

# Four Anointings

Every Church Should Have

A glass pitcher with a curved handle is tilted, pouring a stream of golden-yellow oil. The oil falls into a pool of water, creating concentric ripples that spread outwards. The background is a soft, out-of-focus yellow, suggesting a bright, warm light source.

Establishing the Body of  
Christ in the Local Assembly

Steven L. Highlander

Four Anointings Every Church Should Have

Four Anointings Every Church Should Have:  
Establishing the Body of Christ in the local Assembly

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STEVEN L. HIGHLANDER

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## DEDICATION

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I dedicate this to my wife, Brooke, who has spent 24 years in the ministry with me as we have sought to understand, appropriate, and establish the principles outlined in this book. From pastoring and church planting in the United States to occupying a hut on Kiriwina Island in Papua New Guinea, she has been an incredible partner to share the journey.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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I most heartily acknowledge some of the people who have been a part of developing my understanding of the Body of Christ. Their teaching and practical demonstration have been invaluable as we have sought to implement these principles in our lives and churches.

Pastor and Evangelist Dave Hamer, my first Spirit-filled Pastor, taught me so much about the Spirit-filled life, genuine worship, the gifts of the Spirit, and the Body of Christ.

The late Ron Ricley (Pastor of The Chapel at Lecompton, Lecompton, KS and missionary to West Africa and Central America) taught me what it means to be a pastor. Our travels together in West Africa, teaching pastor's seminars and holding revivals, were vital to much of my understanding concerning God's nature and how he works in and through His people.

Gary King and Bill Lewis, two of the founders of Apostolic Team Ministries, International, imparted much understanding of the apostolic and prophetic ministries and how they relate to congregational life. Gary still plays a vital role in guidance and accountability in my life.

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I cannot fail to mention our good friends Dr. Jerry and Rev. Julie Stott. Jerry serves as Associate Global Director for the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel. He oversees Foursquare's mission work in the South Pacific and Southeast

Asia. Their friendship, encouragement, and leadership are why Brooke and I are currently serving as missionaries in Papua New Guinea, focusing on leadership development and discipleship.

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## A Word from the Author

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I believe the Biblical revelation of the “Body of Christ” to be one of the least understood and most unappropriated truths of the New Testament. That is partly due to a large segment of Christianity that either ignores the issue or rejects it because it does not fit into their ecclesiastical structures.

The Biblical phrase, “The Body of Christ,” is not a metaphor or allegory—it is a reality. The Church *is* the Body of Christ on the earth. We *are* His hands and feet and mouth. Jesus is indeed the functional head of the Church and the Holy Spirit, the indwelling life force animating the Body that was once “dead in sin, but now alive in Christ.”

I love the Church. Jesus died to bring it into existence. He sent the Holy Spirit to give it life and power. The Church is God’s plan for eternity. It is unfortunate that, for many people, the modern concept of church is more akin to a corporate entity or community service club. Trying to operate as the Church without an understanding of the Biblical principle of the “Body of Christ” is one reason why the Church is fractured and powerless. It is a key reason why much of the western church has consumed by a spirit of consumerism.

The Church has a spiritual destiny to fulfill, and she will not fulfill it without the Spirit of God working freely and unhindered in our midst. God wants to show forth Jesus –both to this world and the heavenly realm– through the Church. Paul explains one part of the eternal purpose of God in Ephesians 3:10-11:

So that **through the church** the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities

in the heavenly places. **This was according to the eternal purpose** that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord.

When I use the term Church—with a capital C—I mean that spiritual entity we call the Body of Christ, not the organizational church. I believe a group can call itself a church without being a part of the Body of Christ.

I want to point out another distinction I use throughout this book. I have purposely used the terms Old or New Covenant instead of Old or New Testament. We typically use the terms Old Testament and New Testament to refer to the two sections of the Bible. We could use the words *Testament* and *Covenant* somewhat interchangeably. However, I would like to point out a subtle difference—even if it only exists subconsciously in Christians' minds. When I use the term *Covenant* rather than *Testament*, I am trying to point out the difference in the operating agreement with which God is working. Thus the phrase, *New Testament*, may bring to mind the entire second section of the Bible with 27 books. In contrast, the term *New Covenant* refers specifically to the new operating agreement God made with Israel, Judah, and the Gentiles (Hebrews 8:8, 8:13, and 12:24). The New Testament explains how the New Covenant was implemented, just as the Old Testament explained the Old Covenant's outworking.

I want to make it very plain that the Church does not operate under the Old Covenant in any way, shape, or form. The physical types, shadows, pictures, and history of the Old Testament all point to New Testament Spiritual realities (I Corinthians 10:6 and 11). Hopefully, in this book, I have made a compelling case for the transformation of the physical Old Covenant Kingdom into the Spiritual New Covenant Kingdom.

Steve Highlander

April 6, 2021 Papua New Guinea,

## Chapter 1

### The Anointing Breaks the Yoke

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**The yoke shall be destroyed because  
of the anointing.**

Isaiah10:27

**Christ sets us free by the power of His Spirit; then He  
maintains our freedom as we learn to live from day  
to day in the power of that Spirit.**

Beth Moore, Christian Teacher

I tried to quit smoking. I had been a Christian for a couple of years and had never overcome my addiction to nicotine. The harder I tried to quit, the worse it seemed to get. I went from one pack of cigarettes a day to two or more—trying to stop.

I wanted to be free. Most of my church friends looked down on me for my *sin*. They wouldn't let me be a deacon because I smoked. I prayed and asked God to set me free. I even got mad after a year or so and shook my fist at God, saying, "If you do not help me, I will do it myself!" I am sure God—and all the holy angels with Him—were impressed.

I did everything. I chewed gum. I ate carrots. I used the step-down filters. I even took spiritual advice. “Carry a little New Testament,” they told me, “and every time you want a cigarette, take it out and read some.” I did that—I would read my Bible and smoke a cigarette. That went on from July 1980 to February 1983.

In January of 1983, I was introduced to the Baptism with the Holy Spirit and God’s supernatural anointing. I read where John the Baptist told His followers that Jesus would baptize them with the Holy Spirit. Later, a few days before Pentecost, Jesus reminds them of this promise and tells them to wait until they have received the power of the Holy Spirit in their lives. My Baptist friends did not believe in the Baptism with the Holy Spirit. However, God convinced me I needed this power encounter.

Within one month, I learned the truth: **THE ANOINTING BREAKS THE YOKE.**

A friend, who had become filled with the Spirit sometime before I did, invited me to his church. I went. In just a few weeks, I saw the Holy Spirit powerfully touching people. That stuff did not happen in my church. I wanted to be free from smoking, and now I knew the solution.

Since my church friends gave me a hard time, I was embarrassed about my smoking and tried to hide it. I asked the pastor of my friend’s church to pray for me in his office on a Sunday morning. He wisely said, “Come back tonight and at the end of the service, when the Holy Spirit is touching people, come to the front for prayer.” The last thing I wanted to do was to admit in front of a new church of 300 people that I had bondage (read that “sin”) in my life. I did not want a repeat of my previous experience. However, I was desperate.

That night, as I stood there battling with pride, my desire to be free from nicotine won out. I realized later that pride was an even bigger problem than nicotine, but it was one I needed to deal with. *Pride was the lock on the door that kept me bound to nicotine.*

I discovered this is often the case with long-standing sin-habits that do not respond to the usual spiritual disciplines. Something else must be dealt with first. That night I went to the front and asked for prayer. The pastor laid hands on me, and the Holy Spirit set me free from nicotine instantly. It seems God wanted to reveal a significant truth to me in the form of an object lesson. It was a truth He did not want me to miss, which is often the case when things do not seem to happen when—or in the way—we think they should in our Christian lives. No amount of self-effort or religious observance will break spiritual yokes or bondages.

Now, I want to be quick to say that some have kicked the nicotine habit (or some other habit) on their own. Sometimes these are natural habits for which willpower will work, but in my case, it was spiritual bondage, and it needed a spiritual solution.

**No amount of self-effort or religious observance will break spiritual yokes or bondages.**

The bottom line was that one church did not believe in the supernatural power of God and was content to leave me in bondage while simultaneously judging me. The other church knew the power of God and had faith to help me get free. This scenario is repeated countless times every Sunday around the world.

**The Corporate Anointing in the Body of Christ**

There is a corporate anointing that rests on some congregations. If some churches and ministries have an “anointing that breaks the yoke” in people’s lives, and others don’t, what is the difference? Some simply assume that the anointing rests with the Pastor, Evangelist, or special guest speaker. Sometimes it does. However, churches that are consistently experiencing the Spirit of God moving among the congregation have something more. A corporate anointing will not only break the bondages in the lives of the congregation, but it will also perpetuate itself, sparking the spiritual gifts in others.

We see the evidence in this throughout the two-thousand-year history of the Church. I doubt there was any more significant evidence of this principle than the Azusa Street revival; people would come from afar and take a spark of that revival back to their hometown or even other countries, where it would spread like wildfire. God designed the gospel message to be viral—passing from person to person. The early Christians spread the work of the Holy Spirit through *the laying on of hands*.

If this is the case, shouldn’t we be diligent in figuring out this corporate anointing and pursue it, rather than be content to leave people with problems that religious self-effort (legalism) can’t change? It is not just a matter of faith, either. Instead, the Bible is very clear about the anointing.

God instituted three anointings in the Old Testament to manage His Kingdom on earth. That same Kingdom continues today in the form of the New Testament Church—the “many-membered Body of Christ.”

We are so used to saying “Jesus Christ” in much the same way we say anyone else’s name, like Billy Graham, for instance. However, we should remember “Christ” was not Jesus’s last name—His parents were not Joseph and Mary Christ. No one

ever said, “Honey, let’s invite the Christs over for dinner after Synagogue on Saturday.”

“Christ” is a Greek word, and it is equal to the Hebrew word “Messiah.” Both Christ and Messiah mean “The Anointed” or “the Anointed One.”

Both Jew and Gentile in the early Church understood that Jesus was the ANOINTED ONE! He IS the anointing of God that breaks the yokes in the lives of people. He demonstrated this over and over in His earthly ministry. Here we find both the source and result of the anointing.

*You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him. Acts 10:38 (NASB)*



Chapter 2  
**Understanding the Body of Christ  
and the Kingdom of God**

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**For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same function: So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.**

Romans 12:4-5

**God's glory is most majestically  
displayed not through you or through me,  
but through US....**

David Platt, *Follow Me: A Call to Die. A Call to Live.*

A cornerstone of Paul's revelation was the Body of Christ: the truth that Jesus still lives, loves, and moves on earth today through His many-membered Body. We find this revelation in three key passages: Romans 12, I Corinthians 11-14, and Ephesians 4.

In these passages, we discover we are members of one Body—of which Christ is the head. That is not an analogy or metaphor; it is a living reality. We are the Body of Christ. We are the Body

of the Anointed One. If that is true, we can carry it a step further; we are the *Body of the Messiah* since Christ and Messiah are interchangeable titles. This concept deserves some careful consideration because of the spiritual implications, however, outside the scope of this present discussion.

Today, the same anointing and commission given to Jesus rest on the genuine Body of Christ: The Church.

Why then is it that some churches manifest that anointing and commission, and some churches do not? Every born-again Christian is part of the Body of Christ. Every true church is a local expression of the Body of Christ. The Body of Christ—this mystical, universal Church spanning the globe and the centuries—is made up of all genuine believers, regardless of location or denomination.

**Let us not  
forget,  
Jesus  
IS the  
anointing.**

To answer our question, we must look at the three anointings that God ordained for the management of His Kingdom on earth: the prophet, the priest, and the king. After this, we will look at the fourth anointing—the corporate anointing. Jesus told His disciples that where two or three of them gathered in His name, He would be in their midst. Let us not forget, Jesus IS the anointing.

I can hear someone say, ‘Okay. Now he is getting weird. We are skeptical of the whole prophet thing, we do not like the priest idea, and we sure do not want a king dictating to us.’

Before you assume you know what I am going to share, how about a commitment to a fair hearing? I am not suggesting we have prophets like those of old who wrote scripture. (In fact, there were many prophets in the Old Testament that did not

write a book of the Bible. Likewise, there were New Testament apostles who did not either.) Neither do I want to return to a strict clergy/laity system (with which I totally and wholeheartedly disagree). I believe in the “*priesthood of all believers*.” I am committed to a plurality of leadership in the Church with much input from the congregation, not a top-down pyramid of church government that promotes a single man at the top of the food chain—be it pope, king, apostle, prophet, or preacher.

It is not the positions or offices to which I am referring. Instead, it is the anointings that rested on individuals in the Old Testament version of the Kingdom, which now reside within the New Testament Church. It is necessary to understand how these three anointings (Prophet, Priest, and King), work in the New Testament Kingdom. It is equally imperative for ministers, congregations, and individuals to seek and respond to them to release the corporate anointing.

First, we must understand the nature of the Kingdom of God. There was not one Kingdom in the Old Testament and another in the New. The Old Testament Kingdom of God found its fulfillment in Jesus, the Son of David. He is the Alpha and the Omega. He is currently the “King of kings and Lord of lords.” If that is so, then He is King of the earth, and it would follow that He is also King over Israel.

Jesus repeatedly said, “The (New Covenant expression of the) Kingdom of God is at hand.” That is, it is here now, not some future reality associated with the second coming of Christ. “At hand” also meant it was close and touchable—not just philosophically, but practically. Jesus demonstrated Kingdom power by raising the dead, healing the sick, and casting out devils—not to mention forgiving sins. He did not take the Kingdom—and the resulting power—to heaven with Him when He ascended. He transferred that power, authority, and

commission to the disciples, who were to be apostles. The apostles continued to pass it along to all who would receive the Holy Spirit.

Jesus rose from the dead. He ascended to the Father to offer—as the Great High Priest—His own blood in the *temple in the heavens, made without hands*. Having secured eternal redemption, He returned to earth the same day and appeared to the disciples.

The scene in the upper room was gloomy. Fear, doubt, confusion, unbelief, and no doubt, emotional agony was the order of the day. Suddenly Jesus appeared. The astonished disciples believed for sure that Jesus was alive (the qualification for salvation, according to Romans 10:9-10).

Then Jesus did two remarkable things. First, He breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Ghost.” That was the first time since Adam sinned that a man had the Holy Spirit on the inside of him. (John the Baptist, who was “filled with the Spirit from his mother’s womb,” is the one notable exception.)

**“As the Father  
has sent Me,”  
He said, “so I am  
sending you.”**

When God created Adam, He “breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul.” (Genesis 2:7) It is apparent that, when Adam sinned, he died, just as God told him he would. Since it was not physical death, it must have been spiritual death. Adam could no longer eat of the Tree of Life, for an angel blocked the way. Paradise was lost to humanity—for a time. Adam’s human spirit was disconnected from God. His sin—and resulting death—were passed to all mankind (Romans 5:12).

Four thousand years later, in the upper room on the night of

His resurrection, the disconnect ended when Jesus breathed on the disciples and said, “Receive the Holy Ghost.”

The second remarkable thing Jesus did was to commission His disciples with the same commission He had received from the Father. The disciples had walked with Jesus. He had sent them out two-by-two to minister without Him. They knew the power of God in and through their lives, but Jesus was going to do something new. Having just received the Holy Spirit and becoming the first “born-again” men in history, they now get another shock. “As the Father has sent Me,” He said, “so I am sending you.”

The laughter stops. The room is hushed.

“John, what did Jesus just say,” Peter might have whispered.

“I am not sure, Peter; it sounded like He said He was sending us just like God sent Him,” John might have replied.

Perhaps Andrew leaned over and whispered to Phillip, “What does that mean?”

And so, with the second breath of God and a short sentence, the Kingdom commission was passed to the disciples who had, at that instant, become apostles. The literal meaning of the word apostle is *a messenger who is sent*. Jesus further astounded them with another statement. “If you forgive anyone of their sins, they are forgiven.” As mankind once passed only condemnation and death to others, they now could pass on forgiveness and eternal life to others. That is the most significant moment in history, outside of the life of Christ itself.

We also find a progressive revelation of this commissioning in the last chapters of Matthew and Mark and the first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. Jesus passed on the Kingdom baton

to eleven men, who passed it on to others in their generation. They ran the race and handed it to others—on down through the centuries to this point in time when someone passed it to you and me. That is true Apostolic Succession. It has nothing to do with the Pope in Rome.

It is safe to say that the God-man Jesus was the culmination and fulfillment of the prophet, priest, and king anointing from the Old Testament. We are told so in no uncertain terms in the New Testament. It was said, “He was a prophet mighty in word and deed,” by the two on the road to Emmaus. Hebrews declares Him to be “A Priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.” And, of course, we know Him to be “King of kings and Lord of lords,” as proclaimed in the book of the Revelation.

Today we have received a Kingdom to administrate through the power and gifts of the Holy Spirit. It is not a different Kingdom. It is the same Kingdom that Jesus came to fulfill as the Messiah. It is the same Kingdom that would morph into the New Covenant Kingdom through the agency of the cross and the impartation of the Holy Spirit. You and I have received a Kingdom and a commission.

Wherefore, we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. Hebrews 12:2

Chapter 3

**Three Kingdom Anointings:  
Prophet, Priest and King**

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**Nevertheless, you have an anointing  
from the Holy One.**

I John 2:20

**We are anointed for our assignment on earth  
because the anointed King lives in us—He is  
fulfilling His will through us.**

E. N. Supen, Author

Because there is only one Kingdom, we need to look at how God ordered that Kingdom, first in the Old Testament and then in the New Testament. While there is only one Kingdom, it certainly operates differently under the Old and New Covenants. That said, some things carry over.

Perhaps an analogy is appropriate here. Consider metamorphosis, the physiological transformation of some life forms. A butterfly does not start as a little butterfly and grows into a big butterfly. Not like a puppy or a kitten growing into a dog or cat. It begins as a larva and grows into a worm. Then the worm forms a cocoon, and metamorphosis takes place. The creature now emerges from the cocoon as a butterfly.

You cannot say the worm and the butterfly are two different

creatures; they are not. We have to admit that a fundamental transformation has taken place, and the form and function are not the same.

The worm was earthbound and ugly. The butterfly was beautiful and free to fly in the air. The worm was a butterfly with unrealized potential. The butterfly was the fulfillment of the worm's destiny.

Such is the relationship between the Old and New Covenant versions of the Kingdom of God. The Old, comparatively speaking, was earthbound and ugly, filled with blood and sacrifices, commandments, and rituals. It was legalistic and confining because, like the worm, it was not yet in its final form. It would take the cocoon of the cross and grave to 'morph' into the spiritual version, with spiritual beauty, grace, and the wings of the Holy Spirit.

As I previously mentioned, God ordained three offices in the Old Testament: prophet, priest, and king. These three anointings carry over into the New Testament version of the Kingdom, although the form and function are somewhat different.

We must remember that Jesus fulfilled all three. He was a prophet, He was (is) the great High Priest, and He is the King of Kings. Jesus carried all three anointings, and the manifestation of the Kingdom of God was the result. Should we expect less now that He has gone to heaven and passed the commission, power, and authority to the Church—His Body? Jesus said we would do greater things than He did—not lesser things—because he would send the Holy Spirit to guide and empower us.

Logically, it follows that when a church body and individuals come under the same anointing of prophet, priest, and king,



we would see the same manifestation of the Kingdom that Jesus and the early Church did.

The truth is that no one person or ministry equals the totality of Jesus. God determined it to be that way. However, the corporate Body of Christ does add up to Jesus. The adage, “The whole is greater than the sum of the parts,” finds its greatest fulfillment in the Body of Christ. Together we can be more than we could ever be on our own. Therefore, the Bible places such a great emphasis on Christian love and unity. Without it, the Body of Christ cannot exist. We find the practical reality in this passage:

And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds, and teachers to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, 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.

Ephesians 4:11-13

Or, I love the Amplified Bible version even more:

[That it might develop] until we all attain oneness in the faith and in the comprehension of the [full and accurate] knowledge of the Son of God, that [we might arrive] at really mature manhood (the completeness of personality, which is nothing less than the standard height of Christ’s own perfection), the measure of the stature of the fullness of the Christ and the completeness found in Him. Eph. 4:13 (ABV)

The Old Testament anointing and office of prophet, priest, and king find their fulfillment in the five-fold ministry gifting of the New Testament. Because of this, we need to see what these anointings and offices are all about; and how they relate to the

Church of God today.

## Chapter 4 The Prophetic Anointing

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**Now there were in the church that was at Antioch  
certain prophets and teachers.**

Acts 13:1

**The task of prophetic ministry is to nurture, nourish,  
and evoke a consciousness and perception  
alternative to the consciousness and perception of  
the  
dominant culture around us.**

Walter Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination*

The first anointing we discover in the Bible is the prophet. The prophetic ministry was God's voice to everyone—the nation of Israel and the pagan kingdoms. When God needed to say something, He sent a prophet.

The prophet brought direction, correction, and encouragement. The prophets also were used to establish and anoint new leadership. We love direction and especially encouragement, but the whole correction thing is a little iffy for

many people.

The prophetic anointing carries serious consequences. It is life-changing. It sets the course of lives and ministries. We are admonished: Life and death are in the power of the tongue, and nowhere is this seen more powerfully than through the prophetic ministry.

**Many have turned the prophetic ministry into a circus side-show to draw crowds and raise money.**

We should be careful with the prophetic ministry. There are many would-be prophets today seeking attention, authority, and fame in the church. Many have turned the prophetic ministry into a circus side-show to draw crowds and raise money. After all, when you tell someone they will do something great, they are more likely to give you money than when you correct them. We find this very human tendency in the Old Testament prophets as well. From Balaam to the prophets of Malachi's day, many who were called prophets fell into the trap.

The heads thereof judge for reward, and the priests thereof teach for hire and the prophets thereof divine for money. Micah 3:1

A famous couple came to minister to our church once. They were nearing the end of their public ministry and were planning on retiring soon. They insisted on taking their own offerings (sometimes two a night) and refused to let the pastors or elders handle it or even know how much they took in. The last night of a three-day meeting, they did something that shocked me to the core. I found it revolting.

Immediately after the regular nightly offering, they said, "Now we are going to take a special offering. We want everyone to

take an offering envelope and put your very best offering in it, and make sure to write your name on the outside of the envelope. We are going to draw one envelope out and pray a special financial blessing over the person who gave it.”

What? Where would anyone ever get the idea that something like that was godly? It was pure manipulation to get more money. They encouraged people to play the *blessing lottery*. Yet, people were excited and reached for their checkbooks.

Carnal Christians buy into the idea that you can purchase a blessing from God, and many false prophets foster the idea for the sake of bigger offerings.

The true prophet will speak the word of God, regardless of advantage or disadvantage. He or she will reject the idea that people can buy a blessing. In Acts Chapter 8, the sorcerer-turned-believer, Simon, thought he could buy the gift of God. “But Peter said to him, “May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money!” Acts 8:20 (ESV)

In 2 Kings chapter five, we find another story that illustrates both sides of this issue. Naaman, a Syrian leper, came to the prophet Elisha for healing. He offered him a handsome reward, which Elisha, being a true prophet, declined graciously. However, Gehazi, Elisha’s servant, wanted the spoils and went after Naaman, lying to him to get the reward. As a result, Naaman’s leprosy transferred to Gehazi as a judgment for his sin of greed and lying.

Another story illustrates the potential danger of would-be prophets. One day my friend’s phone rang. She answered, and the person on the other end of the line (who had recently become caught up in the prophetic movement and fancied herself to be a prophetess) said she had just received a “word

from God” for my friend. According to this word, my friend was to break up with her fiancé and marry the caller’s brother.

Prophecy does not work that way, especially if the would-be prophets have no accountability. *Phony* (pun intended) prophets like to prophesy privately, but Paul instructs us in I Corinthians chapter 14, to “Let the prophets speak one by one and let the others judge.” One of the few things we are told to judge in the Bible is prophecy.

God began restoring the prophetic anointing in the last half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Since that time, there have been many prophetic conferences and much teaching on *being a prophet*. Christians flocked to these meetings and walked away, declaring themselves to be prophets. While the gift and anointings are real in many cases, there is also a real danger. All spiritual gifts need to be recognized, developed, and exercised in the context of the local church, under the authority and direction of stable, godly leadership.

### Direction, Encouragement, Edification, Exhortation and Comfort

That is enough of the negative. There is a true prophetic anointing in the Old Testament, and it transfers to the New Testament Church. One of the five-fold ministry gifts is that of a prophet.

Besides discussing the office of the prophet, Paul tells us, in 1 Corinthians 14:31: “You may all prophesy one by one....” In verse three of that chapter, we are told, “But he that prophesies speaks unto men edification, and exhortation, and consolation. (ASV)

There is a considerable difference between congregational prophecy and the office of a prophet. The main difference is that congregational prophecy is not generally corrective or

directive. It speaks to men for edification, exhortation, and comfort. Specific direction and correction are best left to the seasoned prophetic ministry because of the seriousness of the issues involved and the life-changing nature of the ministry. Direction and correction need to be judged by others, according to Paul, for the safety of the congregation.

**One of the few things we are told to judge in the Bible is prophecy.**

We need to be clear on an issue here. In the truest and most simple definition, prophecy is a ‘right now, today, Word of God.’ It is not always predictive or corrective. Most prophecy—especially congregational prophecy—is for edification, exhortation, and comfort. Prophecy does not have to sound like Isaiah from the Old Testament, “Yeah, thus saith the Lord....” Prophecy can be simply a word of encouragement when needed or a timely sermon directed by the Spirit of the Lord for a specific congregation. In this sense, anyone can share these words, but it does not make them a *prophet* in the five-fold ministry sense.

Congregational prophecy—which we can all be a part of—is intended by God to be a positive, encouraging, and instructive thing. When someone in the general congregation feels the need to start correcting people, there is a problem. First, it is the job of the spiritual leaders to do that. Second, if needed and the local leadership is not doing it, it is unlikely that the congregational correction will correct the problem. It will usually only create more problems.

There is one other issue here. Some of what we refer to as prophecy could be one of the other spiritual gifts, such as the word of wisdom or knowledge. While the differences may be subtle, they are different gifts, and they have different functions.

## **A Part of the True Prophetic Anointing is Direction.**

Jesus said, “My sheep hear my voice, and they follow me.” That is the directive element of the prophetic. Churches and individuals need to hear from the Chief Shepherd. Before we can follow, we must hear. Jesus’s voice may come as the “still small voice” inside us, or it may come to us through another person. It is not wise to limit God in how we are willing to hear from Him. When we do, He often uses that method or vessel to speak to us, and there is a real concern that our prejudice or preconceived idea might keep us from hearing what He is saying, even though He is speaking.

Prophetic direction can be short or long-term. It may be something God is saying for the immediate time, or it may look years down the road to find its fulfillment. God can speak during a service to an individual, giving them specific and direct instructions for the moment, or He can encourage a Church to turn their attention to a particular area of study or ministry outreach for a time.

There is no “one-size-fits-all” scenario for every church. The idea that we can franchise a church or buy a church-growth package that works for everyone is nothing but the flesh. Yes, you may follow some principles that others have used successfully, but to do this without seeking and following the Holy Spirit’s prophetic direction is at best fleshly and can have a devastating effect on the spirituality of the church.

Every congregation is at a different phase in development. Each faith community needs to hear specifically from the Lord

**Many people are drawn to the prophetic because there is no prophetic anointing in their local fellowships.**



what He is saying to the assembled group. A prophetic word for one church may not be the word for another church. To unilaterally apply prophetic direction across the board is dangerous.

Several years ago, I subscribed to a popular prophetic newsletter. Every day I received several “prophetic words” in my e-mail inbox. Within a few weeks, I was overwhelmed spiritually as so many “words” flooded in. I couldn’t do everything I was supposedly prophetically directed to do. I unsubscribed from the newsletter and determined to hear what God was saying to my church and me. My feeling of being overwhelmed went away immediately.

Many people are drawn to the prophetic ministry—real or assumed—because they are not getting it in their local churches. However, in the local church context, the prophetic direction is most applicable to their lives, individually and corporately.

The prophetic anointing in a local assembly will guide that congregation precisely regarding the messages given for a season of growth.

If something is wrong in the local assembly, the Spirit of prophecy will reveal it. Three times the Lord spoke to my heart regarding three different churches.

The first time happened when I was pastoring my first church. The church had a congregation of a couple of hundred in the 1970s. However, the pastor had fallen into sin and told the people he hated their guts and walked out. The church dropped to about ten faithful women who keep the church going. Several pastors came and went over the next 15 years. There was never any significant growth.

Finally, they asked me to pastor the church. Within a couple of

months, the Holy Spirit began to reveal some issues through the gifts of the Spirit both from within the congregation and from the outside. A minister and his wife saw a vision of our front door with a board across it, blocking the way. That board, he told us, was the board of the church that was causing problems and that God was not going to grow the church until the control issues were solved. He was correct; they fired me a few months later.

However, that isn't the end of the story. After this revelation, God spoke to my spirit. He told me there was a demonic spirit that had set itself up in the church's door to keep people from visiting. We had not had any visitors in a long time. I said, "God, I heard what you said, but I want to see that one in the Bible." Immediately God spoke scripture to me that I had never noticed before. God showed Ezekiel an "image of jealousy" that had set itself up in the temple gate, and all sorts of ungodliness and idolatry were happening in the temple (Ezekiel chapter 8). That was good enough for me.

We fasted and prayed for a week, then went through the entire church using the gifts of the Spirit to identify and cast out any demonic spirits that had been given the right to operate there.

There was a transformation. We had visitors every Sunday for the next few weeks, and—for the first time in years—a family wanted to join the church. That was the morning they fired me between Sunday School and the morning service. That church limped along for a time and finally closed with the same five ladies. There's more to that story, but I want to relate a couple of others.

One is about a well-established Assembly of God Church in our town. They had a recurring problem, though. The church would grow to about 250 people and then fall apart after a couple of years. They went back to a base attendance of about 35

people. They would call a new pastor, and the church would grow again to 250 people—and fall apart again. That happened several times while I was in that town.

One day I was praying in their sanctuary with my friend who attended the church and his pastor. The Lord spoke clearly to me that there was a ‘spirit of division’ in the church. I told the pastor and at least two or three pastors after him about this prophetic revelation—all to no avail. I am assuming that pride was an issue. First, I wasn’t a part of their denomination, and second that there could not be a demonic spirit operating in their church. That church still has a huge building today and a congregation of about 50.

The third story is about a church I attended. I was on the ministry team there. I left to become the pastor of another church about 45 minutes away. God spoke to my heart again about a ‘spirit of division’ that had crept into the church. That was in the spring. I talked to all three pastors about the word God had given me. Again to no avail. By the fall of that year, the church was in deep trouble. The church of over 200 that had been growing steadily for several years fell apart. The congregation dropped to about 40 faithful members and finally shut down and formed a new church with a different name.

Hundreds of people were hurt over the years in this one town because church leaders would not allow the prophetic direction to guide their churches.

The prophetic ministry will also direct the congregation in terms of outreach for their local area. God often leads us to do things we could not accomplish in the flesh. We also have a promise that God’s Word gets the job done based on its own merit.

So shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it. Isaiah 55:11 (ESV)

It seems very foolish to attempt to do something without a Word from God on the matter. Just because God spoke to someone else to do something does not mean it is God's will for every person and every congregation.

Cultivating and following the prophetic ministry in a local church—in conjunction with the other two anointings, which we shall discuss shortly—are vital to any church's spiritual success.

### **Correction is Part of the Prophetic Function**

“God tells me to tell you that your church is the faithful few, and I will bless them.”

With that short sentence, the prophetic ministry rebuked me—but everyone else in the room thought I was getting blessed. Let me back up a little bit.

I was pastoring a small church in a rural, northwest Kansas county seat town of 2,500 people. I had been there for several years, and some good things were happening, but we hadn't gained much ground size-wise (the real measure of a church's success—right?). There was some division between me and the older couple who were serving as elders. I was pretty discouraged at the time. I took a road trip from western Kansas to southwest Michigan to be with a friend who was hosting a conference. I was to be one of the speakers at the meeting.

At that point, I was blaming the people in the church for not being more proactive. They were good people and faithful, and they would do anything I asked, but I had to lead and initiate

everything. Not only was I the Pastor who spoke twice a week, but I was also the youth Sunday school teacher and the youth group leader on Sunday nights. Oh, did I mention I was also working a regular job at the time?

That night I was down on my church and the people. It couldn't be me holding things back; I was working harder than I had ever worked. Then the evening's speaker began to share prophetically with some who were in the room. He called me out and gave me the word. Everyone thought it was a great word—and it was—but it was a rebuke that only I understood. God saw my congregation as faithful. God was correcting my self-centered understanding of the situation, yet He did so without embarrassing me. Such is the nature of genuine prophetic gifting. If we are willing to hear, God speaks softly. He only exposes things when we continually refuse to listen and obey or when we try to hide wrong motives and actions.

(I need to insert a prophetic word right here. As I write this, the Spirit tells me that He has been speaking to someone about some things, and you are not responding. He will give one more warning and then expose the issue if you do not respond to the Spirit. He will not do this to hurt you but to purify you and make you fruitful, for this issue is holding you back. He is giving you another opportunity to hear and obey. Take it!)

I do not know of anyone who LIKES to be corrected. Myself less than anyone—and I get a lot of it from my wife. However, liking something and needing and receiving something are two entirely different things.

Some people neglect or reject the prophetic because they don't want correction or direction. I know a pastor who avoids prophetic meetings because he is afraid something in his life will be exposed. He also doesn't want someone else to give him direction, in which he has no say. He doesn't understand

the true nature of the prophetic ministry. This attitude can be devastating to people and churches.

That does not mean that we must receive and act on every word that is given. We saw earlier that we are to judge prophecy. We are also admonished, “In the mouth of two or three witnesses, let everything be established.” The genuine prophetic anointing also comes with safeguards for protecting the people. This is one main reason ‘telephone prophecies’ are not such a good idea. Someone who does not want their word judged has a problem.

I learned a valuable lesson early in my ministry. I had just taken over as pastor of the small church I mentioned earlier. At the end of a service, as we were praying for people, a brother in the church (whom I did not know at the time had a questionable reputation with regards to spiritual things) asked if he could pray for the worship leader. I said yes, and he called her to the front. She was a little hesitant but came. I stood with her placing my hand on her shoulder to let her know I was there. The “word” was more head knowledge than spiritual gifting and seemed a little too personal for my liking. Later, she came up and told me how much it meant to her that her pastor was standing there protecting her. I realized that it is the responsibility of every true shepherd to protect the people, but not to hinder the Holy Spirit’s moving.

Unfortunately, some pastors try to control things by shutting down any prophetic activity because they are afraid something will get out of hand. I have worked in an *Open Church* format for many years, where we give a lot of leeway to the congregation to speak openly during services. I can only think of a couple of times when things were so bad they had to be corrected on the spot. The genuine prophetic anointing on a congregation tends to cover the assembly and limit false activity.

**I realized it is the responsibility of every true shepherd to protect the people, but not to hinder the moving of the Holy Spirit.**

We have all seen kids throwing a fit in a store because they did not get the toy or candy they wanted. Growing up, my kids each did that once! They quickly learned that this behavior did not get the expected results but had unintended consequences. Good parents will discipline and train their children to act right and will not allow bad behavior to become a habit in their children. God is a good parent. He can protect, direct, and correct His children.

The writer of Hebrews, quoting the Old Testament, says that God disciplines us three ways: 1. He rebukes: which is a verbal correction, 2. He chastens: which is consequential correction, and 3. He scourges: which is a physical correction.

The passage quoted in Hebrews chapter twelve reminds us that God corrects every child He receives and that God's corrective process is proof positive that you are a child of God.

And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: 'My son, do not despise the chastening of

the LORD, Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; For whom the LORD loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives.’ If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected *us*, and we paid *them* respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? For they indeed for a few days chastened *us* as seemed *best* to them, but He for *our* profit, that *we* may be partakers of His holiness. Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward, it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.  
Hebrews 12:5-11 (NKJV)

Correction is a vital part of the journey for every growing Christian. Every child of God receives it from God. The people who want to say that God will never rebuke or correct us—that He is just a loving old granddad type of God that only wants to bless His people—are biblically wrong. To refuse or reject correction is spiritually dangerous.

A good parent will always speak to the child first and give verbal correction or direction. “Billy, don’t touch that honey; it’s hot.” As Billy seems determined to test the theory and reaches again, his father’s voice might become a bit louder or sterner: “Billy, don’t touch that.” The first effort at correction should always be verbal and gentle. It should be instructive and training-oriented. So, it is with God. God doesn’t start out spanking His kids; He speaks to them first. Therefore, prophetic anointing in a church is so important.



Currently, I am living and ministering in Papua New Guinea. The culture steeped in centuries of violence as a usual way of life. That society is struggling to get out of it. Regularly I see a parent slap their young child without warning, often knocking them to the ground.

Most of us from a western culture would recognize this as wrong, but we sometimes attribute this same behavior to God when we preach that God is quick to judge and punish. I have found God to be quite patient, loving, and kind and that He only resorts to the more consequential means of discipline when we refuse to listen and obey. Not hearing is one thing—God will keep speaking in various ways until we do—refusing to listen and obey is quite another and will result in chastisement and possibly more.

Of course, we have already noted that some people will try to use the prophetic ministry as a controlling or manipulative measure. I am not advocating unquestioned submission to anyone who claims to be a prophet.

False, or at best immature, prophets are quick to label someone as rebellious for not obeying their supposed prophetic word. It is about their ego, not the Kingdom of God. God never forces us to heed His word, nor does he use manipulative or controlling techniques. He doesn't work that way through His ministry either. That is a good sign the person is not hearing from God.

When someone does question their word, motives, or methods, they are quick to rebuke them with 1 Chronicles 16:22, “Touch not my anointed and do my prophets no harm.”

To them, this is the end-all of argument stoppers. They are—in their minds—the anointed and to refuse to listen to them is rebellion. This attitude is as spiritually wrong as rebellion itself. That is not the prophetic anointing at all; instead, it is the fleshly nature demanding control or at least homage.

**The prophet’s job has always been to deliver the message, not to make people receive it.**

The prophet’s job has always been to deliver the message—not to make people receive it. Often there is a tendency on the part of the “prophet” (or preacher for that matter) to pressure people to accept the word. These people are operating in fleshly ego. They have a hard time separating the ministry from their desire to be recognized.

All prophecy needs to be judged. We have already discussed that fact. The church’s pastoral ministry needs to help discern the words coming forth to the church and the congregation. I say again—**EMPHATICALLY**—if someone does not want to have their prophetic words judged by other ministers, they are certainly not mature prophets and may be false prophets.

The bottom line: A genuine prophetic anointing in a church will, at times, bring correction. It is a safety net for any person or congregation. It needs to be as eagerly accepted as direction or encouragement, and it is necessary to be open to spiritual discernment. I would say that to the degree correction is welcomed and received, guidance and encouragement will also come.

## **Prophetic Encouragement is Badly Needed in Churches**

A new leader with a fresh prophetic vision had arrived. The congregation had started to build a new building. They were all excited about the new vision. God had promised to bless them. They had a prophetic call to reach their neighbors—indeed the world—with God’s Word. There was good cooperation and unity among the people. The work was going along great until the enemy managed to bring the work to a standstill. The government got involved, and the project was put on hold.

The situation was dire. The people were discouraged. They had heard from God, but nothing was happening now. Time passed. Everyone started to lose vision and lose heart.

Then the negative thoughts started creeping in. Perhaps God had not spoken after all. Maybe it was just some grand scheme thought up by the leaders that had no real basis in God’s plans and purposes. Perhaps the prophet had been wrong, and they placed their dreams in false hope. Maybe things would never change. The people just started taking care of their own interests and forgot about the work of building. The new building sat there. Unfinished! It was a poignant reminder of the failed vision and a discouragement to all who passed by. It was a vision unfulfilled, and it was plain for all to see.

I set you up a bit, but the story is from the Old Testament historical books of Ezra and Nehemiah and Haggai and Zechariah’s prophetic books. It is the story of the Jewish people rebuilding the second temple in Jerusalem. The Word from God came to the heathen King, Cyrus, to rebuild the temple which had been destroyed when Israel refused to heed the prophetic voice of correction and rebelled against God. However, the enemies around the Jews managed to get the next king to shut the project down. The temple sat incomplete

for seventeen years.

Enter the prophets Haggai and Zechariah. They had a word of correction, direction, and encouragement for the people. In Haggai, Chapter 1, he reminds them that their plight is due, in part, to the fact that they had turned to their own interests—building their own houses instead of God’s house and that things were not going so well for them because of it.

The story continues in Ezra 5:1-2:

Then the prophets, Haggai the prophet, and Zechariah the son of Iddo, prophesied unto the Jews that were in Judah and Jerusalem in the name of the God of Israel, even unto them. Then rose up Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and began to build the house of God which is at Jerusalem: and with them were the prophets of God helping them.

Prophetic encouragement is essential when the vision gets tested with opposition and spiritual warfare. When the going gets tough, people start to lose heart. It is at this point that prophetic encouragement is critical. That is also the point where the temptation to ignore prophetic words is the greatest.

In the early days of my Spirit-filled journey, I had a pastor who had come from the height of the praise and worship movement. We were involved with many in the prophetic movement. I can clearly remember Pastor Dave saying, “I don’t want any more prophetic words because you have to go through hell before they come to pass.”

Satan indeed opposes the Word of God. The truth is you cannot stop the Word of God because God had already said, “My word will not return to me void but will accomplish the things I sent it to do.” Since Satan cannot stop the word of God, he tries a few other tricks: 1. He will try to stop the messenger from

speaking the word, 2. He attempts to discredit the messenger through lies or temptation to sin, or 3. He tries to abort the word in the lives of those who have already received it.

The fact is that spiritual warfare and the tribulation it brings is often the result of God's word in your life—not a lack thereof. The same is true of peace. Sometimes peace comes when you move away from God's will for your life because Satan stops fighting as hard since you are not following God as closely as you could. It takes some real discernment here to know what is happening. Therefore, prophetic encouragement is essential.

I spent years working in the prison ministry. Every prisoner lives for the day they get released. They can usually tell you how many days—or months/years if it is a long sentence—until their release date. However, that day does not come without some severe emotional stress. A parole hearing is a prerequisite to their early release. Parole hearings are not fun. The prisoner's record and behavior in prison are reviewed. Victims and their families can retell their stories and provide reasons why a prisoner shouldn't be released, and the parole board asks many uncomfortable questions. Combined with the fact that the rest of your life lies in the hands of a few people, it generates a lot of stress.

During our prison ministry, we developed lots of good Christian friends behind the walls. One man was really stressed out about his pending parole hearing. He finally told us one day that God had given him complete peace. He had decided not to be present at the hearing and just leave everything in God's hands. There was a problem; it was not the peace of God. It was an emotional peace he received from not having to appear before the parole board. Not to appear would have negatively affected the results because it would demonstrate that he did not care enough to contend for parole.

That is why we must seek spiritual encouragement. Not everyone is excited about the word God gives you. Not everyone will understand or even agree. You have got be careful about who you share with and where you get your encouragement. There are a lot of discouragers out there.

When Mary got a prophetic word from an angel that she was pregnant with Jesus, it immediately caused her problems. I can just hear the conversation when she sees Joseph next. “Hi honey, how was work today? You know the strangest thing happened this week, an angel appeared to me and well ... I’m pregnant ... but don’t worry, the Holy Ghost is the Father, and I’m going to bear the Messiah.”

Joseph did not believe her. Who would? To his credit, he did respond to some direct revelation from God, but the prophetic word caused problems in Mary’s life. Now most young women who get pregnant call their girlfriends and share the news and talk and giggle and dream. Mary couldn’t. There was only one place she could go to share and process what God was doing in her life. She went to see her cousin Elizabeth who also had a miraculous pregnancy.

**If you are spiritually pregnant, you must talk to other people who are spiritually pregnant, or you will get discouraged.**

The truth is, if you are spiritually pregnant, you must talk to other people who are spiritually pregnant, or you will get discouraged. Therefore, the prophetic ministry is so crucial at this stage of the journey. We must have prophetic encouragement to finish the work. Therefore, churches need to cultivate a resident prophetic anointing. It is valid to have prophetic ministry visit the church on occasion, but they tend to come and go, especially in smaller churches. The prophetic ministry needs to be in the trenches with the

congregation “helping them,” as we saw demonstrated during the second temple’s construction.

### **When There is no Prophetic Voice**

“Where there is no vision the people perish” (Proverbs 29:18).

The Message Bible puts it this way,

If people can’t see what God is doing, they stumble all over themselves; but when they attend to what He reveals, they are most blessed.

Where there is no genuine prophetic ministry or vision, there is a lack of Godly direction. When this happens, several things occur in a church.

Much time, money, and energy are expended without life-changing results. Programs, committees, and meetings begin to dominate church life rather than the anointing of the Spirit.

One person—or sometimes one family or small group in the church—controls the church’s direction according to their own personality, position, vision, or understanding—which may or may not be correct.

A battle emerges over direction stemming from the various perspectives and personalities involved. One group or another wants to emphasize their pet doctrine or cause. Common issues—and they are real issues—include; politics, abortion, Islam, foreign policy, end times, spiritual gifts, etc. However, the church is not and cannot be a ‘single issue’ church, flavoring everything they do with one cause or another.

The congregation just goes about “doing what is right in their own sight,” but without the unity and synergy needed to change lives. The adage, “The right hand doesn’t know what

the left hand is doing,” plays out splendidly in these churches.

Would-be prophets arise and lead the congregation astray.

Sin goes unchecked and unchallenged, and fleshly activities and motives begin to prevail.

The congregation senses the lack of direction and leadership or spiritual control and will eventually diminish and fall apart.

Where there are no—or few—spiritual gifts operating in the church, it is a sign that there is a problem with the prophetic anointing in the church. That is the first place to start looking.

### **The Blessing of Genuine Prophetic Ministry**

The prophetic ministry is a balanced, mature mix of direction, correction, and encouragement. The prophetic anointing in a church will release the Holy Spirit’s other gifts in greater measure and accuracy.

**The prophetic ministry is a balanced, mature mix of direction, correction and encouragement.**



## Chapter 5 The Priestly Anointing

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**You yourselves, as living stones, are built up as a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood and to offer spiritual sacrifices that are acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.**

I Peter 2:5 (NET)

**Priesthood is not a convenient, historically conditioned form of Church organization, but is rooted in the Incarnation, in the priesthood and mission of Christ himself.**

Arthur Middleton, 1742 –1787 Signatory of the Declaration of Independence

The next anointing we find activated in the Bible is the priest. We see this first in Melchizedek and then in Aaron and his sons.

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary partially defines “priest” this

way: "...one authorized to perform the sacred rites of a religion especially as a mediatory agent between humans and God...."

Moses was a prophet. Aaron, his brother, was called and anointed to be the High Priest. God appointed the Levites to be the priestly tribe. Under His original plan, one could not be a priest unless he was of the tribe of Levi. One could not become a high priest unless he were a direct descendent of Aaron's family. Under the Old Covenant system, access to priestly ministry was limited. Two hundred and fifty years after the second temple, the Roman Empire conquered Israel. Politics came into play. The High Priest was assigned by the Roman government and often went to the wealthiest families.

The priesthood changed when the Old Testament Kingdom of God transformed into the New Testament expression of God's Kingdom.

I want to make it clear right here and now that I do not believe in a strict clergy-laity system. Some people are dedicated to full-time service and have more training or education to do the job. However, the New Testament is clear: every born again child of God is a Saint (sanctified one), and Jesus made us a "*Kingdom of Priests.*" (1 Peter 2:9; Rev. 1:6, and 5:10)

**God's ultimate intention was to have a Kingdom of priests – not Kingdom with priests.**

God's ultimate intention was not a kingdom *with* priests in it; He wanted a kingdom *of* priests who managed His Kingdom. There was a steppingstone required to get there, though. The Old Testament priests served as an example of heavenly realities in Christ. God's desire, however, was realized in and through the New Covenant Church. *Today we are a Kingdom of Priests because of the cross.* When we emphasize the clergy-laity system, we will necessarily minimize

the priesthood of all believers.

Once again, we see that a metamorphosis has taken place. The cross and grave become that chrysalis (cocoon) that transforms the rudimentary, earthbound worm of the Old Covenant priesthood into the beautiful spiritual butterfly of the New Covenant priesthood of all believers. Resurrection power opened the cocoon and released the new anointing on the Church.

### **New Testament Priests and the Spiritual Gifts**

The prophetic ministry wasn't the only thing to go through a transformation of form and function. The priestly ministry finds its fulfillment in the New Testament ministry gifts of pastor, teacher, and evangelist.

These three ministry gifts manage the day-to-day ministry in the Church. Similar to the Old Testament priests, they are tasked with ministering to people on behalf of God. They administer evangelism, teaching, preaching, counseling, and performing the church's rites such as baptism, communion, marriage, and funerals. They were also tasked with taking the needs of the people to God. The ministry of prayer, worship, and intercession come into play here. Healing and deliverance ministries round out the duties of the priestly ministry.

Through the New Covenant priests' ministry, the motivational gifts (Romans chapter 12) and the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12) come into play. These gifts are expressed through the entire Body of Christ, not just clergy members.

Remember that Jesus, through the anointing of the Holy Spirit, made us all Priests to God. Because of this, every Spirit-filled believer has one or more motivational gifts and one or more gifts of the Spirit.

We start with discovering our motivational gifts that determine the primary mindset of our areas of service. Remember, these are gifts, not just natural talents or personality traits. The Holy Spirit chooses the gifts each of us is to have; you can't just claim them or say, "I want to be a this or that"

For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.  
Romans 12:3-8 (NASB)

Those who give or lead have a different personality and drive than those who teach or show mercy. Not every person thinks the same way or is motivated by the same things. That is one reason for so much church conflict. People have different priorities and drives. As Paul put it, "We don't all have the same function."

**As Paul put it,  
"We don't all  
have the same  
function."**

Someone once said, "To the man with a hammer, everything looks like a nail." We could also say that to the man with a saw; everything looks like it needs cuttin'.

Our various motivations and gifts cause us to see things with a distinct perspective. God designed the Church that way. The truth is that we need one another because no one person has all the gifts—this is the reality of the Body of Christ.

Unfortunately, people tend to like everyone to be pretty much the same. We determine what normal should be based on ourselves. Anyone different from me is not normal. The Body of Christ can be characterized most accurately as ‘unity in diversity.’ When we limit diversity, we necessarily limit the full expression of the anointing in our midst.

### **The Mary and Martha Syndrome**

“Jesus, would you do something about that lazy sister of mine?” In Luke chapter ten, the sisters are entertaining Jesus and a houseful of guests. Mary is listening to Jesus teaching, and Martha is working, cooking, serving, etc. Martha saw Mary’s inactivity as laziness and was offended that she was burdened with being a good hostess by herself. On the other hand, Mary was tuned spiritually to Jesus, and Jesus did not see it as laziness. Mary quite easily could have judged Martha for not being very spiritual and not wanting to hear what Jesus was saying (perhaps she did, and it just did not make it into the story).

In a small church I pastored in Rural Missouri, we had an older woman who had been in the church for years. She was a true deaconess and cared for the natural things of the church. Her concern was not if or how the Spirit of God moved in the services, or even if lives were changed. Her focus was on how clean or repaired the church was. She would fuss over every little detail (and often complain) when things were not just right. It drove me crazy at times because, in my opinion, her issues were not as important as mine. I had sermons to preach, people to counsel, and things of the Spirit to attend to. I did not notice if the curtains needed cleaning.

However, I soon realized if everyone were like me, we would be holding church in conditions like a barn. If everyone was like her, the church would look great but would be spiritually dead—

as it had been a few years prior. The truth is that it takes people with different gifts, mindsets, and motivations for the whole work to get done. We need Marys and Marthas in every church—and we need them not to fight about what is important.

I see this as one of the primary differences between elders and deacons. Deacons were originally responsible for the church's more natural affairs, while the elders primarily attended to the spiritual ones.

There is a reason for lack of spiritual fruit and even burnout in our church workers. People try—or are asked to—function outside of their motivational and or spiritual gifting. Many churches fall prey to the *warm body mentality*. “Oh, you're 23, married, and can quote John 3:16! Can you take over the youth ministry?”

Anyone willing—or unwilling but compliant—gets thrown into a ministry position. I understand that the needs are great, and the laborers are few, but this is still a recipe for disaster. Placing people in jobs they are unequipped or not ready for is detrimental to the person and the church.

I was involved with one church where there was a tendency to put people in positions without regard for their spiritual maturity or reputation in the community. They were not profoundly spiritual ministries, especially. There is a tendency sometimes to differentiate between spiritual and non-spiritual functions in the church falsely. Even the deacons waiting tables in the Book of Acts had to be filled with the Spirit and have good reputations. This where these churches run into problems.

In one case, they let a man coordinate the food, clothing, and physical needs ministry. One day, we got a call from the police

chief asking us to come to the police station for a visit. When we arrived, we discovered he was under investigation for theft. In an unrelated event, we found he had gone to a store about 60 miles away and got a truckload of items donated—in the name of the church—for the ministry to the poor. He had these in his house and was selling them.

The community knew the man's reputation, but lack of discernment and a need for help caused the leadership to give him a position representing the church. He did hurt the reputation of the church.

Paul points out in Romans chapter twelve that there are seven categories of motivational gifts. I want to reiterate these are gifts from the Holy Spirit, not just personality traits. They are the foundational motivation imparted by God's Spirit for a person's service in the Body of Christ.

**It is essential for each member of the Body of Christ to learn to discern his or her motivational gifts.**

The church does not operate spiritually with fleshly talents or abilities. If Jesus "ascended on high and gave gifts to men," then we must need them. If the Holy Spirit sets the members and spiritual gifts in the church as He wills, He must know what each church needs and provide it.

Each member of the Body of Christ must discern their motivational gifts and have a place to begin developing and exercising them.

**Add to Your Motivational Gifts one or more  
of the Nine Charismatic Spiritual Gifts**

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and

there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, 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. All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills. For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. I Corinthians 12:4-13 (ESV)

The Holy Spirit imparts, activates, and operates the nine spiritual—or charismatic gifts—in the lives of Spirit-filled believers. The Greek word Charisma means “conferred power or talent.” From the early 1960s to the early 1980s, God began restoring the gifts of the Holy Spirit to the regular believers in the Church. This movement became known as the Charismatic renewal because there was a renewal of the nine gifts of the Spirit spoken of in 1 Corinthians chapter twelve. While all the gifts were seen to some degree sporadically throughout church history, they were somewhat limited to individuals and movements.

**The Bible is clear; no one has all the motivational, spiritual or ministry gifts.**

The early Pentecostal movement saw many miraculous signs and wonders, but in the 1960s, God poured out the Baptism of the Holy Spirit on the mainline denominational churches.



Two things happened. First, the mainline denominations received a tremendous awakening to the power of God's Spirit. Multitudes of Presbyterians, Baptists, Catholics, Lutherans, and others were filled with the Spirit and started non-denominational churches. The second thing was that the Spirit's gifts moved from being mainly active in the clergy to empowering the general congregation.

As we saw in 1 Corinthians 12:11, the Holy Spirit imparts gifts to each believer according to His own will. The Holy Spirit, who imparts the motivational gifts, will also impart the charismatic gifts that will fully empower and fulfill the ministry to which each believer has been called. Some people try to operate in their motivational gifts without the power of charismatic gifts. That results in much church work being done in the power of the flesh.

The Bible is clear; no one has all the motivational, spiritual, or ministry gifts. That is the reality of the Body of Christ. Jesus broke His ministry into pieces and parted them out to His "many-membered body." *The Body of Christ will never portray the totality of Christ to the world until it gets serious about cultivating all the spiritual gifts and callings within the leadership and the general congregation.*

### The Missing Revelation of Communion

When Jesus shared the last supper with his disciples, it was a Passover meal—or the Jewish Seder. Jesus took the bread and broke it, saying, "Take eat; this is my body which is broken for you." We must ask a question right here. What was the main course of the Passover meal? Was it bread or lamb? Of course, the lamb was the focal point of the meal. It was the blood of the Passover lamb that they placed on their doors on the original Passover night. The lamb's blood was slain and poured out at the base of the altar for 1500 years after the original

Passover. It was the lamb's body that was to be eaten completely that evening, leaving nothing edible to remain until morning. John the Baptist introduced Jesus to his disciples as "The lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world."

I have yet to have someone explain why Jesus did not pick up the leg of lamb and say, "Take eat this is my body which is broken for you." It seems this should have been the most logical thing to do if He was trying to point something out about His physical body on the cross.

However, Jesus did not do that. As far as we know, He ignored any teaching about Him being the lamb and instead focused on the bread. At this point, a thinking person must ask why? Why miss the best opportunity to explain how He would be the true Lamb of God? Of course, if He had, we would have a very different communion service; Wine and a piece of lamb.

He picked up the bread instead of the lamb because He had a completely different message in mind. A message that much of the church has missed through the centuries, but that is relevant to the issues at hand. Missing this object lesson is one reason why the church struggles with the concept of the Body of Christ.

When Jesus said, "This is my body which was broken for you," He used the Greek word *klaō*, which typically means to break and pass out bread. The same word was used when Jesus fed the multitudes and in other places accordingly.

What makes this important is an Old Testament regulation concerning the Passover Lamb. They were forbidden to break any of its bones (Exodus 12:46 and Number 9:12). Therefore John, citing this command, specifically pointed out that they did not break Jesus's legs, as they did with the two crucified beside Him.

“For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken.” John 19:36

The word *broken*—both in Hebrew and Greek—means to break by crushing, shattering, or breaking in pieces. The New Testament word is *suntribo*, a different word with a totally different meaning than “*klaō*.”

Jesus was not referring to His physical body being broken, but rather to the fact that his calling, anointing, commission, and ministry would be broken up and distributed to His spiritual body—the Body of Christ—the Church.

Bear with me for a minute. To see this clearly, we must add two other passages into the mix. In Acts chapter two, the disciples were baptized with the Holy Spirit. Jesus said this would fulfill the “promise of the Father” (Acts chapter 1). When this happened, “cloven tongues of fire” came and sat on each of their heads (Acts chapter 2).

We’ve all seen the Pentecostal painting of the disciples with a little flame on each of their heads. However, most people don’t realize that the tongues of fire did not initially appear on each one individually. The fire came into the room as a whole (a pillar of fire, if you will) and then divided and settled on each one.

The Greek word “cloven” in the KJV is *diamerizō*, and it means to “divide up into parts, break up; distribute” (Strong’s Greek Dictionary). It was not each individual tongue of flame that was cloven, but rather the entire fire came and was “cloven,” or divided and parted out. In plain English, the ball of fire that entered the room was divided and distributed to them all. There was nothing left over—it was all passed out. A single ball or pillar of fire appeared and then divided into 120 individual tongues that sat on each of them.

Now, this is the same object lesson that Jesus gave when he broke the bread and distributed it. The disciples consumed the entire loaf in the same way the flame was divided and distributed to the 120 in the upper room. The object lesson is the same. The whole was broken and parted out to the group present. That resulted in the original loaf or flame being present when the parts were assembled. It sounds a lot like the Body of Christ and Jesus's promise, "where two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in the midst of them."

Now we need to add one final passage to pull the pictures together. We often read Paul's famous communion passage in I Corinthians 11:23-29. However, Paul starts his thought in chapter ten and concludes it in chapter fourteen. To understand what Paul was saying, you must read chapters ten through fourteen together in context, which will provide a basis for interpreting what Paul was saying. Paul starts in 1 Corinthians 10:15-17 with this thought:

I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say. The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.

Paul references the communion bread and relates it to the Body of Christ—the Church. He then goes on to give the famous communion passage in Chapter 11. Once again, most people miss an essential phrase and application in the last verse.

For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this reason, many are weak and sick

among you, and many sleep. I Corinthians 11:29-30  
NKJV

In this passage, he explains that many were sick and dying in the church—because they were not discerning the Body of Christ. He was not speaking of his physical body on the cross, but rather His spiritual body—the Church—now operating in the world. Jesus continues this theme in the next three chapters. A few short sentences later, he starts to explain the revelation of the Body of Christ in conjunction with the nine gifts of the Spirit in I Corinthians chapters 12–14.

They were sick and dying because they did not understand the power of God that was to be operating through the gifts of the Spirit—in particular, healing and miracles. Division, strife, envy, and personality cults (I Corinthians 1:10, 3:3, and 11:18), were major issues in the Corinthian church. These fleshly issues were hindering the outflowing of God’s power through and to the congregation.

The Corinthian church had a lot of problems. It was probably the least spiritually mature church to which Paul. In fact, he had to write to them three times correcting problems. The key problem was the fleshly division and pride that had consumed the congregation. They missed the necessity of unity and how their factions and divisions hindered the Holy Spirit’s gifts in the church. Paul shared his revelation of communion—emphasizing the Body of Christ and the gifts of the Holy Spirit—for this very reason. Unfortunately, centuries of tradition have continued to blind the eyes of many in the church.

Since Paul started his thoughts by saying the church is “one bread and one body,” it would seem logical that he is still talking about the mystical “Body of Christ”—the Church—as he continues explaining his revelation of communion. You see Paul string these thoughts together cohesively in chapters ten

through fourteen. He reiterates the original thought in 12:12,

“For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.”

As a continuation of these thoughts, Paul instructs them on using the Spirit’s gifts in conjunction with love in chapter 13 and further teaches them on unity and practice in chapter 14.

I want to make it clear that emphasizing the spiritual Body of Christ—as opposed to His physical body—in this passage does not in any way take away from the importance of bodily suffering, crucifixion, and death of Jesus. It puts the whole passion of Christ into sharper focus. Nor does it take away from the command or blessing of taking part in a physical communion service. We need to see the spiritual object lesson communion was meant to convey in conjunction with the Body of Christ. *Communion* means “sharing together.” God never intended Communion to be a me-and-Jesus thing, but instead you, me, and Jesus thing.

**Communion was never intended to be ‘me-and-Jesus’ but instead you, me and Jesus.**

### Understanding the Nature of Gifts

It is essential to understand that gifts are just that: gifts. A gift cannot be earned or bought. It is not a reward for a job well done or a level of maturity achieved—it is a gift. Therefore, we need to understand that God may choose to use people that we might not consider spiritual—or even moral—enough.

The other side of the coin is that you may not think you are spiritual or moral enough for God to use you. The Holy Spirit imparts and activates the gifts apart from self-effort or self-righteousness. We are admonished to desire spiritual gifts (I

Corinthians 12:31) and allow the Spirit to cultivate and mature them.

The nine gifts of the Spirit are a part of the priestly anointing. They are the conduit of the Holy Spirit's power through the Body of Christ to the Body of Christ and the world. That is what true "Body Ministry" is all about.

Paul explains the purpose of the five-fold ministry gifts listed in Ephesians chapter four.

[They are] for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ.

We have been confused about the work of the five-fold ministry. We have assumed the professional ministry (read that, *paid staff*) is to do all the work of building up the Body of Christ. That is the viewpoint of the clergy/laity system. Clergy (professional ministers) are the only ones qualified to do the spiritual work, while the laity watches—or a few help in limited ways.

In the church, the priestly ministry is the privilege and responsibility of every Spirit-filled believer. It is the job of the five-fold ministry to equip the congregation for the work. In other words, they are to apostolically and prophetically stir up the gifts of the Spirit and are to train and develop those gifts through the pastoral and teaching gifts. They allow room for the congregation to exercise and mature their gifts and callings, providing covering, encouragement and correction as needed.

In this way, the New Covenant priesthood (Spirit-filled congregation) serves in the New Testament temple (gathering of believers), offering up spiritual sacrifices and ministering to the daily needs of the faith community (1 Peter 1:5).

God did not intend for most of the ministry work to be done by a paid pastor or two. That is one of the significant reasons why statistics show that thousands of pastors leave the ministry each year; some never return to the ministry or church, for that matter. Fatigue, burnout, congregational infighting, and other issues take a tremendous toll on pastoral families and marriages. The congregation expects them to be available seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day because they are being paid to be the Pastor. Often, the overworked pastor is left to fight the battle alone while continuing to try to meet the flock's daily needs.

Perhaps it is time to stop perpetuating a church system that has no basis in the New Testament and admit that God has a better way: The priestly ministry of the saints to the saints through the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Admittedly, this requires a significant adjustment, but it is where the Spirit of God wants to take the Church in the last days.

That in no way takes away from the leadership gifts or responsibility of pastoral ministry. Done correctly allows the pastors and elders of the church to do what they do best and not overwork themselves to the point of burnout.

**Every Believer has the Potential to be used in the  
Five-fold Ministry Gifts, They are not Just for the Elite.**

What is even more impressive is that each believer also has an opportunity to develop one or more of the five-fold ministry gifts at some point in their life. The anointing of Apostle, Prophet, Evangelist, Pastor, and Teacher are not just for a select few. If you look closely at the passage in Ephesians chapter four, it also says, "But unto **every one of us** is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ." The immediate context is the fivefold ministry gifts.



Once Spirit-filled Christians understand their motivational gifting and start to operate and grow in the charismatic gifts, they need to realize that God intends to develop ministry gifts of some sort in them.

We need to understand that the fivefold ministry gifts are different than the motivational or spiritual gifts listed in Romans chapter twelve and 1 Corinthians chapter 12. The main difference is that the ministry gifts, because of the leadership involved, take time and maturity to develop and work properly.

Motivational gifts are a primary part of a person's personality makeup. The nine charismatic gifts operate both by the impartation of the Spirit and faith on the part of the one exercising the gift. A new believer might naturally lean toward teaching or giving, or showing hospitality. A young Christian might have the faith to lay hands on someone and see them healed, or they may, by the Spirit, speak a word of wisdom or knowledge or prophecy. As noted, these are gifts that are given, received, and used. While the fivefold ministry gifts are still gifts—they can't be earned or bought—they require a level of maturity that only discipleship, experience, and wisdom can provide.

**Gifts are  
given. Fruit  
is grown.**

Maturing Christians develop their character and spiritual gifts as they grow spiritually in faith and faithfulness to God and the Church. That is genuine discipleship. As previously noted, believers become disciples, and disciples become leaders. Ultimately leaders become part of the fivefold ministry that recreates itself within the church.

### **Gifts are Given; Fruit is Grown**

We observe another interesting fact. While there are nine gifts

of the Spirit, there are also nine fruits of the Spirit. One aspect of the fruit of the Spirit is godly character.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another. Galatians 5:22-26

There should be a balance of character and supernatural gifts which the Spirit brings believer's life. We see this beautifully illustrated in the life and ministry of the High Priest in the Old Testament. The High Priest's outer robe had, at the bottom, alternating golden bells and pomegranates (woven cloth in the likeness of pomegranates Exodus 28:33-34). These odd adornments serve to foreshadow the balance of the spiritual fruits and gifts in the New Testament believer's life—and by extension—priesthood. Perhaps this is significant in the story of the woman with an issue of blood who said to herself, "I will be healed if I can only touch the hem of His garment."

It is necessary to understand the nature of fruits and gifts. Gifts are given and must be received and used in faith. Fruit, on the other hand, is cultivated and grown. How we all might wish the spiritual fruit of patience was simply imparted, but sadly, that is not usually the case. Spiritual fruit does not come as a gift but rather as a result of cultivation and care. Likewise, love, self-control, and all the other fruits are cultivated in our lives as we pray, read our Bibles, interact with the church and the world, and walk in fellowship with the Holy Spirit.

There are two reasons this issue causes problems.

First, it is easier, faster, and much more fun to receive a gift

than to take the time to work in an orchard and harvest the fruit. Hear me clearly on this point; gifts are not earned. If it is based on merit of any kind, it ceases to be a gift. Therefore, we must conclude that a young believer—whom we might consider immature in many ways—could operate in spiritual gifts without a lot of spiritual fruit.

On the other hand, Jesus alluded to this fact of cultivating fruit when He told the disciples that He had to prune them and would continue to do so that they might bear more fruit. Pruning is hard work for the gardener and is painful for the vine. The process of fruit-bearing takes cultivation and time. A problem occurs when we want to limit the gifts of the Spirit in the life of a believer who has not yet had time to develop spiritual fruit.

The five-fold ministry will wisely work to disciple and train the younger believers while encouraging and giving space for the spiritual gifts. That is the practical outworking of Paul's direction in Ephesians 4:11-13:

[The fivefold ministry gifts were given] ... for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ....

If the first problem tends to limit gifts in others whom we don't deem "worthy," the second problem is to limit the gifts in our own lives. Once, a prophetic minister discussed some of my faults with the elders of our church. (They had been friends before I had come to that church, so he felt more obligated to them than me.)

**Another big problem is that we have mis-defined the ministry.**

When I found out, I called him on it but also said, “Hey, you missed a few.” Most of us growing in Christ know our own lack of godliness and spiritual struggles better than those around us. It is easy for many Christians to fall into the old snare of, “God couldn’t possibly use me.” I feel this way, too, sometimes, and even after 35 years in the ministry. However, it is at this point that we must realize that we don’t earn God’s spiritual gifts, but we do have to cultivate Spiritual fruit.

Just as each believer will have one or more of the seven motivational gifts and one or more of the nine charismatic gifts, they will also, at some point in their spiritual growth, develop one or more of the five-fold ministry gifts.

Another big problem is that we have mis-defined the ministry. For instance, we have developed an attitude that the apostle is a little “pope,” ruling his apostolic kingdom from the top down. The prophets must be like Elijah of old and a little scary, to boot. The pastor is the guy we pay to be CEO of the church, with duties ranging from preaching several times a week to hospital visitation, marriages, and funerals (oh, yeah—he also has to be at every ridiculous committee meeting someone wants to call at the church). We tend to think of the evangelist as the guy who travels from church to church, preaching at revivals in different churches every week. The teacher is the person we hand a Sunday School manual to and encourage them to do their best to teach the class.

The fact is that none of these stereotypes even remotely touch the actual Biblical ministries to which Paul is referring. For this reason, so many disciples will never find or fulfill their God-given calling or use their Spirit-given gifts. The church must redefine—read that *correctly define*—the true purpose and function of the ministry gifts and allow the Body of Christ to discover and develop them amid the congregation.

Where there is a lack of priestly ministry, you will discover several problems:

- There may be a lot of activity, but there will be little genuine spiritual life in the church. People will be motivated emotionally, but not spiritually.
- Authentic discipleship does not take place, and individual Christian growth is rare. The message doesn't truly change lives long-term because the power behind it is soulish, not spiritual.
- Evangelism is not happening, and few people get saved in services or through outreach.
- Church growth, if it happens at all, is a matter of sheep-shifting. Those who are already Christians move from one church to another, often precipitated by division, entertainment or programs.
- Pastors are overworked and don't have the time to do the spiritual work they called to do. Neither do they have time to rest or attend to the needs of their families.
- Teaching tends to be shallow, self-help-oriented Bible studies and Sunday school classes that discuss current events—without any real Biblical depth.
- Youth ministries often focus more on food, fun, and games than discipleship to get kids to come.

On the other hand, when a church gets this area of Kingdom administration right, they will see a real Spiritual life impacting the entire church. People will be converted, and discipleship will cause them to grow spiritually. Spiritual and numerical growth begins to occur organically. Physical and spiritual

healing becomes more common. Another sign of a healthy church is that the congregation is highly motivated to missional outreach. In short, the actual life of Christ begins flowing powerfully and freely as more people discover their spiritual gifts and find their place in the body of Christ as a holy priesthood.

Chapter 6  
**The Kingly Anointing**

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**Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward.**

I Samuel 16:13 (KJV)

**‘Welcome Prince,’ said Aslan. ‘Do you feel yourself sufficient to take up the kingship of Narnia?’ ‘I—I don’t think so sir,’ said Caspian, ‘I am only a kid.’ ‘Good,’ said Aslan, ‘If you had felt sufficient, it would have been proof that you were not.’**

C.S. Lewis *The Chronicles of Narnia*

As noted previously, the anointing to manage God’s Kingdom was limited to three offices: The prophet, priest, and king. Here we find the Old Testament institution of the Kingly anointing.

Then Samuel took a vial of oil, and poured it upon his (Saul’s) head, and kissed him, and said, Is it not because the Lord hath anointed thee to be captain over his inheritance? .... And the Spirit of the Lord will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be

turned into another man.... And it was so, that when he had turned his back to go from Samuel, God gave him another heart: and all those signs came to pass that day.  
1 Samuel 10:1-9

The first thing to understand is that no one calls, gifts, or anoints themselves, or anyone else for that matter. God reserves the right to manage the Body of Christ—through the ministry of the Holy Spirit—as He sees fit. It matters not what you or I want to be; it matters what God has called and anointed us to be. While we are to “desire the best gifts,” that desire itself is born of either the fleshly impulses or the prompting of the Holy Spirit based on the motivational gifts He imparts to us. Both can be strong, and it takes spiritual discernment to divide between soul and spirit in these matters.

Motivation and intent are vital things to look at, both in ourselves and others, when we look at leadership positions. I have often said, “God is looking for servants who will lead, not leaders who will serve.” Some say there is no difference. I beg to disagree. The focus is different. Do I primarily see myself as a leader or a servant? The motivation is much different.

**God is looking for servants who will lead, not leaders who will serve.**

As we look at Saul’s and David’s calling and anointing, it is crucial to understand three things.

Both times God directed and confirmed the anointing of the King through the ministry of the prophet. In the case of David’s son, Solomon, the prophet and the high priest both confirmed the king’s installation.

The truth is, God generally uses His existing (faithful) ministry to launch new ministries unless the current leaders are so out



of touch with God that He cannot use them. If that is the case, such as with John the Baptist, God goes around the existing ministry to raise ministry that will hear and obey Him. God used John the Baptist outside of the religious system because the religious leaders were no longer in tune with God. That happens but is not the standard method of raising leaders.

In both cases, we see that the physical anointing, symbolized by the oil, was the vehicle by which God imparted the true anointing of the Holy Spirit. Both men experienced a new impartation of the Holy Spirit at the time of their consecration. This impartation was the commission and unction to get the job done in the power of the Spirit. God's spiritual Kingdom cannot be administered simply by the fleshly efforts and wisdom of men. It makes little difference how gifted, educated, or talented a person is. It takes the Spirit of God working in and through men to accomplish spiritual things.

The anointing changes a person. It is interesting to note two things about Saul and David. Saul was anointed with a vial of oil and David with a horn of oil. Likewise, the anointing changed Saul's heart, but we are told that David "was a man after God's own heart."

We are not told what changed in Saul, but evidently, something deep and profound happened when the anointing came upon him. We are told that God gave him a new heart and that he was changed into another man.

God does look on the inward issues of the person He intends to anoint. Sometimes that anointing will work so powerfully in a person's life that they find some deep inward changes also occur. I believe that—sooner or later—the true anointing changes everyone it touches. How can we be filled, baptized, or anointed by the Holy Spirit and remain unchanged?

It is essential to remind the reader when I talk about a kingly anointing: I am NOT talking about one man running the church, denomination, or organization like a dictator. Nor am I talking about some top-down hierarchy of church government. I am talking about an anointing on a group of God-called, Spirit-anointed people to establish and order the Kingdom. When a team of five-fold ministry leaders operates together as one man (reread Ephesians 4:13), it releases the fullness of Christ's ministry in and through the church—and the fullness of Christ's Ministry is the Kingdom of God.

As the Old Covenant Kingdom expression morphed into the New Covenant Kingdom expression, it was also necessary for the kingly anointing to morph into its New Testament expression—just like that of the prophet and priest.

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace, there shall be no end upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this. Isaiah 9:6-7 (emphasis mine)

Of course, Jesus is the King of God's Kingdom. He is King of kings and Lord of lords. That kingly anointing—the wisdom and power to order and establish God's Kingdom—was also apportioned out to the Body of Christ with the commission and gifts.

Before someone starts to protest, I am not saying that Jesus is not the King or that we are kings apart from Him. He is “capital K” King, and we are “lower case k” kings. He is King through His Body. He rules and reigns in us and through us as we yield

to His Spirit. It is the anointing of the Holy Spirit that gets the job done, not the person.

Jesus told us to pray that His Kingdom would come, and His will be done on earth as it was in heaven. Jesus is King in heaven. However, on Earth, He has chosen to work in and through His many-membered Body called the Church. We cooperate with Him in prayer, obedience, and His Kingdom's administration as the Holy Spirit guides and empowers us to produce eternal results.

### **So, what does the Kingly Anointing Look like in the New Covenant?**

In Isaiah, we just discovered that the kingly anointing was to bring order and establishment that was in turn to bring a never-ending increase of the extent and scope of the Kingdom.

The king was responsible for providing a safe territory for the daily life of his subjects. A good king always had what was best for the people in mind. David, the go-to guy for prophetically picturing Christ as King, was first a shepherd, then a king. In his training and experience as a shepherd caring for sheep, David learned what it meant to be a king.

In a New Covenant sense, kingly (I prefer the term *governmental*) anointing was commissioned to establish a mature fellowship, raising up men and women who provided a stable, safe, spiritual environment (local assemblies) that would produce and nurture Christians through evangelism and discipleship.

Ultimately this would result in a church that would be salt and light, transforming society. Under the New Covenant, it isn't as much about control and doctrine as it is about discerning and administering the will and direction of the Lord and establishing and building up churches and ministries.

Turning again to the five-fold ministry, we find fulfillment of this in both the apostolic and prophetic ministries.

So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit. Ephesians 2:19-22

We find here that the apostles and prophets were the foundation the church was built on. These ministry gifts "ordered and established" it initially and continue to do so today. In I Corinthians 3:10, Paul says he is a "wise master builder who laid a foundation" and admonished others to be careful how they built on that foundation. Of course, Paul referred both to the everlasting gospel he preached and to the churches he planted.

I believe the same principle exists today as it did in the early church. The Church—the cumulative, 2000-year-old Body of Christ—certainly has an apostolic and prophetic foundation. It should also follow that the individual expressions of the local church need a prophetic and apostolic foundation. That doesn't necessarily mean that they have to understand it totally, but that the call and anointing are there to order and establish the church.

Over the years, we have seen many churches spring up to proclaim the great things they will do for the Lord, only to fizzle and fail after a short time. Jesus referred to this in some of His parables. He spoke of "digging deep and laying a foundation," lest a storm comes and knock the house over. He also mentioned the man who started to build a tower and did not

have enough money to finish it. These churches and ministries become an embarrassment to the Kingdom of God. In some cases, God never intended for them to be started in the first place. A prophetic and apostolic foundation was lacking. It was all done in the flesh, by the will of men.

When I was a young spirit-filled Christian, I was involved in a small church looking to purchase a building. We felt the Lord directed us to a particular building, and we talked to the realtor handling the property. We explained that we did not have a lot of money to work with, as we were a small church. His advice to us: “Put some wealthy people on the board, and they will be more likely to invest their own money in the project.”

First, we did not have any wealthy people. Second, that is man’s way of getting things done. People who are given positions because of their money, involvement in the community, or influence will use those things to control the church.

Too many pastors and leaders have felt they had no choice but to compromise the truth for fear of losing large donations to the church or ministry. That is not the way God does things. Those who follow such fleshly plans are doomed to fail. Even if the church continues or even grows, you will find little spiritual or eternal fruit produced because it requires God's Spirit to produce spiritual fruit.

Under the New Covenant, we find God has a better way: Christ—The Anointed One. God-called, God-ordained, and God-anointed men and women following the leading of the Holy Spirit.

### **The Gift of Rule**

One of the motivational gifts listed in Romans 12 is the “Gift of Rule.” Other translations use the words “administration” and

“leadership.”

The word means “pre-standing” and carries the idea of an excellent reputation that allows one to lead and influence people by setting a positive example.

Paul’s instruction to Timothy and Titus concerning deacons and elders addresses this issue. They were not novices or new believers and were to have a good reputation outside the church (I Timothy 3:6-7).

That may be a missing element in the selection of spiritual leaders. People are often recognized in the church for zeal or knowledge, yet outside of the church, they have a reputation for being intolerant, legalistic, harsh, or judgmental.

If evangelism is a significant function of the Body of Christ, then we should also consider how those outside the church perceive the people we are putting into leadership.

After forty years of walking with Jesus, I (think and hope) I have matured somewhat. However, I cringe when I think back on my earlier days as a young, zealous Christian. Our church practiced door-to-door visitation and “soul-winning.” I learned they had visited with a co-worker of mine, and he had made a profession of faith.

That following Sunday, he came to the church I was attending. I spoke to him at work and tried to encourage him to stay in the church. His comment was, and I quote, “What I know about you and the church, I don't think it is the place for me.”

That was over thirty-five years ago, and I recall it clearly—and painfully! Someone did not want to go to my church because of how I portrayed Christianity in the workplace.

I genuinely was a born-again Christian and loved the Lord, but my character was not on par with my zeal, and it turned some people off who did not understand.

**I genuinely was a born again Christian and loved the Lord, but my character was not on par with my zeal.**

There was also another example I experienced firsthand. I took over as pastor of a small-town church in the Midwest. The previous pastor had grown the church by giving everyone titles and positions—and even preaching credentials (for \$100 each).

A few months before I arrived, the town drunk had gotten saved. He had a genuinely dramatic conversion experience while sitting on the edge of the bed with a gun in his hand, getting ready to commit suicide. Since he had shared his testimony and a few people came to the Lord, they made him a preacher and a deacon within a few months. Later I was told, “He got down to three beers a day, so we made him head deacon.” (I promise this is a true story, and I did not make it up.)

The other men in the church were set in as elders and deacons also. The problem was that few had any depth of Christian character. The elders frequented the local coffee shop. They often gossiped with the locals about the good, the bad, and the ugly regarding the church.

The church became the laughingstock of the town before I arrived. Of course, I did not know any of this when I accepted the call to pastor the church. The first time I drove into town

and stopped at the local convenience store, I introduced myself as the new pastor. The response I got. “Good. They NEED a Pastor!”

A little later, I invited another person in town to church, the response? “I won’t come as long as there is a ‘minister’ Smith and a ‘minister’ Jones in that place.” (Obviously not their real names, but ones who had purchased a preaching license at the persuasion of the previous pastor.) The reputation of ‘Smith and Jones’ in the community did not engender confidence in the church.

I spent the first two years there just rebuilding the reputation of the church. There are many more stories (somewhat humorous now) about the rumors and encounters we had as we tried to change how the community viewed us as a church.

The truth is the world does watch the church, its people, and leaders. They are concerned about how we live, especially about the leadership’s consistency, which will ultimately define the church. The fact is that they have the right to do so. They have a right to expect the church to be responsible when acknowledging leadership.

**The church should portray an overall level of maturity, love, and practical ministry to the community they serve.**

While the church is a hospital for sinners, not a clubhouse for saints, the church should portray an overall level of maturity, love, and practical ministry to the community they serve. Otherwise, we will never reach the people Jesus died to save. Like it or not, we have a responsibility to portray Christ to the world around us. Responsible church leadership and their reputation outside the church is a vital part of that portrayal.

This brings us back to the issue of the “Gift of Rule.” Leadership (read that the kingly or governmental anointing) in



the church is not on par with the Rotary or Optimist Club. It isn't something with which just anyone can get nominated or elected. It does require an anointing. We have already seen that the Holy Spirit gives the gifts (anointings) "as He sees fit" (I Corinthians 12:11) and that God "sets the members in the body as it pleases Him." (I Corinthians 12:18.)

In his book *The Paradise War*, author Stephen R. Lawrence has his character saying, "I tell you the truth, a man may not make himself a king; only the blessing of him who holds the kingship can elevate a man to that high place. [It is] a sacred trust that may not be bartered or sold; still less may it be stolen or taken by force."

So, it is with Christ. Only the sitting King can elevate (or humble in our case) a person with the anointing to be a genuine spiritual leader. As we have seen throughout history, men who would be king, and set about positioning themselves so by shady politics, treason or war, usually make terrible rulers. The same principle is true in the church.

It only makes sense that having the "gift of rule" is a prerequisite to governmental leadership in the church. Since the Father and the Holy Spirit place the callings, gifts, and anointings in the Body of Christ according to their will, it means the church must discern and recognize the gifts given to her through godly, Spirit-empowered people. Leadership in the church, then, is the express will of God, not the will or choice of men.

**How can we  
discern who has  
the gift of rule?**

### **Defining the Gift of Rule.**

How can we discern who has the gift of rule?

Some have simply said that the Pastor is the head of the church and leave it at that. So then, according to this philosophy, if a man (or woman) goes to school, gets a

preaching license, gets someone to hire him (or starts his own church), and starts calling himself a Pastor, he must be the governmental leader of the church.

Other churches fall back on the good old American way of democratically voting for pastors or governing boards—be it elders, deacons, or advisory boards.

Is this a scriptural way of looking at things? I think not. I believe the church has almost totally ignored this *Gift of Rule* because of not recognizing it or knowing what to do with it. Additionally, it is ignored because it doesn't fit within the organizational bylaws for appointing leaders.

There are a few ways to recognize those that have an anointing to lead and govern the Body of Christ.

A person with a genuine leadership gift will start leading. We may call them “natural born leaders,” but perhaps it is more than personality. I know some self-proclaimed leaders, but it is because they run roughshod over people and assume control of things because of ego, a controlling spirit, or the desire to be important. These *leaders* don't lead; they drive people through control techniques that often include coercion, intimidation, guilt, superiority, shame, and more.

I once heard a story about a family who went to Israel for a Holy Land tour. They saw a man behind a flock of sheep driving them. They got excited and said, “Look at the shepherd, look at the shepherd!” Their tour guide said, “No, that is not a shepherd. That is the butcher. The butcher drives the sheep, and the shepherd leads them.” We need to heed this wisdom. A true shepherd leads sheep, and the sheep follow their shepherds. People who drive others are not shepherds—be warned!

God had a controversy with the spiritual leaders in the Old

Testament. In Ezekiel 34, He charges the shepherds with using and abusing the flock for their own gain but failing to feed them, guard them or tend to the sick and wounded. He said He would “require the flock at their hands.” That means that they were going to give an account of how they handled themselves as shepherds. In response to this abuse, God said He would give His people shepherds after His own heart.

Paul considered himself a “best man” for the bridegroom. He stated, “I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.” (2 Corinthians 11:2)

In early traditions, the Best Man protected the Bride for the Groom. He was chosen as the “best man” for the job, loyal to the groom, fit to defend the bride’s honor and dignity. The bride was not his to use or abuse. His job was to guard, protect and present her to the groom at the wedding.

Being a shepherd or leader in God’s Kingdom is an awesome responsibility. It is not for everyone. Those who are called and appointed must also be trained and mentored by the seasoned ministry. Otherwise, the position, power, and privilege can open a door for much destruction in the leader and the congregation. I have counseled many Christians who have been severely wounded by pastors or other leaders who were more concerned for their own power and position than they were for the flock.

If you want to discern potential leaders in the Church, start watching who the congregation respects and are following. The Bible tells us, “A man’s gift makes room for him.” God is the one who calls, anoints, and places a person as “members in the body as it pleases Him.” Therefore, he intends that the person rises to the ministry to which he or she is called.

If the Holy Spirit is operating in the church, a person’s spiritual

gifts will start to come forth naturally. You don't have to pass out *spiritual gift assessment tests* to help people find their spiritual gifts. Just put them in situations where there is an anointing, encourage them to trust God and step out in obedience, give them a little space, and those gifts will start to surface.

A second way to discern true leadership gifting is by watching the maturity level of believers. There are two lists of qualities for elders and deacons in the Bible (1 Timothy chapter 5 and Titus chapter 1). You will note that all the requirements were character qualities. Ecclesiastical skills, theological knowledge, or even ministry gifts did not make the list—although I think they were a prerequisite for considering someone to be elders or deacons. God was concerned with character in leadership.

Isn't it interesting that there is not a list of qualifications for "pastors?" You would think that, if the pastor were the most important position in the church, Paul would have said, "Here is a list of qualifications for a pastor." He did not. Either Paul did not think a pastor needed maturity, or he assumed the elders and deacons were the church's leadership—of which a pastor would be a part.

### **Conclusion**

When the genuine kingly (governmental) anointing is undeveloped or lacking altogether in a church or organization, one or more problems will ultimately arise over time.

- Disorganization becomes a significant problem. That might manifest in different ways, from a lack of communication (nobody knows what is going on) to things not getting done that need to get done.
- Leaders will be concerned with protecting their

position resulting in either compromise or jealousy.

- Factions surface vying for power and allegiance.
- A dictatorship evolves, with one person or family ruling the church.
- Chaos ensues with every man “doing that which is right in his own eyes.”
- Fight for control of the church or organization results in little life-changing ministry happening.

### **The Blessing of the Kingly Anointing**

Where the kingly anointing is active and growing, you will find order and establishment. As opposed to self-focused leaders, Godly Church government will value diversity and make room for all of the gifts of the Spirit to operate in a church or organization. Diversity—in both ideas and ministry—finds expression in this environment. In some churches, the various gifts and visions can cause frustration and confusion. A governmental anointing overcomes this. The result is light and life. Ministry will flow to the congregation and then from the assembly to the world around them

## Chapter 7

# Test of Leadership

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**And let them also be tested first; then let them serve as deacons if they prove themselves blameless.**

I Timothy 3:8 ESV

**The first step to leadership is servanthood.**

John Maxwell, Author, Speaker and  
Christian Leadership Coach

An organization I am associated with uses the S.A.T. test to determine when people are ready for leadership positions. Typically, in America, “S.A.T.” is short for the “Standard Aptitude Test” to enter college. If you don’t pass the test, you can’t get into college because you will not do well. However, in this case, “S.A.T.” stands for something else: SERVANTHOOD, (being under), AUTHORITY and TEAM. Failing the Spiritual S.A.T. test should indicate a person is not yet ready for leadership

### Jesus Modeled Servant Leadership

Leaders are to be servants. Jesus said, “The Son of man did not come to be served, but to serve.” He demonstrated this in many ways. He washed his disciple’s feet. He ministered to the point of physical exhaustion. He “had compassion on the

people,” healing the sick, raising dead loved ones, setting people free from demons—not to mention his voluntary death as a criminal on a cross.

Jesus tells His disciples that they should follow His example (John 13:15). Peter tells us that Jesus left us an example and that we should follow in His footsteps (1 Peter 2:21).

The world’s way of leadership is gaining and keeping power and control, one way or another. Jesus said His Kingdom did not operate that way, and He demonstrated it. On more than one occasion, the disciples were arguing about who was greatest among them. Jesus told them that if they wanted to be a leader of all, they first must become the servant of all. I am pretty sure they did not want to hear that. They probably struggled with the very thought because, after all, they were bragging about who was greatest—who was to be top dog. Their idea was the way of the world—the guy on top rules, and everyone else caters to him.

**The world’s way of leadership is gaining and keeping power and control, one way or another.**

On another occasion, James and John went with their mother to ask Jesus to make them the top two guys in His kingdom—sitting on His right and left hand. That did not work out so well, either.

According to Jesus, if a person cannot be a servant, he cannot be a leader.

The servant test is simple. How well do the leaders you know (or the people you are looking at for potential leaders) exemplify servanthood? Are they humble and willing to do anything, or are they privileged and touchy? How do they deal with criticism or difference of opinion? Do they drive people or lead people? Servants do not demand their rights or need their

egos stroked regularly. Servants serve and lay down their lives for others.

### Understanding Authority

The second test is being under authority. Self-willed people don't make good leaders because they don't listen to others. A Roman Centurion (a military captain over 100 men) came to Jesus and asked Him to heal his servant. Jesus responded by saying, "let's go to your house." Here is the exchange:

Now, when Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, pleading with Him, saying, "Lord, my servant is lying at home, paralyzed, dreadfully tormented." And Jesus said to him, "I will come and heal him." The centurion answered and said, "Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed for I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does *it*. When Jesus heard *it*, He marveled, and said to those who followed, "Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel!" ... Then Jesus said to the centurion, 'Go your way; and as you have believed, so let it be done for you.' And his servant was healed that same hour. Matthew 8:5-13 (ESV)

Jesus marvels at the man's grasp of authority. The soldier understood it because he was, at the same time, under the authority of his superiors and had authority over others. This man understood delegated authority. He understood that having authority meant you got it from somewhere. He had power because he was placed into authority by others who had authority over him. He understood that the authority did not originate from him. He applied the natural understanding to



spiritual things, and Jesus marveled that he understood it so well.

In Luke chapter 10, we see this principle played out in real life when Jesus sent 35 teams of disciples out to minister two by two. The Bible says he gave them authority over all the power of the enemy. It was not resident within them. They did not proclaim themselves ready to conquer the world. They were sent by God and given the authority to get the job done. And it worked!

I am sure a few guys were standing by, wondering why they were not chosen and sent. I can hear the conversation (because I have heard similar ones). “Why did Jesus pick Joe? I can’t believe it. I am a better disciple than he is. And can you believe Rebecca got to go? She’s a, a, a— girl! I know something about Abraham and, if Jesus knew it, He would not have picked him for sure. I am not sure why Jesus did not pick you and me. I think we are much better qualified than half the ones who got sent out.”

Submitting to their leaders’ spiritual authority is one of the hardest things for growing Christians to do. But this is the very thing that releases spiritual authority into their lives. I have to say that those who won’t submit, as they are growing in their ministries and positions, will not end up being good leaders.

That doesn't mean we have to like submission, just that we must develop the maturity to submit, and in doing so, we will come to appreciate its value.

I recall several instances in my life when I disagreed with a decision my Pastor made concerning me. Once I wanted to have a Bible study in my home. My Pastor prayed and said the word “autonomous”

**Why did  
Jesus have to  
be baptized?**

came to him. He asked me not to do it. I wasn't happy at first, but I submitted. I never did start that Bible study, but not too much later, I became the Pastor of that same church. It was my first pastorate. I don't think another person in the church knew about that conversation. The pastor did not know at the time that he would be leaving. I understand now it was an opportunity for God to produce a greater authority—and as a result—greater opportunity in my life by humility and submission.

We even see this virtue of submission displayed in Jesus's life. At the age of 12, even knowing to some degree who He was, He submitted to his parents.

Later we would find him submitting to the inferior ministry of John the Baptist.

Why did Jesus have to be baptized? Was it for repentance? Was it to wash away His sins? Was it a sign of membership in the Church? It was nothing like that! It was a pattern of submission to the currently established ministry—even if that ministry would end up being inferior—that Jesus had to follow, leaving us an example that we should follow in his steps.

John protested that Jesus had the more excellent ministry. Still, Jesus knew that submission to the God-called, God-ordained ministry of the hour was a necessary pattern for coming into His ministry. It is a pattern to which up-and-coming leaders and ministers need to pay special attention. Even Jesus humbled Himself for a time to receive from another ministry before He launched out on His own mission.

Later, we find Jesus saying, "I only do what I see the Father doing."

Likewise, in John 16:13, Jesus tells the disciples that the Holy Spirit does not speak of His own initiative, but only what He

hears. This remarkable humility and submission among the Godhead is a powerful example of the importance of submission in the life of a disciple who will become a leader.

Before we can have spiritual authority, we must submit to proper spiritual authority—at least for a time. Remember, Jesus submitted to the inferior ministry of John the Baptist in preparation for His own ministry.

### **Team Ministry**

The last part of the Spiritual SAT test is Team Ministry. How willing is a person to work in a team environment? Do they have to make all the decisions, or can they learn to work in the context of a group of people? Do they have a top-down leadership mentality or a collegiate leadership mentality?

Like any good sports team, a church leadership team consists of various people with different strengths and weaknesses, each doing what he or she is called, anointed, and equipped to do. That is the Body of Christ in practicality. No one has all the motivational, charismatic, or ministry gifts. As leaders, we must seek to recruit or develop all the other pieces we lack individually or within the team. That is the only way to experience the totality of Christ in our churches.

There are a variety of ways to practice team ministry, but the one thing common to all is that one person does not call all the shots all the time. At different times and in various circumstances, the team member with the appropriate gift, experience, and anointing comes to the forefront to lead the team for a season.

Every church goes through various stages in development. In the beginning, those gifted in outreach might be at the forefront. Later the pastoral or teaching ministries might be driving the growth and development of the congregation.

Perhaps the assembly needs to be stirred to evangelism for a season. Likewise, the various charismatic gifts might need to be emphasized for a time. The assembly may need leadership in the prophetic ministries or healing, and those with these gifts may take a more significant leadership role for a season, based on their particular gifts and callings.

Many churches operate on one ministry gift—the pastor. But there are five ministry gifts. This is like running a six-cylinder engine on one cylinder. It might make noise and smoke, and you might have some motion, but it isn't going to work with the power and efficiency with which it was designed to work.

Churches must understand that they will not operate as they could or should without developing a team ministry concept—whatever their version of “team” looks like.

Team leadership is not the easiest form of church government. It *is* the most Biblical, however. I find it interesting that there was not one New Testament letter written to “The Pastor.” Instead, they were addressed to the “Elders and Deacons.” You might also note that the greetings were always plural. No letter was addressed to “the” Elder or “the” Deacon. The early church practiced a collegiate form of Church government.

Indeed, there were Pastors, as there were all five ministry gifts, but the team concept was practiced and emphasized.

Team leadership requires a higher level of humility, submission, and vision than other Church government forms. If I practice team leadership, I don't always get my way. There

**Team leadership requires a higher level of humility, submission and vision than other forms of Church government.**

are times I have had to say, “I don’t necessarily agree, but I will go along willingly with the consensus of the group. Let’s try it your way, and we’ll adjust if it doesn’t work.” Likewise, if my idea doesn’t seem to produce fruit, I must be willing to back up and go a different direction when necessary. Humility and unity are fundamental principles in team leadership. That is why these characteristics need to be developed early in a disciple’s life—before moving into a leadership position.

The key to real team ministry is recognizing each member’s gifts and weaknesses. No football coach in his right mind puts a 320-pound lineman in as quarterback. His size, strength, and training are best used in the line position. Many churches and organizations do not build team leadership based on the team member’s strengths (and weaknesses) but rather on something else. Organizational politics, pride, personality, favoritism, relationships, money, and power are a few of the issues that keep a team from developing correctly.

The typical pastor who operates without a team ministry often finds himself forced to do things he is unequipped for. At the same time, these tasks take time and energy away from the things he is called to do. How much more effective would our churches and ministries be if each person on the leadership team could focus on their strengths, gifts, and anointing while not being forced to do things that they are not that good at. Or, they cannot do what they are good at because someone else already has the job and won’t give it up.

When many people think about ministry, they assume it means preaching. That causes a problem when people feel a “call to the ministry” but are not good communicators. They think they must preach or teach because this is what real ministry is.

As a pastor—and later an apostle—I have encountered many people who wanted to be a preacher or a teacher but simply did not have the gift for it. Some just wanted the attention, to be the person in front. Others had a sincere desire to serve the Lord and encourage the Body of Christ but lacked the anointing or ability to communicate well.

**Desire alone, no matter what the motive, doesn't produce an anointing.**

Desire alone, no matter what the motive, cannot produce an anointing. I have had numerous people come to me over the years and say, “Pastor, please don't let so and so preach anymore. It is horrible.” And I had to agree that it was. The problem was that the person who wanted to preach was sure they were called to do so.

That doesn't mean they don't have a calling to minister; it is just their concept of ministry is limited. If they are called, God has a place for them where their experience, talents, and training will be a blessing to everyone.

The other end of the spectrum is equally devastating to the congregation. Some would say, “I don't want to preach. I don't like to be in front of people, so I could never be a Pastor,” or any other of the ministry functions. The idea commonly held, once again, is that a minister's job is primarily preaching. This is wrong,

If ministry isn't all about preaching or teaching, it opens a much wider door for people to serve God. Understanding that the motivational gifts in Romans chapter 12 and the charismatic gifts in 1 Corinthians chapter 12 are genuine ministry functions will also make a huge difference in how people see ministry.

Preaching and teaching are essential, but so are ministering to the congregation in hospitality, organization, healing, words of wisdom, and words of knowledge by the Spirit.

Ministry outside the church walls is no less critical—and sometimes more important—than ministering in the church. The person in prison or a nursing home will most certainly think that the ministry of the person that comes to minister to them where they are at is more important than the preacher who preaches three times a week in the church setting.

Herein lies the problem. Many believe that preaching in the pulpit, praying for people, giving Godly counsel by the Spirit, and visiting the sick and those in prison IS the pastor's job. It is not the pastor's job alone. Ephesians chapter four tells us the purpose of the five-fold ministry was to equip the Church—the Body of Christ—to do the work of the ministry.

How much ministry can one man or woman do? How much more would get done if the Body of Christ was activated and empowered to do the work of ministering to the Body as the Bible says.

It requires vision, humility, patience, submission, and spiritual guidance to build, train, empower and release an effective team; however, this is exactly what Jesus did. He wasn't trying to keep the ministry activity, and attention focused on Him. His goal was always to clone Himself by equipping and training His disciples to do the work in His name.

Most certainly, Jesus demonstrated the ministry and trained the disciples. He corrected them when necessary, but He never hindered them—even Judas. “Jesus left us an example that we should walk in His steps.” (1 Peter 2:21)

It is also interesting to note that Jesus only trained about seventy people in three-and-one-half years. Ministry mentoring is not done primarily in a classroom but in the world. That

necessarily limits the number of people that any one person can train effectively. If one mentor could disciple seventy, it follows then that ten mentors could disciple seven hundred. Perhaps our vision should be to train leaders who will train other leaders.

We find this principle in Paul’s philosophy of ministry. There were probably many that Paul impacted significantly in his lifetime. The Bible only tells us about a handful with whom he worked closely.

His counsel to young pastor Timothy was, “And what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men **who will be able to teach others also**” (2 Timothy 2:2 emphasis mine). Paul was committed to perpetuating ministry training to his spiritual great-grandchildren.

### **Eldership in the Church**

Different church structures treat eldership differently. In some churches, the elders are the governing body; they may or may not include the pastor(s). Other models set the elders under or above the Pastor. Still, other models use the elders as an advisory board or put them over the congregation’s financial affairs.

**Not one book of the New Testament was addressed to the “pastor” or even “the pastors” of the churches.**

While there is no direct, authoritative information in the Bible for structuring elders in a church, we can glean some ideas from the Bible. The Bible regularly speaks of elders and deacons—and always in the plural. Not one book of the New Testament was addressed to the “pastor” or even “the pastors” of the churches.

In no way am I trying to undermine the importance or position



of the pastoral ministry, or as some have suggested, get rid of pastors altogether. However, I think we have accepted a Roman Catholic structure that is hard to justify Biblically. The pastoral role is one of five ministry gifts God gave the church. The current emphasis on THE pastor is causing many problems, as already noted.

The fact is that God uses imperfect people and imperfect structures. None of us would be here if it were not for some of the old-line denominations who carried the torch of Christianity in their day.

God continues to move forward, though. A friend of mine always wanted to “go back to old-time Pentecost.” He saw the power and glory that many early Pentecostals experienced and wanted to see it in the church today. However, my response was always, “God doesn’t go backward; He goes forward. Let’s find what they had and add to it what God is speaking and doing in our day.

The same is true of Biblical eldership. Many of our imperfect governmental structures have been used by God up to this point. I think that most people—pastors and congregations alike—would agree the best we have is imperfect. The question is not, “Has God used it?” The question is, “Is there a better way?” Or perhaps, more importantly, “Is there a more Biblical way?”

No model is without problems and issues. Hey, we’re dealing with imperfect people as leaders and disciples, and we are dealing with our own imperfections as well.

So, what model am I suggesting? The Five-Fold ministry model of Ephesians chapter 4, with an emphasis on the motivational gift of Rule or Administration.

### **Unity in Diversity**

If I were to describe the Body of Christ in one phrase, it would have to be “unity in diversity.” Each of the *Body of Christ* passages (Romans chapter 12, 1 Corinthians chapters 11-14, and Ephesians chapter 4) emphasize this fact. None more so than Paul’s discourse on the Charismatic gifts in 1 Corinthians chapter 12. Here, Paul clearly explains that the same Spirit gives different gifts to different people. He further states that those gifts are then administered and manifested in different ways in various people’s ministries. That means the same gift won’t operate or look the same from one person to the next, and we should not expect it to.

It is easy to slip into a learned behavior. We’ve all been in one church group or another that has “their way of doing things.” You can often tell what “flavor” a church or ministry has by their worship, preaching style, or the way people use religious terminology.

Charles Colton said, “Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery.” We want to be like the people we respect, so we often imitate their actions, mannerisms, and even their way of speaking. That is especially true in religion.

The inherent danger is that it is possible to mimic a style without replicating the original ministry’s spiritual dynamic. Christianity is not an assembly-line venture, kicking out mass-produced copies of a particular leader. The Holy Spirit is an artist, working in each individual according to the raw material each person brings to the table. We see this principle clearly in Ephesians 2:10:

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

Each of us is God’s “workmanship.” You are not mass-

produced. The master craftsman handcrafts you for a unique work that is pre-planned for you to accomplish. Knowing what His purpose is for you, God imparts, activates, and perfects the various gifts and ministries uniquely suited for maximum spiritual fruit.

The responsibility of the five-fold ministry to “equip the saints for the work of the ministry.” Our leadership must acknowledge this principle and commit to implementing it in our churches and organizations. The best course of action, then, is to discourage mimicking and encourage allowing the Holy Spirit to impart, administrate, and manifest the various spiritual gifts uniquely in each person.

Team ministry deals effectively with the strengths and weaknesses of each person on the team. Team ministry values unity in diversity and will seek to give it full expression rather than squelch it.

## Chapter 8

# Assembling Together

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**Let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.**

Hebrews 10:24b-25 (NASB)

**Synergy is what happens when one plus one equals ten or a hundred or even a thousand! It's the profound result when two or more respectful human beings determine to go beyond their preconceived ideas to meet a great challenge.**

Dr. Steven Covey, Leadership Coach  
and Motivational Speaker

When I was a boy, I used to love building model cars and airplanes. There was only one problem: I was impatient to get the thing finished, so I would often cut corners. I wouldn't read the instructions, and I did not paint the parts first. That resulted in leftover parts and sloppy paint jobs as I had to paint around

pieces that were already glued together. Needless to say, my model cars did not usually look like the pictures on the box, and I would not have won any awards for my efforts. Honestly, I was more interested in the finished project than the process. I must confess I still struggle with this tendency to this day (I really wanted to get this book finished and was tempted to leave this chapter out).

**You cannot cut corners with spiritual things.**

I am afraid the same thing is happening in churches today. We must understand that the process is as necessary as the end result. You cannot cut corners when it comes to spiritual things. In a rush to be successful and gather people together, many leaders are not reading the instructions. They are not doing the foundational work required to create assemblies. The results are less than stellar and far below what the ‘manufacturer’ intended to display.

God has given us instructions on building the Church. The prototype is Christ Himself, and the blueprint is the revelation of the Body of Christ. We cannot take shortcuts and expect the result to be the fullness of Christ in our midst.

### **Gatherings or Assemblies?**

The Bible uses the term “assembly” to describe the corporate meeting of God’s people. This is an accurate term, given our current subject. There is a big difference between a gathering and an assembly. Let me illustrate. You can have all the parts for an engine gathered in one room, but if the parts are not properly assembled and functioning correctly in relation to one another, you don’t have any power. You can say you have an engine in the room, but you don’t. You have parts with the potential to be an engine.

Unfortunately, many leaders are more interested in having

gatherings than they are in creating assemblies. The focus and results of gatherers and assemblers are quite different. It takes much more time and effort to have an assembly than it does to have a gathering.

Gatherers seek to get as many people (parts) together in one room as possible. Success is determined by having at least one more attendee than you had last time. Go to any gathering of pastors, and sooner or later, the question is asked, “How many members do you have?” This helps us to quickly determine our (or someone else’s) place in the ranking of fellow gatherers.

Assemblers are not as concerned about numbers. Their question is not, “How many members do you have?” but, “What ministries are operating in your church?” Assembler churches emphasize helping their members find their God-given roles and fulfilling them in the context of the larger Body of Christ.

Assembling the Church requires assemblers with a true vision of the end product. We have to know what the thing is supposed to look like and how it is supposed to function before putting the pieces together. That is the real job of the five-fold ministry. We have to know what pieces we are supposed to have and how they are to fit together before we start the process of building the model. If we do not have all the right pieces, we have to seek God to provide them.

In keeping with my model car analogy, the picture on the front of the box shows what the model should look like when it is done. The instructions show us how to make it so.

For Paul, the picture on the box was Christ Himself. Read again the revelation he shared with the Ephesian believers concerning the Church:

[That it might develop] until we all attain oneness in the faith and in the comprehension of the [full and accurate] knowledge of the Son of God, that [we might arrive] at really mature manhood (the completeness of personality, which is nothing less than the standard height of Christ's own perfection), the measure of the stature of the fullness of the Christ and the completeness found in Him. Ephesians 4:13 (ABV)

That is the goal to which we all should be building. A church model that looks like Jesus acts like Jesus talks like Jesus and ministers like Jesus. How do our churches measure up to that picture? Some would be much like the models I built when I was an impatient, nine-year-old boy.

The other thing that came in the box was an instruction sheet. It showed each part and stated what materials and tools were needed for assembling the model. Finally, it explained how each piece was to be connected to the adjoining part. It even had a few pictures for the tricky areas.

If Jesus—the Word made flesh—is the picture and prototype, then God's written Word is the instruction sheet. The gospels and the book of Acts serve as pictures for the tricky parts.

Love, humility, patience, discernment, faith, and more are all required virtues of the assembling ministry. We must discern what God is doing in the lives of the congregation. We must assess their maturity levels and provide appropriate discipleship opportunities. They must be allowed to find and exercise their spiritual gifts. And finally, a chance to function in and develop their ministries must be provided.

Too often, churches stir people up with gift assessment tests and talk about everyone's spiritual gifts, only to fail when it comes to helping people find a place to serve and minister. That produces untold frustration and confusion in the

congregation. Soon they are back to being spectators with no vision of ministry.

Twice in the New Testament, Paul tells us we are “members one of another.” (Romans 12:5 and Ephesians 4:25). It is important to note that both instances occur in context with our key “Body of Christ” passages.

When the Bible uses the term “member,” it refers to a piece of the whole, having a place and connection as a vital part of that larger whole. It is not talking about an organizational member with a membership card and privileges. That is the heart of Paul’s revelation of the Body of Christ: Each of us is an individual and an essential member of a whole. Without assembling with others, we cannot experience the Body of Christ as God intended it to be.

Let’s return to our illustration of the engine. A piece of the machine not connected to the whole is of little value by itself. Its actual value is discovered in being assembled with the other parts that make up the engine. Only then can it fulfill its destiny, and only if the whole engine is assembled and working properly. Christians can avoid much frustration by understanding this simple analogy.

To fulfill my God-given, Spirit-empowered destiny, I must allow the Spirit of God to reveal who and what I am to be in the Kingdom. Then allow God to place me into a group of believers seeking to express the totality of the Body of Christ.

I must admit that this is a work in progress for many, but too often, the concept isn’t even acknowledged by Church leadership. The Ephesians four model is not even on their radar screen.

Assembling together requires quite a bit more spiritual maturity than just gathering. We can simply look at both letters



Paul wrote to the believers at Corinth. He tells them that they did not lack any gift (I Corinthians 1:7). Yet, he goes on to bring correction on almost every issue you can imagine, including the proper way to use the spiritual gifts and how to assemble.

**Assembling together requires quite a bit more spiritual maturity than just gathering.**

Assembling requires humility, patience, love, forgiveness, and all those other messy Christian virtues the Bible is always talking about. Gathering does not. If a gatherer has a problem, they just gather somewhere else until a problem arises, then they move on again to gather in another place with another group of gatherers.

God is more into assemblies than gatherings. He desires that the church members form close ties, recognizing the individual strengths—and, yes, weaknesses—of each member. Paul, remaining consistent with his analogy of a physical body, tells us that, for the body to work correctly, the parts must be closely joined together and held in place by the joints and ligaments. We find this principle in Ephesians.

But practicing the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into Christ, who is the head. From him the whole body grows, fitted and held together through every supporting ligament. As each one does its part, the body grows in love. Ephesians 4:15-16 (NET)

But speaking the truth in love, we may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh

increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.  
(KJV)

While the King James translation is a little more complicated, it brings out several key points. First, Paul speaks of parts (members), joints, and ligaments. A joint is not a part but a relationship between two parts; an elbow or knee, for example. Joints are what give the body flexibility to move. Ligaments are the bonds that hold these relationships tightly together. Elsewhere, Paul refers to the “bonds of love” and the “bonds of peace.” These, and other spiritual virtues, are the ligaments that hold relationships together. Physically speaking, you simply can’t function properly with loose, floppy joints. The same is true spiritually.

Years ago, when I was pastoring a church in rural Kansas, there was some division between the older couple serving as elders and me. We could often feel the presence of God in the services, but not much was happening, and there did not seem to be any power.

During this time, I developed severe pain in my left elbow. If I did not put any pressure on it, it did not hurt, but as soon as I tried to pick up something, the pain caused me to drop it again. That went on for a while. Then the pain switched to my right elbow.

It was at this point that God led me to this passage in Ephesians chapter four and spoke to my heart about “strained relationships.” He showed me that my arm muscle had as much power as ever, but I could not access my muscle’s strength because of my elbow joint problem. The problem was in the exact place where two parts came together to move on one another. A relational problem in my elbow was not only causing pain but stopping me from functioning correctly. As soon as I realized this spiritual principle and started to deal with it, the pain went away and never came back. God gave me

a very pointed object lesson that I will never forget.

Paul points out that “every joint” (relationship) and every individual member contributed to the whole. This is the Body of Christ. We must realize we were created to be a vital part—along with every other member. In 1 Corinthians chapter 12, Paul even tells us that the members which we think to be unrepresentable are necessary.

Paul instructs us on how we are to assemble together in 1 Corinthians chapter 14. Everyone was encouraged to take part and share a spiritual gift, a song, an exhortation, or some other spiritual thought for the edification of the entire assembly. Spiritual gifts should not be forbidden. When one teacher was speaking and God revealed something to another, the first was to give way to the second. How do you think that would work in our modern church setting? The pastor is on point two in the middle of his thirty-five-minute sermon, and the associate pastor stands up and says, “Uh, pastor, God just revealed something to me; can I share now?” Do you think the pastor would sit down and let the other speak? That probably wouldn’t happen because our churches are not set up to function that way today. Yet this is Biblical instruction on how to assemble together.

**At Any Time—In Any Place**

In the next chapter, we will discuss some hindrances to establishing the Body of Christ. However, there is a real need to discuss a significant issue in our current context of assembling: when and where assemblies occur.

We often hear the question, “Where do you go to church.” As mentioned previously, the Biblical term “Church” always refers to the people, not a building or organization. Technically it is hard to “go to church” since the Church is not a place. Therefore, in days gone by, Christians called their buildings meeting houses, tabernacles, chapels, or a variety of other terms rather than “churches.”

**For many, ‘real church’ is defined by what happens on Sunday morning. This attitude alone narrows the expression of the Body of Christ considerably.**

In most people’s minds, the default idea is that “church” happens at a specific time, in one particular place, and in a specific way—usually on Sunday morning at a building dedicated for the purpose, with some anticipated order of service. While there may be other meetings and functions, for many, “real church” is significantly defined by what happens on Sunday morning. This attitude alone narrows the expression of the Body of Christ considerably.

When we take Jesus’s words seriously, “Where two or three are gathered together in my name, I am in their midst,” it changes things considerably. Too often, we just apply that verse to our predetermined gatherings. What would happen if we accepted the reality of that principle without pre-defined limitations? What if two or three Christians gathered at the coffee shop or park in Jesus’s name to discuss the Bible or pray? Would that be considered “Church?” Not for many people, because it

doesn't meet the basic requirements of a specified time or place. There is no pastor, no songs, no structured liturgy, no bulletin, no sermon, or whatever else their ecclesiology requires for *real* church to happen.

Yet Jesus said this was The Church—His people gathered in His name. It matters not when they meet or where they meet or even how they meet for that matter. It matters that they assemble together, with each part having the option of contributing to the whole.

When we planted a non-traditional church in 2009, we initially met in a small community building at a park. Six months later, we rented a senior citizen's facility that was closed on the weekends. We met in their activity room that was used as the dining hall and for dances and events. We served coffee, ate breakfast, and sat at round tables. I even joked that I was the only pastor that had a pool table for a pulpit. Obviously, it was not a traditional church setting, which is precisely the way we wanted it.

After two years of meeting like this, God directed us to purchase a beautiful, old traditional church building. It had stained glass windows, a sloping floor in the sanctuary, curved wooden pews, a large orate wooden pulpit—everything we said we did not want.

We had first-time visitors every Sunday morning for one entire year (yes, I kept track of it). Several people came to us and said, "We have been watching you, and now that you have a building, we will join. We did not know if you were going to be a real church or not."

Such is the (mis)understanding and attitude that thrives among many people with a gathering mentality. That is one of the critical things that hinders the true organic expression and growth of the Body of Christ—thinking of church as a place, an event, or a program, rather than people assembled to build one another up through their exercise spiritual gifts and

ministries.

While there is nothing particularly wrong with having a dedicated building or time to meet (people at least know when and where to go to assemble together,) it becomes an issue when a church begins to define itself in those terms.

**Where Jesus  
is, anything  
can happen –  
wouldn't you  
agree?**

We often use the term “church service” to describe our Sunday morning religious experience. I began to question that term and what meaning or idea it conveyed.

Who was being served, I wondered? Was God being served, or were people being served? I also questioned what “service” was being performed. When we first began implementing these new concepts at River of Life Fellowship in Rockville, Missouri, I challenged the congregation to think differently about why we were gathering and who was being “served.” I suggested we all try to use different terminology to help ingrain these new concepts and principles. We found it very difficult to do so because of years of pre-conditioning. I found it hard not to call it a service and challenged the congregation to correct me whenever I referred to our assembly as a “service.” That they did with much delight, as it took me some time to change my vocabulary.

We really must change the fundamental way we look at church before the Body of Christ can become a reality within any group of believers. We simply must stop identifying the church as an organizational entity that we belong to or a meeting we attend.

### **I Am in Their Midst**

Jesus said He was with the assembled believers anytime and anywhere they gathered in His name. Where Jesus is, anything can happen—wouldn't you agree? So, when He said the assembling of two or three Christians in His name creates a

tabernacle for His presence, it is highly significant.

We need to understand an essential principle at this point. No one person can be the Body of Christ by themselves. No single person has all the ministry gifts—as much as some would like to claim they do (1 Corinthians 12:14). Yes, I can be alone with God and have a great time. However, the revelation of the Body of Christ requires two or more gathering together for genuine expression. The humbling truth is that God designed the Body of Christ in such a way as to require us to assemble with others to have the fullness of Christ (Romans 12:4-5; 1 Corinthians 12:12 & 20).

Gathering in Jesus's name for the express purpose of releasing His Spirit through the assembled believers is what God is after. Jesus used a ministry training model that sent out two-person teams, not individuals. While I believe individuals can be used by God significantly at times, I also think Jesus was practicing this principle of the Body of Christ manifesting where two or more gathered in His name.

Why, then, doesn't this principle get much attention? Why is it relegated to something other than *real* church? An even more significant question is, why so many church leaders are threatened by it?

I encourage you to embrace the true principle of “assembling together.” I pray that you become an assembler and that you do not settle for being a gatherer—or the gathered. I believe you will find your gifts and your place in the Body of Christ and fulfill your God-given, Spirit-empowered destiny. Perhaps you are far enough along to say you are functioning in your area of gifts and calling. Then I encourage you to help others find their place alongside you. It is my desire that, when your race is done, and you've crossed the finish line, you hear the Master say, **“WELL DONE, MY GOOD AND FAITHFUL SERVANT.”**





## Chapter 9

# Overcoming Hindrances

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**But in the following instructions I do not commend you, because when you come together it is not for the better but for the worse.**

I Corinthians 11:17 ESV

**The Reformation did not directly touch the question of the true character of God's church.**

John Nelson Darby (*Darby Study Bible*)

Many years ago, I stood on the platform of our church, hoping no one would do anything too radical.

We lived in a small, country-seat town where the main occupation was farming. It was a conservative area. We considered ourselves a charismatic church in those days and believed in all the Spirit's gifts and practiced them to some degree. However, when a visitor would come in, I secretly hoped that no one would prophesy or give a message in tongues. In those days, I was still too people conscious. After all, I wanted people to like our church—not think we were a

bunch of weirdos.

I had allowed my fear of public opinion to keep me from relentlessly pursuing the full and unhindered expression of the Body of Christ. I had to learn to trust the Spirit of God and train our congregation to be sensitive to His leading. That does take time and creates an opportunity for overzealousness and mistakes.

The only other alternative is to squelch the Spirit to the point where either He can't move at all, or people are afraid to step out in the Spirit for fear of making a mistake or getting in trouble.

**The pressure on many pastors to be “seeker-friendly” is tremendous.**

In this chapter, I share this story because I will discuss four things that hinder the establishment of the Body of Christ in our local assemblies. These issues are ignorance, spiritual apathy, fear, and control. In this instance, I allowed the fear of public opinion to hinder us.

The pressure on many pastors to be “seeker-friendly” is tremendous. It is tough to be a “seeker-friendly” church and a church that expresses the Body of Christ. I did not say that it was impossible, just difficult. That is because visitors coming into a church nowadays already have a set idea of what church should look like, and—for the most part—churches seeking to express the Body of Christ don't fit that mold.

Frankly, many “Pentecostal” churches have allowed the Pentecostal experience to slip into the background. I know of a church in a town near us that was a part of a Pentecostal denomination. The church had dwindled to a handful of people. They called a young pastor that had a genuine evangelistic ministry, and the church began to reach out and touch their community. As a result, they grew considerably over

the next couple of years.

I talked to the pastor one day and asked him how he handled the Holy Spirit's gifts. He replied that he did not prioritize them because there were other more important things to do in growing the church.

The church has grown to over three hundred in attendance when he finally felt convicted to bring the gifts of the Spirit back, especially the gift of tongues. The congregation of that "Pentecostal" church kicked him out.

I have discovered that congregations trying to establish the Body of Christ in their midst don't usually have the slick, pre-arranged services (complete with coordinated worship, graphics, and sermon) that have become the standard fare in America today. The very idea of allowing for the spontaneous moving of the Holy Spirit can be pretty scary. You simply can't put the Holy Spirit on the schedule of events, and, to many people, the schedule of events in the morning bulletin is sacred.

Darby was correct in saying that the Reformation did not do much to change the church's structure or how it was governed. We have maintained an ecclesiastical system handed down to us centuries ago by the Roman Catholic Church. The majority of that system came not from the Bible but the Roman governmental and cultural system.

(For a well-documented, eye-opening look at this subject, I suggest you read *Pagan Christianity* by Frank Viola and George Barna. Please don't get the mistaken impression—as I did the first time I saw the title—that they are saying Christianity was really a pagan derivative. The book takes a strong stand for the first-century style of Christianity. *Pagan Christianity* documents how much of our traditional church life—not Christianity itself—

came from pagan sources.)

As much as Protestants tend to be against the Catholic Church liturgies and its compromise with political power through the centuries, no one seems to want to acknowledge or deal with the structure that same church system handed down to us. While the reformers dealt primarily with doctrine and practice, they kept the same man-made, pagan-inspired structures and imported them into the new Protestant congregations.

**To do things  
Biblically would  
mean some  
radical  
challenges and  
changes.**

A key reason why there is so much resistance to changing our received ecclesiology is that we are too heavily invested in it. To do things Biblically would mean some radical challenges and changes. As I mentioned in the last chapter, the cost is just too great for some leaders and organizations.

We have spent years developing our top-down systems of power and control. The upper echelons get to call the shots. They decide who does and doesn't get to preach—and often as not—what they preach. They get to determine where the money goes and chart the direction of the entire group.

I have no doubt there are many sincere, dedicated men and women who have a true heart for God and His Church, but the truth remains: our current systems invest power, authority, and position with certain people. In many cases, it also provides a salary and benefits. Most of us would struggle, at least a little, when faced with giving that up once we get it.

I believe a second reformation is occurring in our day that does address the critical issue of the Church's nature. This reformation is confronting some significant hindrances to

developing the genuine Body of Christ, much like Luther, Knox, Calvin, and others confronted problems in the Catholic Church of their day.

The famous American preacher, A.W. Tozer, said, “One hundred religious persons knit into a unity by careful organizations do not constitute a church any more than eleven dead men make a football team. The first requisite is life, always.”

This is not to say we have to fire our leaders and disband our denominations. It is to say that a significant overhaul of our structures is needed to solve some critical issues that are hindering the establishment of the Body of Christ in local assemblies.

We will look at some of these issues now.

### **Four Hindrances to Developing the Body of Christ**

There are at least four great hindrances to establishing the Body of Christ in our local assemblies: ignorance, spiritual apathy, fear, and control.

I must resist the urge to deal with any of these subjects in length because each would take a chapter—or perhaps book—to be covered adequately. It is impossible to deal with negative subjects without appearing negative; however, I will try to accentuate the positive side of things the best I can. Still, the warning needs to be sounded, heard, and heeded.

### **Paul, Peter, and the Ignorant Brothers**

Eight times Paul and Peter told their readers that they did not want them to be ignorant. *Ignorant* is not a derogatory term. Ignorance simply means you don't know or have not been introduced to something.

In one way or another, we would all be considered ignorant of many subjects. For instance, a few years ago, I became interested in photography—mainly because I live in Papua New Guinea, which is rich in photographic opportunities. Honestly, I was ignorant of basic photographic principles, having used only a point-and-shoot camera in the past. I had no idea how things like F-Stop, IOS, and shutter speed worked together. I did not even know what F-Stop was. I decided to buy a decent camera and spent several weeks learning the basics by reading articles and watching videos by professional photographers who had the heart to help others learn photography. I wouldn't call myself a professional photographer yet, but I am learning and getting better all the time.

There is always hope for the ignorant because we can learn. If someone wants to become a doctor or geologist—or a professional fishing guide for that matter—they can study, learn and practice until they are proficient. Stupidity, on the other hand, is to know better and do something different anyway.

The truth is a large segment of the Church is functionally ignorant of this vital Biblical subject. The principles and practices would be foreign to the clergy as well as the congregations. They have simply never been introduced to the concept before.

The solution to ignorance is a dedicated, humble effort at learning (and a dedicated, humble effort at teaching, I might add). If this is a new concept for you, I suggest a three-fold strategy as you try to incorporate the Body of Christ revelation into your life or church. 1. Seek God; 2. Listen to others; and 3. Practice the concepts.

Seeking God for revelation, truth, and direction is paramount

to establishing the Body of Christ in a local assembly. Paul received this revelation by—er—revelation. He knew that others would have to receive it the same way. That is why in Ephesians chapter one, he prayed for the church that God would grant them a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ.

For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all. Ephesians 1:15-23 (ESV)

The Body of Christ cannot be franchised. There is no cookie-cutter model to reproduce churches from place to place. It is an organic reality, not an organizational structure. Certain elements of the church will look somewhat the same from

**The Body of Christ cannot be franchised. It is an organic reality not an organizational structure.**

congregation to congregation, but if you look deeper, each corporate expression will have some uniqueness to it.

The natural, organic way to get more people is for a man and a woman to combine their DNA to produce another unique person. That child may look similar to the parents and other siblings, but he or she is a unique expression of humanity. Even their fingerprints will be different. Perhaps this is a part of the meaning behind God's declaration, "The two shall become one flesh."

The Church is called "the Bride of Christ" and "the Lamb's Wife." In both cases, the corporate body is described as a single entity, not individual Christians.)

It is an intimate relationship between Christ and His Church (bride/wife) that produces "fruit on the earth for God" (Romans 7:4). That fruit includes both new Christians and additional local expressions of the Church.

Each church will have the unique spiritual DNA of the Spirit of God and the people who are a part of the local church. The different personalities, spiritual gifts, and ministries will, of necessity, produce a unique expression for that group.

The only alternative to natural, organic procreation is cloning. Cloning is an attempt to get an exact copy of something by circumventing the natural, organic order. Cloning a person doesn't require the union of a man and a woman. Neither does cloning a church need an intimate relationship between Christ and his bride.

Ignorance of the organic life built into the Body of Christ is one reason men try to clone their church structures. Seeking God for a unique expression of His Body in each congregation is the right way to expand the Church.



The second strategy is listening to others who have been on the journey a little longer than you have. Religious pride often keeps us from learning from others—men, especially, like to figure things out for themselves. While cloning is not the answer, discipleship certainly is. Placing yourselves in a learning environment—whether it is a classroom or a living room—is key to developing a vision for the Body of Christ. Just about everything that can be tried has been tried. The mistakes have already been made and the lessons learned. You can speed things up considerably by not trying to reinvent the wheel. Be a humble learner. Ask questions and discuss them.

**The solution  
to not  
knowing  
is learning**

The third element is practice. If possible, immerse yourself into a group that is already practicing the principles and concepts you are trying to understand. It might be a house church, a marketplace ministry, a prayer room ministry, or a full-blown congregation.

In the 1980s, our pastor was trying to introduce our new congregation to the concepts of praise and worship. He had been involved in dynamic praise and worship for years but was having a hard time transferring that passion and understanding to us. His solution was to start taking us—as a group—to other churches that were already practicing what he was trying to build into our group’s spiritual DNA. This way, we could see and participate in the dynamics we were trying to implement in our fellowship. It helped us immensely to see the Body of Christ moving dynamically, and it generated faith and a desire to see it in our midst.

The solution to not knowing is learning.

### **Spiritual Apathy**

Frankly, establishing the Body of Christ in a local assembly is

hard work. I have often likened it to swimming upstream. It takes more effort to go against the flow—and that is precisely what you will be doing. You will also discover how easy it is to float back downstream to where you started if you stop paddling. We learned it took a dedicated effort and continual reinforcement of the new concepts and ideas we were trying to. People, like electricity, tend to take the path of least resistance.

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There are always a few people who like change—most of us do not. That is especially true when it comes to religion. Religion seems like it ought to be solid and unchanging—like God Himself. We should be slow to jump around with our doctrines and practices. However, being open to change is a good thing. *Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever.* God is perfect and unchangeable. Our attempts to worship, serve and relate to him are not.

Much resistance is due to spiritual apathy—it takes too much effort to make significant changes. You will hear things like, “We’ve never done it that way before.” (My answer is, “So, you are saying that is a good reason not to do something different?”)

Most of us would like a more dynamic relationship with God—individually and corporately. Few want to make an effort to get it. It has been said, “If you always do what you always did, you will always get what you always got.” Famed physicist Albert Einstein said, “Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.” You must be willing to do things differently, even if it is awkward, uncomfortable, or even difficult at first.

I alluded to swimming upstream earlier. In most churches, the congregation is expected (and expects) to be spectators, not participants. To make this significant change and encourage and expect people to participate in the gathering by sharing a song, poem, gift of the Spirit, short exhortation, etc., (according to II Corinthians chapter 14) can be like pulling teeth in the beginning. People are not used to participating, and it takes an effort to do so. Once you make a breakthrough on this issue, it will become more normal and natural, and all you must do is leave room for the Body to share, and it will start to happen much more spontaneously.

### **The Fear Factor**

Other hindrances to developing a genuine expression of the Body of Christ are a combination of fear, pride, and control: each one feeding off the others. These three elements are very much alive and well in our religious circles.

Fear manifests with several different faces. There is the fear of public opinion like I experienced. Fear of things getting out of control. Fear of losing control. Fear that someone will say or do something that is not scriptural (or at least outside of what has been accepted for your group). Fear that someone might rise and become more powerful or popular. I am sure that there are a few more spiritual phobias we could add to the list.

Some leaders are afraid to lose control, position, or power—often because of pride.

Around 1993, while I was pastor of a small Midwestern church in Kansas, I was first introduced to a different way of doing Church. One of my Elders gave me the book *Where Do We Go From Here* by Ralph Neighor. One part scared the daylights out of me. Neighor said that churches should fire their pastors and start meeting in small organic groups led by Spirit-

filled “lay” leaders (read that non-professional clergy).

Today I think I understand what he meant. The Body of Christ should be allowed to develop organically. I rejected the concept because I WAS a professional clergy member he was suggesting should be fired.

This concept threatened me. It grated on me considerably. Being a pastor was my religious identity. I had a position and title. My position provided me with a (small) salary, some authority and afforded me some respect in the community. To do what Neighbor suggested would cost me quite a bit, and I balked at the idea.

Many pastors and leaders have the same initial reaction when you start talking about sharing power, influence, and ministry with several other people. It is okay as long as they stay at the top of the food chain, but to flatten the peak or, God-forbid, turn the triangle upside down, you start to meet quite a bit of resistance.

I can tell you that in 2009 two other men and I planted a non-traditional church in West Central Missouri, and for seven years, the three of us served as pastors/elders without a salary. We set out to model servant-leadership and develop a church that expresses the Body of Christ, and that is what we have tried to do. All three of us had our own businesses in addition to shepherding the local congregation. One pastor was a farmer, another was an owner/operator of a trucking company, and I was a partner in an Internet development company.

I am not saying this is the only, or even the best, model. I am saying that my concept of the Body of Church developed over a period of a couple of decades and that I was willing to practice what I preached as a result. (I have no problem with a pastor getting paid if it doesn't produce an organizational entitlement mentality that gets in the way of developing the

Body of Christ. I just don't believe we should view ministry the same as any secular career.

At some point, we must start trusting God the Father who birthed the Church, Jesus the Head of the Body, and the Holy Spirit who imparts, operates, and matures the gifts within the Body. In the early Church, there were times Paul would plant a church and walk off and leave it after only a few months, commending them to the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

Today we require a potential leader to spend years in discipleship and attend Bible training or college before letting them be a leader. One significant fear is that someone will start teaching something with which we disagree. That is always a concern. However, suppose we lay the foundation correctly. Suppose leaders model the principles, and the people were taught to follow the Holy Spirit humbly and sincerely. The Body of Christ would be established, minimizing this problem.

I am not advocating letting anyone do whatever they want. Discipleship and training are essential, as are accountability, encouragement, and correction. Opportunity is also a critical factor in establishing the Body of Christ.

Reread that last paragraph. These are concepts that do not get a lot of airplay from the pulpits. That is why there is a genuine reluctance to establish the Body of Christ in local Churches.

It is within the context of these things that people mature. Remember that we learned earlier there are nine gifts of the Spirit and nine fruits of the Spirit. Wise leaders will make sure their congregations are developing both Spiritual elements at the same time.

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### **Manning the Controls**

Control is a powerful motivator; few people who have it want to

give it up. We see this in religious settings quite a bit. Some church groups even teach their pastors to get and maintain control, like the Church is their private business to manage and manipulate. Other church systems take control away from the pastor as a means of maintaining control of the church. Control might be invested in a pastor, committee, board, or even with the congregation as a whole. It makes no difference who has it—letting go of it is difficult.

That is a problem because if you want the Body of Christ to be established in your local assembly, you will have to give control over to the Holy Spirit. That is not to say that no one is at the helm. It simply means that whoever has control must be willing to yield to the Holy Spirit at any given moment. That takes a boatload of humility and trust.

One thing I have learned is to allow the Holy Spirit to set the agenda. I can't tell you how many times I have prepared a message only to have God do something entirely different in a gathering. Sometimes he would change the message. Other times there would be no message, or someone—sometimes several people—would share instead of me, even if I was scheduled to minister.

There are a lot of leaders who would struggle with that for a variety of reasons. Pride is a significant issue. Some pastors enjoy their weekly time on the platform and derive a lot of personal satisfaction from it. They do not want to share the limelight. Some might be afraid of competition and do not want to be compared to others.

My friend Randy, who had a true Pentecostal anointing as an evangelist, faced this issue in several churches he attended. While he was always totally supportive of his pastors, he tended to have a more dynamic ministry, and the Holy Spirit was working through him. He even had altar calls in his Sunday

school classes where people got saved and filled with the Holy Spirit. The anointing on him would end up being a source of jealousy in his pastors, who would then start finding a reason to limit his ministry and thus their perceived competition.

Sometimes the control issue is over the direction of the church or who gets to direct the finances. Regardless of the problem, if there is a struggle for control, the Holy Spirit is not moving, and the Body of Christ is not functioning correctly.

### **Activity Does not Mean Life**

I can't stress it enough; just because there is a lot of activity, it does not automatically mean there is life. Like fruit on branches, we must look past the necessary leaves to see if there is real fruit growing in there somewhere. Because of this, Darby's quote, I opened the chapter with, is so important. As leaders and as congregations, we must heed the warning in the story of Jesus and the barren fig tree.

In Mark chapter 11, Jesus is on His way to Jerusalem. He was hungry and saw a fig tree in the distance with leaves and naturally assumed there was a possibility of figs because fig trees bear fruit before producing leaves. From a distance, there was an indication that there should have been fruit on the tree. From a distance! However, upon closer inspection, there was no fruit to be found. Reaching the tree, Jesus discovers there are no figs, just a leafy green tree.

A casual reading of this passage would make it seem like it was not the season for figs and that Jesus was being unrealistic in assuming there would be figs on the tree. Reading it that way makes no sense. Jesus would have cursed the fig tree for something that was not the fig tree's fault. If this were the case, the message to you and me would be that God is arbitrary, expecting spiritual fruit when it wasn't possible for

us to bear any yet. That does not accurately reflect the character of God. There must be a different understanding. There is!

The correct understanding is that the tree represented itself as having fruit since the leaves were already in full foliage. Even though it was early, it appeared as it might have fruit, and Jesus was curious to see if it did. The fact that there were only leaves and no fruit meant that there would be no fruit—at least for that season. It wasn't that Jesus cursed it keeping it from producing fruit; it was that He knew it would not produce fruit. He removed it so it would not take nourishment away from other fruit-producing trees.

That was a pointed object lesson for the Jewish leaders of His day. The fig tree's story is wrapped within the container of the greater story of Jesus cleansing the temple of the money changers.

We see the same principle in a parable about another fruitless fig tree (Luke 13:6). The vineyard owner saw the barren tree as a waste of valuable space and a hindrance to his garden's overall fruitfulness. In this parable, though, the gardener requests one more season to specifically work with the tree to see if he could get it to produce fruit. If not, he would cut it down next year. That is the simple principle of pruning and purging to produce the most fruit.

The bottom line is that, from a distance, a lot of churches and ministries look like they are producing fruit. They have many leaves—activities, busyness, staff, people, etc.; however, on closer inspection, they are not really generating spiritual life. People are not being born again or filled with the Spirit. Spiritual gifts are not being developed. Ministries are not being

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produced. The “leaves” are just keeping the tree alive and looking good—which is okay for a shade tree, but not for a tree that is supposed to be producing good fruit.

I believe we are entering a season where God is inspecting His garden. He is looking for an abundant harvest in the last days. Churches that aren't producing spiritual fruit are taking the resources (finances and people) away from churches that are producing fruit or that have the potential to produce fruit. Some of these churches may receive a period of grace, like the barren fig tree in Luke's story. On the other hand, for some churches, that extra season may have come and gone already.

The further a church moves away from the anointing and direction of the Holy Spirit, the less likely it is to produce spiritual fruit. Sooner or later, the parable is fulfilled, “No man shall eat of you again.” All spiritual nourishment is gone. The Spirit is excluded, and men have substituted their own agenda. The church may keep going on as usual, but nothing spiritual is happening either.

**“But I have something against you.” WHAT! It can't be. How could Jesus correct us?**

While I really do not want to keep reinforcing the negative here, however it is a critical and challenging message. It is life or death for churches and people.

We find the same principle in Revelation chapter three. Jesus sent specific messages to seven churches. The letters consisted of encouragement, correction, and a warning that their light would be removed if they did not respond to their specific issues.

Can you imagine the immediate joy of the churches? After all these years, they get a handwritten letter from the last living

apostle, John the Beloved. They gather in anticipation. Surely this was going to be good. An elder stands to read the letter out loud. “You are doing some good things,” he reads. Everyone nods in agreement, beaming with not a little pride. “But I have something against you.” WHAT! It can’t be. How could Jesus correct us? We have lots of stuff going on. We’re very active. We have an excellent reputation in the area. We preach blessing and prosperity; all the rich people come to our church. And on it went.

Yet Jesus said, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear what the SPIRIT is saying to the churches.

As leaders and congregations, do we have ears to hear what God is saying specifically to our congregations? Of course, some churches do not have an issue with this. They have learned to listen and adjust accordingly. This part of the book is not for them.

The main problem with wanting to maintain control is that you and I are left with our own resources and abilities to control things.

I have seen the Spirit of God change situations in a matter of hours when I saw no way that the thing wouldn’t end in disaster.

We all know that there are things in life that we can’t control. If control is a major issue for you, you can expect God to guide you to situations that will prove your inability to control things. That is not God being mean; this is God bringing you to a place where you can voluntarily yield control to God. The release of the power of the Kingdom of God is the result.

**Establishing the  
Body of Christ in a  
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Establishing the Body of Christ in a local assembly is not for the faint of heart. It takes courage, faith, humility, dedication, and a host of other spiritual virtues to get it right—but isn't this what Church should be? Isn't the lack of these qualities the main problem in many churches? We have discovered that the process of establishing the Body of Christ is the very thing that works the character of Christ into a group of people. When we try to avoid the process through ignorance, apathy, fear, or control, it also short-circuits the congregation's character development.

Chapter 10  
**The Fourth Anointing**

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**You also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ...But you are A chosen race, A royal priesthood, A holy nation, A people for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; for you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.**

I Peter 2:5, 9-10 (NASB)

**The kingdom of God is not going to be advanced by our churches becoming filled with men, but by men in our churches being filled with God.**

Duncan Campbell  
Scottish revivalist 1889-1972

Dave, the Pastor friend of mine I mentioned earlier, his worship leader, and I drove a whole day from southeast Michigan to Toronto, Ontario, Canada. We wanted to check out the reports of a revival that had been going on for some time at the Toronto Airport Vineyard Church. Tens of thousands of people had come from all over the world to get in on this anointing and take it back to their homes.

As with all revivals, there was some controversy surrounding this one, and we wanted to find out for ourselves what Spirit was operating there. We arrived the night before and got hotel rooms. Since meetings were scheduled every night of the week, we decided to locate the place early and just walk around and pray before we went to a service. We arrived late morning. The doors were unlocked, and no one about, so we went in and prayed. I must testify that all three of us agreed there was a strong presence of God in the place.

Later that evening, we went back to the service. It was the only time I have ever stood in line and waited two hours to go into a Church. I saw some incredible things in that service that I knew had to be God working. I also saw some things that I think were the enemy trying to hinder and distract. The truth is, where God is working, Satan is usually around looking for an opportunity to pervert and drag it off-center. Where Satan is at work, God is generally there to redeem and cleanse.

We have all been in places where the presence of God was real and tangible to us as soon as we walked in the door. When I was pastor of the church in Rockville, we had numerous visitors tell us they “felt something” as soon as they walked into the sanctuary. Several said they felt peace. Others—who later became members—said they felt like they were “home” the minute they walked in.

The Fourth Anointing is the anointing that rests on the congregation as it comes together to worship, pray, grow in Christ and serve God. It is this anointing to which I referred in the opening pages of this book. You will discover it in churches where life is happening—not just activity. People are born again, healed, forgiven, restored, set free from bondage, and are perpetually growing in Christ. It is a place where people are constantly being encouraged to find their place of ministry inside and outside of the church. It is the fulfillment of Peter’s salutation in 2 Peter 3:18:

But grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.

That is an anointing that abides with the congregation—not one that comes and goes with individuals and programs. This congregational anointing only happens when the first three Kingdom anointings—prophet, priest, and king—operate with at least some degree of maturity. The ministries of the apostles and prophets lay a firm foundation for the ministries of the evangelist, pastor, and teacher to build on.

The five-fold ministry equips the congregation to do the work of ministering to the Body and building itself up in love. The ministry gifts provide the protection, direction, correction, teaching, and spiritual nourishment and insight to grow a healthy, Christ-focused congregation. As a result, the corporate anointing rests upon that congregation. Life flows from them to one another and through them to the world.

As mentioned earlier, some pastors are afraid to allow the congregation to operate in the Holy Spirit’s gifts. They are worried things will get out of control. However, the prophet, priest, and king anointings will serve to keep order in a church; rarely will things get out of hand if the work has been done to

establish them.

In the passage above, Peter deals with individual members (living stones) being built together to assemble and seek the Lord. That assembly becomes a spiritual temple and a holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God. In verse nine, he calls them a chosen race, a royal priesthood, and a holy nation.

Here we see the true and final effect of the spiritual metamorphosis we discussed earlier. Remember that the Old Covenant expression of the Kingdom must transform into the New Covenant expression of the Kingdom. That started with the cross, the grave, and the resurrection. The Old Testament ministries, created and anointed by God to manage His earthly Kingdom, ‘morphed’ into the New Testament ministries of apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher.

Likewise, God uses these ministries to effectively transform the people of God and the Old Testament Kingdom from the physical to spiritual. Notice Paul’s language here. The people, temple, priesthood, and sacrifices were now spiritual. The word “holy” meant “set apart for the priestly service,” yet Peter reveals that the Church, the Body of Christ, is now “a holy people.” The Church is a new “race,” no longer Jew or Gentile, but “one new man,” according to Paul (Ephesians 2:15).

As noted earlier, the priests could only come from the tribe of Levi, and the king had to descend from the tribe of Judah. Yet Peter combines these two Old Covenant distinctions, calling the Church a “Royal Priesthood.”

What could never happen under the Old Covenant became a spiritual reality under the New Covenant by the Holy Spirit’s power operating in and through the people of God, the Church—the Body of Christ on earth.

Paul reinforces this very idea in Galatians chapter 3:

O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified. Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh? ..... Does he who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you do so by works of the law, or by hearing with faith?

### **According to the Pattern**

When God instructed Moses to build the tabernacle in the wilderness, He told him in no uncertain terms, “Build it according to the pattern I showed you on the mountain.” God gave Moses specific instructions on what materials to use and what specific size things were to be. When God said, “use brass,” Moses was not allowed to substitute iron, gold, or silver. When something called for acacia wood, Moses couldn’t just decide to use cedar or oak instead. The earthly tabernacle—and later the temple—was designed to show forth spiritual truth and reality. To break the pattern meant distorting the truth and reality God intended to relate to men.

Of course, Jesus is the head of His Body, which is the spiritual Tabernacle of the New Covenant, according to Peter. The writer of Hebrews picks up on this principle in chapter eight of his book and relates it to the ministry of Jesus.

It follows then that there is a pattern for building the New Covenant Tabernacle. We can no more substitute spiritual building materials than Moses could natural ones. To do so is to damage the spiritual truth and reality the New Covenant Tabernacle was designed to display to the world.

The truly amazing thing, though, is God has given us all the various building materials we need in the gifts and ministries of the New Covenant. They are enough if appropriately used,



to get the job done quite nicely.

Concerning this, we find some significant instruction in Exodus chapter 25.

Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: "Speak to the children of Israel, that they bring Me an offering. From everyone who gives it willingly with his heart you shall take My offering...And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them. According to all that I show you, that is, the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furnishings, just so you shall make it." Exodus 25:1-9 (NKJV)

There are several key things here. The most significant thing is that God desires to dwell among His people. God did not want to come and go. There is a huge difference between *visitation* and *habitation*. God, at times, visited His people because He wasn't dwelling among them, although He had plainly stated His desire, "I want to live among my people."

**Are we settling for the occasional visitation, or are we contending for the habitation of God?**

We must ask ourselves a question.

Are we settling for the occasional visitation, or are we contending for the habitation of God? That is a serious and significant question. I must confess that many times in the past, I was content with an occasional visit from God during service. I am no longer satisfied with that.

The good news is that we do not have to settle for the occasional visitation. We can build (or instead be built as) a habitation for the Spirit of God in our congregations.

...having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief

cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit. Ephesians 2:20-22 NKJV

In this passage, we find the transition from Old Covenant to New Covenant; the physical temple being superseded by the spiritual temple. Yet, the purpose remains the same. God is still looking for a people He can dwell among; He is still looking for a place of habitation.

The second thing we notice in the Exodus passage is that God places responsibility on the people both to give and do the work of building the tabernacle. “Let them build me a tabernacle that I might dwell among them.”

We discover two significant factors here. What was in the heart of the people? Were the people willing to invest in the process? The question was, would they give, and would they work, to have God in their midst? I think God was proving hearts. Did they believe God’s Word? Did they want God? Was God going to be a God afar off or a God that was near? If God dwelt in their midst, things were going to be different. Yet it was God’s very presence that would make them a “peculiar people.”

When the people rebelled, God told Moses that He will send an angel to lead them into the land but that He would not go with them. Moses argues the point that it is God’s very presence in the midst of His people that will set them apart from the heathen nations around them. (Exodus 32). Moses then tells God, “If you do not go with us, do not send us into the land.” Moses was unwilling to go to the Promised Land if it

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meant not having God's presence.

Are we content to have our programs and productions, even it means that God's Spirit is not present? Are we content to be like the people of the world around us, or do we want to be "peculiar people?" There is a prevailing idea in some circles that we must be like the world to reach the world. While the church needs to be culturally relevant, it is from the world we are trying to save people.

At this point, God gives some unique instructions to the Israelites in Exodus chapter thirty-three. It is easy to simply read past them if you are just reading this as a historical account. However, if you are looking to understand how God works, you tend to pay closer attention.

God told the Israelites to take off their ornaments or trappings so He could determine what to do with them. He did not ask them to strip naked but to take off the extras. I believe this to be the outward religious garb and trinkets they wore—the religious bling!

Perhaps, at times, God needs an individual or congregation to take off all their religious trappings and get real before him so that they can hear His instructions to them. Today that might mean our Christian tee shirts, cross necklaces, and WWJD bracelets. Maybe it's our robes or suits or Easter hats. It might mean setting aside some long-standing traditions or favored style we tend to worship.

A few years ago, one church experienced this principle of stripping off the trappings and lived to tell about it. That church, Soul Survivor, in Watford, England, was struggling with genuine worship for a period. Christian artist Matt Redman, a member of the church, tells the story.

"There was a dynamic missing [in worship], so the pastor did a

pretty brave thing,” Redman explained. “He decided to get rid of the sound system and band for a season, and we gathered together with just our voices. His point was that we’d lost our way in worship, and the way to get back to the heart would be to strip everything away.”

Redmond explained how, for a season, the church just gathered to worship without instruments—or even a music list. They truly wanted to return to pure worship and were willing to be radical to do so. For a while, they struggled with the change, then figured out how to allow the Spirit to move among the congregation. After they regained a genuine heart of worship, they reintroduced the instruments, but this time they were not glorifying the music.

Soul Survivor is one living example of the Exodus 33 principle. Another outcome was a song Redman wrote about their experience: Heart of Worship, which is now sung worldwide, is a testimony to a church that would not settle for less than the presence of God. It is also a challenge for every individual and congregation to examine themselves on this matter.

For Moses and for us, the good news is that God did go with them, and He will go with us if we desire Him to do so and commit to doing things His way. We can have a dynamic presence of God in our Churches.

Another thing we see is that the people were to give an offering. That offering was to be made freely and with a willing heart. There was to be no coercion on the part of Moses. The temple God wants to build cannot be built with manipulation or deception. Once again, God was looking at a heart condition.

It is no surprise that we see the same principle repeated in the New Testament. Paul admonishes the Corinthian believers to give willingly and cheerfully. “Every man according as he

purposes in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loves a cheerful giver.” (2 Corinthians 9:7)

There is a difference between building the Old Covenant Tabernacle and building the New Covenant Tabernacle. Moses built the physical one was built with physical material: gold, silver, cloth, skins, jewels, etc. The New Covenant Temple is made with “living stones.” The offering God is looking for today is not so much money or other material things, but lives—given willingly and cheerfully for the sake of His Kingdom. I can only give my life to God. I cannot give him my wife’s life or my children’s lives, or yours for that matter.

**The New  
Covenant  
Tabernacle is  
built with  
“living stones.”**

*The offering God is accepting today is from individuals who willingly and cheerfully say, “God take my life and use it to build your Kingdom. Make me a part of this habitation you are building. Build me together with others so you can dwell in the midst of your people on earth—not just in heaven.”*

These people become the “living stones” endowed with power and anointed with the various gifts and ministries of the Holy Spirit. Their willingness is not just to give their lives, but the desire to seek out their spiritual gifts and use them. That offering—along with the willingness to submit to the Holy Spirit’s leadership and the leadership God places within a congregation—is the offering that pleases God. It is the willingness to find their place and fulfill it while helping others find their place and receive them.

Finally, the idea that the people would build the tabernacle for God to dwell among them. While the truth remains, “Unless God builds the house, they labor in vain that build,” God still requires us to be co-laborers together with Him (2 Corinthians 6:1). God will build His House where there is willing

participation by the people. I mentioned earlier that it takes some hard work, dedication, and spiritual maturity to see the Body of Christ established in the local assembly. God wants people who are willing to labor; to build according to the pattern, He has given us. It is not an easy task, but the result is that God dwells in the midst of a congregation that is willing to be built into a “habitation for God.”

### **Watching God Work with Willing People**

It is such a joy to watch God move in a congregation that is open and willing to follow His leading.

I will never forget one Sunday morning at our Church in Rockville, MO. As I was getting ready to speak, James, our youth pastor, came to the front and said he felt like the Holy Spirit wanted to say something to the congregation. I handed the microphone to him and stepped off to the side to allow him to have the people’s attention.

He shared a word that God wanted to touch people in a special way that morning. (I honestly don’t even remember what He said specifically.) He invited people to come to the front for prayer. No one moved. I bowed my head and started praying that this would not be an awkwardly embarrassing moment for him as he was learning to step out and follow the Spirit. He kept encouraging people to respond. After a couple of minutes of praying, I looked up and was surprised to see the altar area was full of people.

James caught my eye and motioned me forward to pray for the people. I said, “It was your word; you pray for them.” I also asked his fiancée, Amanda, to come up so they could get used to ministering together. To their amazement, the first lady they prayed for fell under the power of the Holy Spirit and was lying on the floor speaking in tongues. It was the first time that had

happened to them. Their faith soared. The place lit up after that. They finished praying for all the people that morning. God did a powerful thing. I don't think I got to speak that day because God had his own agenda.

James and Amanda are now pastors of that church and have been for fifteen years. They still talk about their experience to this day and how, as a couple, it birthed a ministry in them. They often encourage others to begin stepping out in faith to minister to others, just as I had allowed them to do some years before.

### Conclusion

The bottom line of what we have been discussing is that God wants churches that genuinely express the Body of Christ to the World. Paul speaks of this as the “fullness of the stature of Christ” in Ephesians chapter four. God desires to powerfully impact lives—body, soul, and spirit—for eternity. Jesus did not die to allow people to remain in sin, sickness, and various bondages; He died to set them free. Through His Body on earth, He continues to save, heal and deliver today in the same way He did 2000 years ago. He said, “Whom the Son sets free is free indeed.” That has not changed in the least.

**It is the Body of  
Christ in the  
world that brings  
heaven to earth.**

It is the Body of Christ in the world that brings heaven to earth, manifesting the will, purpose, and the Kingdom of God, as the Spirit moves through it. This was God's eternal purpose for the Church of Jesus Christ.

The first step in establishing the Body of Christ in a local assembly is to acknowledge the necessity of all five of the ministry gifts. Since these ministries—apostle, prophet,

evangelist, pastor, and teacher—were tasked with equipping the congregation for the work of the ministry, it seems that establishing them would be a prerequisite for Body-building.

When Jesus said, “I will build my Church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it,” He wasn’t referring to a worldwide religious movement or an organization with non-profit status. He referred to people built together as a spiritual house and a spiritual priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices to God. Therefore, our priority should be to build people, not organizations. Our emphasis should be on developing the motivational, charismatic, and ministry gifts of everyone within any group of believers. A final step would be to effectively assemble those members together into a working environment where they contribute their part—for the good of all.

When this happens, there will be an anointing that abides on a congregation in such a way that they will see a consistent flow of salvation, miracles, healing, and deliverance. They will be The Body of Christ, and Christ will manifest Himself to them and through them in a powerful way.

I commend you to the Spirit of Grace and Glory.



## Epilogue

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Perhaps some would say that they are experiencing God's presence and the life of the Holy Spirit in their church already. All the extra stuff about prophets and apostles and gifts of the Spirit are not necessary. Perhaps that is so. I would not argue, not having been in that particular church. I am excited whenever and wherever the Spirit of God is working. I rejoice with the congregation that is genuinely developing the Body of Christ

I am convinced of one thing, though. Even if some may not use the same language I use in this book, they do some of the same things. One thing has been on my heart while writing this book. Some churches experience the reality of the Body of Christ, even if they don't have the theology or terminology for it.

I have often said that our relationship with Jesus Christ saves us. Theology is just our best attempt to explain that relationship. So, I conclude that someone could go to heaven with some bad theology but will never get to heaven with a bad relationship with Christ. Likewise, some may practice many of these principles yet without really being aware of them. I don't think God is as much interested in how we can explain things as He is in how we practice something.

My desire and prayer are to impact three groups of readers.

To some, this book will be new—and somewhat challenging—information. I trust it encourages you to study, pray and seek God more deeply.

To others, it explains what you are already trying to do and, hopefully, gives you a road map to get there a little quicker. The last group would be those already practicing these principles. I trust it confirms what the Spirit is saying to these Churches and encourages them to keep on developing the Body of Christ despite the challenges you face and the required effort.

To everyone, my desire and prayer are that you find and fulfill your place in the Body of Christ and help others to do so too. I challenge you to refuse to settle for less than the Body of Christ on earth in the last days.

The Bible admonishes to fight—or struggle—to maintain scriptural truth and experience.

Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. Jude  
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The full expression of the Body of Christ is one of those things that defined the early church. It is one of the key issues that we must contend for—both doctrinally and experientially. I have discovered that it is much harder to have a spiritual church than a typical church. But it is the Biblical model, and it will be worth the price paid to see it established.

I commend you to the grace of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.

## About the Author

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Steve Highlander and His wife Brooke are currently living in Papua New Guinea, where they serve as missionaries, teaching in Bible colleges, traveling the country, speaking in regional and provincial pastor and leader conferences. They focus on discipleship, mentoring, and leadership development. They also minister regularly in local churches, revivals, and crusades.

Steve has a doctorate in Pastoral Theology combined with over thirty-five years of ministry experience, including pastoring four churches in the Midwest region of the United States. In 2009 he and a team of two other elders planted a non-traditional church in Nevada, MO. He founded Open Door Prison Ministry and, with His team, conducted over 450 services inside the walls of Norton Correctional Facility, a Kansas State Prison. He has also led hundreds of Bible studies in county jails.

Steve has worked on the mission field in Mexico, several countries in West Africa, and the Philippines in addition to his current work in Papua New Guinea.

With a background in publishing and multi-media communications, Steve created the Real News Review, a

monthly Christian Newspaper published out of Springfield, Missouri, and The Encourager, a quarterly digital magazine highlighting Second Reformation themes. Steve also produced and spoke on two radio programs covering twenty-five thousand square miles in NW Kansas, SW Nebraska, and Eastern Colorado.

In 2004 He created TalkToAPastor.com, a website dedicated to answering questions from anyone about anything. Over the years, thousands of people wrote in to find the spiritual answers to their questions. In January 2021, he launched Emmaus Road Institute ([www.EmmausRoadInstitute.org](http://www.EmmausRoadInstitute.org)), an online portal providing free resources, links, online training, and mentoring for third-world pastors, leaders, and gospel workers.

As a writer, Steve has published three full-length books, including this one. He wrote a book for spiritual leaders titled, The Supervisor's Handbook: The Fruitful Life of Spiritual Stewardship. His latest book, released in April 2021, is Test the Spirits, about the spiritual deception the Bible warns about in the last days. In addition to these, he has written many booklet-length messages and articles about issues not commonly discussed in the church today. You can access many of these free resources by visiting his website at [SteveHighlander.com](http://SteveHighlander.com).

The Highlanders also have years of experience working with at-risk youth, both professionally and in the ministry. Steve was the chaplain of ShowMe Challenge, a boot camp program for at-risk youth sponsored by the Missouri National Guard. Brooke has a master's degree in Applied Psychology and a doctorate in Christian Psychology.

Brooke and Steve have five children, 15 grandchildren, and an

Four Anointings Every Church Should Have  
ever-growing number of great-grandchildren

