Moses and the elders governed the whole of Israel.



3. ASCENSION GIFTS VERSUS ELDERSHIP.

While there is a striking similarity between the ascension gift (such as that of a pastor) and the office of eldership, there are however fundamental differences.

Some differences are:

- 3.1 The Ascension gifts are bestowed by the Lord (Ephesians 4: 11). Whereas elders are appointed by man (Titus 1: 5-9).
- 3.2 The Ascension gifts are placed within the universal church. Whereas the office of eldership is confined to the local church.
- 3.3 Eldership constitutes the government of the local church and is always plural in the New Testament.
- 3.4 The Ascension gift constitutes the spiritual leadership of the local church and is singular, see Revelation chapter 1. One noted church leader said, "Anything that has more than one head is a monster."
- 3.5 The Ascension ministry which operates within the local church however, is equal in government to that of the local eldership (1 Peter 5: 1-4).

- 3.6 If the Ascension gift within the local church is singular, the time for its operation within that local church may have to be limited in order that the congregation may receive a balanced diet. Otherwise:
- The people may move
 - A split may occur
 - If there is nowhere else for the people to go there will be discontent

3.7 Elder - Overseer - Shepherd

Elder	Greek = presbuteros		Acts 20:17 1 Pet 5:1
	English = presbyter		
	Shows the kind of person	“mature and wise”	
Overseer	Greek = episkopos		Acts 20:28 1 Tim 3:1
	English = bishop		
	Shows the nature of the work	“Supervisor who directs workmen”	
Shepherd	Greek = poimen		Acts 20:28 Eph 4:11
	English = pastor		
	Shows the spiritual ministry	Root meaning is “to protect”	

“An Elder is not a Pastor - but - a Pastor is an Elder”

Activity:

1. Think of any other similarities and differences between these three ministries. Write them here: _____

2. How much should these three functions be fulfilled by one person?
3. From your experience, discuss the value of having a plurality of elders.

- 2. Separation unto
 - Exodus 19: 4-5
 - Psalm 103: 7
 - Exodus 14: 1-10
 - Psalm 106
 - Exodus 33
 - 2 Peter 1: 5-15

5. HOW DOES ONE IDENTIFY THE ASCENSION GIFT?

5.1 How do we recognise a call?

How does a call to ministry come?
How do we know if we have been called by the Lord?

"By what right does a man stand before his fellows, Bible in hand, and claim their attention? ... because he is obeying a "tap on the shoulder". Because God has whispered to him in the ear and conscripted him for the glorious company of those voices crying in the wilderness of life."

CH Spurgeon

"The preacher is conscious of being CALLED, as we say, and that means that he is responding to an inward urge that could not be resisted ... - an urge that grew into a conviction that only by obeying could ever find that joy and satisfaction of a life according to the plan of God."

Peter Marshall

5.2 The Meaning of a Call

The idea of the call of God occurs throughout the Bible. The significance in each instance must be determined by the context in which it appears.

Firstly: There is the general call to **Salvation which is extended to** all. Matthew 11:28; 1 Peter 2:9; 1 Timothy 6:12.

Secondly: There is the general call to service. Once the call to salvation has been accepted, the believer immediately receives a call to service. There should be no period in the believer's life when he is exempt from ministry of some kind. He is saved to serve.

Thirdly: There is the specific call to ministerial leadership. God has set some in the church (1 Corinthians 12: 28) to serve as apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers, and evangelists (Ephesians 4: 11). These people have not placed themselves in positions of leadership. They have simply responded to Christ's plan for their lives.

For the purpose of these studies however, we will only look at the call to the Ascension Ministry.

5.3 The Method of a Call

It is important to remember that God is a Being of infinite variety. Because each person is a distinctive being, he is approached by God on the basis of his individuality. every call is original. No one can tell another what the call of God must be like. The conviction of having been called must be personal.

- Isaiah had a vision of the Lord high and lifted up.
- Jeremiah had a revelation of the omniscience and sovereignty of God.
- Saul was smitten with blindness

Not all calls however, were of extraordinary nature.

- Timothy entered the ministry because Paul found him to be a man of good reputation. As a result he joined Paul and Silas and eventually launched out on a ministry of his own.
- John Mark was first chosen as an assistant to Paul and Barnabas (Acts 12: 25); later rejected by Paul because he deserted them in Pamphylia (Acts 13: 13; 15: 37-40). Barnabas felt sorry for him, picked him up, gave him another chance, and later proved himself to be useful even to Paul (2 Timothy 4: 11).

The message then is this: Do not despise your call because it is different from others. Cherish it because it is distinctively yours!

Activity:

Discuss the times when you have felt the call of God to a certain course of action, or to an area of ministry.

How did you deal with feelings of inadequacy or unworthiness?

Were you tempted to compare God's call to you with that to someone else?

5.4 The Assurance of a Call

Since a call cannot be validated on the basis of conformity to some standard pattern, it is logical to ask how one can know he is called. On the other hand, how can one know he is not called to this ministry? The following four points will help us in this matter.

5.4.1 Intense desire

The first sign of the heavenly calling is an intense, all-absorbing desire for the work.

In a true call to the ministry, there must be an irresistible, overwhelming craving and raging thirst for telling others what God has done for us.

"Do not enter the ministry if you can help it. If any student in this room could be content to be a newspaper editor, or a grocer, or a farmer, or a doctor, or a lawyer, or a senator or a king, in the name of heaven and earth let him go his way."
CH Spurgeon

We must feel that "woe is unto us if we preach not the gospel".

The Word of God must be as a fire in our bones, otherwise, if we undertake the ministry:

- We will be unhappy in it
- We will be unable to bear the self denials
- We will be of little service to those among whom we minister.

The true pastor's work is full of self denials, and without a love for his calling he will soon succumb and either leave the drudgery, or move into discontent, burdened with a monotony as tiresome as that of a blind horse in a mill.

The desire for ministry must be a continuous thoughtful desire, not a sudden impulse without very careful consideration.

The desire must be totally free of self interest. If you can detect, after the most earnest self examination, any other motive than the glory of God and the good of souls, you had better turn aside from it at once. Any other motive will be like the fly in the pot of ointment and will spoil it all.

5.4.2 Aptness to teach

In the second place, combined with the earnest desire to become a pastor, there must be aptness to teach and some measure of the other qualities needful for the office of a minister.

If one is called to preach, he will be endowed with a degree of speaking ability, which he will cultivate and increase.

If the gift of utterance is not there in some measure at first, it is not likely that it will ever be developed. We must give ourselves a fair trial and we must do more than put it to our own conscience and judgement, for we are poor judges.



5.4.3 Proven Results

In order to further prove one's call, some results must be showing. We must see a measure of conversion work going on in the work of ministry, or we may conclude that we have made a mistake, and therefore we best go back the best way we can.

There may be times of drought and periods of leanness, but in the main there will be fruit.

"If the Lord gives you no zeal for souls, keep to the hammer and trowel, but avoid the pulpit if you value your heart's peace and your future salvation."
CH Spurgeon

5.4.4 Acceptance by the Church

The final step beyond all this, however, is also needful of our inquiry. The will of the Lord concerning pastors is made known through the prayerful judgement of His church. It is needful as a proof of your vocation that your preaching should be acceptable to the people of God.

God usually opens the doors of utterance for those whom He calls to speak His name. Impatience would push the door open or break it down, but faith waits upon the Lord. When the opportunity to speak comes, then comes our trial. Our ministry will be judged by the assembly, and if the response is negative, or if as a general rule, the church is not edified, the conclusion may not be disputed, we have failed the test and our ministry is in doubt.

Churches are not all wise, neither do they all judge in the power of the Holy Spirit, but whether you value the verdict of the church or not, one thing is certain, that none of us can be pastors without the loving consent of the flock.

Finally, the church of God is always urgently in need of Spirit-filled ministers; to her a true man of God is more precious than the Gold of Ophir

Former officials do lack and suffer hunger, but the truly anointed of the Lord need never be without a job, for there are hungry hearts and ready ears to welcome them.

Be fit for your work, and you'll never be out of it. Do not run about inviting yourselves to preach here and there; be more concerned about your ability than your opportunity, and more earnest about your walk than either.

The sheep will know the God-sent shepherd; the porter of the fold will open to you, and the flock will know your voice.

6. THE MINISTRY OR ASCENSION GIFTS.

Jesus as the Chief Shepherd was the only one with a "complete" ministry. When He ascended he gave gifts unto men, or, as it is sometimes said, "He gave gifted men to the church".

These ministry gifts of Apostle, Prophet, Pastor, Teacher and Evangelist are permanent possessions or qualities of a man. I believe they are related to our temperament and personality. These ministry gifts are resident within us at the time of salvation and together with the call of the Lord on our life they will become functional. Let us briefly look at them:

6.1 The Apostle

An apostle, being "one sent forth" by Christ, is a pioneer, laying foundations, establishing churches in a scriptural order, overseeing and caring for such churches and confirming them in the Word.

He exercises a fragment of the ministry of our great Apostle, Jesus Christ. He is called and raised up by Christ, and given a vision for the work he is to do. Acts 26: 15-18.

The proof of his ministry is the fruit of his labour - the work he leaves behind him.

12 Kingdom Apostles	- Matthew 10: 1-6; Luke 22: 28-30
Other Apostles	- Acts 14:14
His Seal	- 1 Corinthians 9: 1-2.

6.2 The Prophet

The Greek word is "Prophetes", meaning 'one who forth-tells', embracing also an element of fore-telling.

A prophet is one who speaks forth under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit without any premeditation or preparation. His ministry may involve the exercise of the gift of prophecy (1 Corinthians 12: 10), but will certainly include revelation gifts, such as the Word of Knowledge and the Word of Wisdom.

A prophet conveys revelation. He does not, however, exercise control or give direction and in this respect, New Testament prophetic ministry differs from that of the Old Testament which gave both revelation and direction. N.T. examples are: Acts 11: 27-30, 20: 22-24 and 21: 10-14.

Activity:

Discuss the similarities and differences between the gift of prophecy and the ascension gift of a prophet. How important is this?

6.3 The Evangelist

The word means "a preacher of good tidings". Perhaps the ministry gift of an evangelist is the best understood of all, in its place and function in the church. We see an outstanding example of this in Acts, where Philip had revival in Samaria and then called the apostles and he moved on.

6.4 The Teacher

The Greek is "didaskalos", meaning 'instructor'. There is a very close relationship between the ministry gifts of pastor and teacher. However, it would not be correct to consider "pastor" and "teacher" as synonymous terms, nor regard their ministries as being identical.

6.5 The Pastor

Here the Greek word is "poimen", meaning shepherd. The pastor is a shepherd who cares for and feeds the flock of God. His ministry is very similar to that of an elder. The basic difference being that the office of an elder is confined to the local church, whereas the ministry gift of a pastor, while functioning in and through local churches, is given for the benefit of the entire Body of Christ.

Often as we commence in ministry, we are more of a general practitioner and as the years progress and our ministry matures we become more like a specialist in our particular ministry and one of the above five is more clearly seen.

Activity:
Think about the leader of your church.
Which of the ascension gifts are most clearly seen in their ministry?

7. OTHER GIFTS THAT OPERATE IN THE CHURCH.

As we have said earlier in our study, every Christian has been saved to serve. Just as there are many parts to our human body and each one is needed, so it is with the body of Christ.



There are three main groups of gifts in the church, seen in the following passages:

Ministry Gifts	Motivational Gifts	Manifestation Gifts
Eph 4: 11-13	Romans 12: 6-8	1 Cor 12: 8-10
Apostles	Perceiver	Tongues }
Prophets	Server	Interpretation } Vocal
Evangelists	Teacher	Prophecy }
Pastors	Exhorter	Word of Knowledge }
Teachers	Giver	Word of Wisdom } Revelation
	Administrator	Discerning of spirits }
	Compassion person	Miracles }
		Faith } Power
		Healing }

The purpose of this study has been to deal with the ministry gifts, but we will make a brief comment or two about the others as well.

7.1 The Motivational Gifts.

One or more of these gifts are resident in every believer. They are related to our personality and character. It is these gifts that make every believer a unique member of the Body Of Christ. Each one is different to the others and all are indispensable. See 1 Corinthians 12: 12-28.

"Just as there are many parts to our bodies, so it is with Christ's body. We are all part of it, and it takes everyone of us to make it complete, for we have different work to do. So we belong to each other, and each needs all of the others. "
Romans 12: 4,5 (Living Bible)

7.2 The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

There are nine gifts of the Spirit mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12: 7-11, and these may be broken up into three groups of three:

1. The three voice gifts of tongues, interpretation of tongues, and prophecy.
2. The three power gifts of working miracles, gifts of healing and the gift of faith.
3. The three revelation gifts of Word of Wisdom, Knowledge, and Discerning of Spirits.

These nine gifts are for every member of the Body of Christ. They are "manifestations of the Spirit" (1 Corinthians 12: 7) which should be earnestly sought in prayer and waiting on the Lord by every Spirit filled Christian and more so by those in the ministry. The fields are white unto harvest, the labourers are few, the equipment for effective service is there.

Let us earnestly seek the Lord in prayer and fasting until we see His glory manifest and our churches grow.

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