

Church Unity/Building (1)

A Biblical Philosophy of the Church: Worship, Fellowship, and Your Role in It

Ephesians 4:11-16

****READ THE TEXT****

INTRO

Introductory Illustration

- **What is the purpose of the CHURCH? what is it to be & do?**
- ***Some people think:*** *I go to church and let the pastor preach to me. He leads the church; it's his church; He is supposed to do all the work of the church. I go; I do my duty; I hear the sermon; it's his work — but this is NOT the purpose of CHURCH and this is unbiblical thinking.*
- Because according to the Bible, ***the pastor*** is to equip the people/saints to do the work of the ministry. In other words, the pastor's main job is not to ***do*** all the work, but to train all the believers to serve and do the work together.
 - ***My goal in this sermon is “to encourage all who are genuine believers in Jesus Christ to seek out their gifts and use them in the church's ministry”.***

Background of Ephesians 4

- **Paul** wrote **Ephesians** from **jail in Rome**.
- The Church was **founded** on Paul's 3rd Journey (Acts 19:1-8)
- Eight years later, ***Ephesians*** was written to that Church.
- But about 40 years later, John wrote to the church and they were severely struggling (Revelation 2:1-7).
- **Ephesians** is about **unity in the body** because of what God has done in saving you!

THESIS-Today, I want you to learn about the church so that you love the church, pray for the church, serve in the church, and are committed to the church in your life.

Note: *4 main verbs* in this passage:

1. v.11- “he who gave”,
2. v.13- “until we all reach/attain”,
3. v.14-“we are no longer/we will no longer be”
4. v.15-“we will grow up” !

Ephesians 4:11-16 – “A Biblical Philosophy of the Church: Worship, Fellowship, and Your Role in It”

--> *these are the four main verbs in the section.* You know what the whole section is about by these 4 verbs.

****READ THE TEXT****

Get Plugged In!—Grow, Mature, Serve!

I. THE LEADERS OF THE CHURCH (11)

a. Who appoints the leaders? (11a)

- i. The church has leaders who are *sovereignly* placed there by God Himself. It's not as if *anyone* or *everyone* can be a church-leader. **NO!**
- ii. It is only the man God *ordains*; the man God calls; the man God chooses; the man God *determines* **who WILL be a leader over His church!**
- iii. Even at the outset of the passage, we note the *sovereignty of God* over His own Church! God is the captain! He is the leader! He's the commander! He determines where everyone goes and what everyone does. ***So we must listen...***

b. Who are the leaders in early church? (11b)

- i. **God appoints different roles of leadership:**
- ii. **-apostle**; an Apostle had to have 2 qualifications:
 1. **Must have seen the resurrected Christ**
 2. **Must have been personally commissioned by Christ.**
- iii. **-prophet**; a prophet of God was one who was (lit.) *the mouthpiece of God*; He gave God's Words to God's people. He said: "***Thus Says the LORD...***"
 1. No prophets today (in the biblical sense of the term) though there are preachers who preach God's Word to God's people.
- iv. **-evangelist**; an evangelist is a bearer of good news to the lost. An evangelist is a person whose calling is devoted to ***preaching*** and ***teaching*** and ***evangelizing*** the power of the Gospel to the lost world.
- v. **– shepherd/pastor**; a shepherd is one who protects his flock from error, loves his flock, guards his flock, and guides his flock.
- vi. **– teacher**; a teacher was one who taught the ways of God in truth. The Word of God is the (sole) source of truth for the teacher to bring God's Word to bear upon the lives of all men!

c. Who are the leaders today? (11c)

- i. **Today**, primarily, we have **pastors** and **teachers**.
- ii. You are to be thankful for these men who have **divinely** given roles as overseers of your **souls!** This is no lightweight task! (cf. James 3:1).
- iii. ***You are to pray for them!*** ⇒ look at Heb 13:17 (cf. v.7, 18).

II. THE PURPOSE OF THE CHURCH (12)

What are the two purposes here?

Ephesians 4:11-16 – “A Biblical Philosophy of the Church: Worship, Fellowship, and Your Role in It”

- a. **Equip Saints for the Ministry (12a)**
 - i. – equipping, mending, meshing together. **Same word used in Mark 1:19** for James and John in their boats “*mending*” their nets.
 - ii. Everyone (=the saints) is to be equipped for the **Work** of the **Ministry**. **NONE is left out!**
- b. **Build Up the body of Christ (12b)**
 - i. - Building up; it was used in the Greek world to refer to the *act of building a house* (=the finished product in mind!).
 - ii. **Consider:** you are called to have a part in the building of *Christ’s Body (=the Church!)*. **WOW!**
 - iii. The purpose of the church is to equip, build, serve, and minister (=WORK!).
 - iv. **Mark it:** *The primary purpose of the Church isn’t to convert sinners to Christianity, but to (complete and mature) the saints for the ministry and edification of the Body”*
 - v. *Are you playing your part? Are you being equipped? Are you plugged in? Are you edifying the body or tearing down the body?*

III. THE DURATION OF THE CHURCH (13)

The church exists until...

- a. **Perfect Unity**
 - i. Paul says the church is to exist **until** we all attain (come to, arrive) at the **unity of the faith**.
 - 1. This unity of the faith does **not** mean that: (1) all religions are the same and need to compromise and accept each other!
 - 2. Same word used in **4:3** referring to unity in the Spirit (within the body of Christ; the Church).
 - ii. The church is to exist until there is **perfection** and **unity** in the body of Christ (this will happen till Christ comes back, receives us, and glorifies us!).
- b. **Perfect Knowledge**
 - i. **AND**, the church will exist until we all attain knowledge.
 - 1. This knowledge is the same word used in **Eph 1:17** (*knowledge* of Christ and Phil 1:9 and 2 Tim 2:25)
 - 2. This is a **real**, deep, intimate, **salvific** knowledge of God. This is not just a *knowing about who God is*.
 - ii. Until you attain not only the *perfect knowledge* you receive at salvation, but until you are **perfectly knowledgeable of the Son of God (=Christ!), the Church MUST exist**.
 - 1. Therefore, we must **preach Jesus Christ as LORD!**
- c. **Perfect Maturity**
 - i. **to a perfect man / mature, complete.**
 - ii. **And**, the church is to exist until we all attain spiritual status of maturity.

Ephesians 4:11-16 – “A Biblical Philosophy of the Church: Worship, Fellowship, and Your Role in It”

1. The word here can mean perfect, mature, one who has come to a whole, full, mature state.
 2. This perfection comes **at glorification**.
- iii. But while here, we must **be growing** in our knowledge of God and maturing in our Christian knowledge and Christian walk as we wait for that day when Christ will receive us.

d. Perfect Fullness

- i. We must serve until we all reach maturity of the fullness of Christ.
- ii. ***Therefore, do you LOVE the church? Will you go to church when you're on your own out of the house and out of your parents' waking you up on Sunday mornings?***

IV. THE PROTECTION OF THE CHURCH (14)

a. Don't be immature (14a)

- i. Paul says, the church is to exist *so that we may no longer be **infants***.
 1. an infant, incapable of taking care of himself. He is one who is dependent upon his parents (cf. Ps 8:2).
- ii. The Church must **protect** the body of believers so that they are not *immature*, “*infants*”, naïve with regard to spiritual truths.
- iii. **Note how Paul specifies *how* they could be as “infants”...**

b. Don't be deceived (14b)

- i. **As Waves of the Sea:** Don't be blown here and there by every wave of the sea tosses and turns in the ocean.
- ii. **As Wind of the Air:** Don't be carried along by every wind of teaching which comes in the craftiness of men.
- iii. **Note the 4 words of deceit here** that the Church is called to protect individuals from: craftiness, etc.
- iv. *“The greatest danger to immature faith is false doctrine”*
- v. ***Be careful what you watch on TV! Beware what you hear on the radio! Careful in many so-called ‘Christian bookstores’; Beware of so-called ‘Christian psychology’ (it’s mingling worldly wisdom w/ God’s Word).***

V. THE SUBMISSION OF THE CHURCH (15-16)

a. Submit to Christ (15)

- i. - Let us grow up *into/unto* Him (**He is the goal!**)
 1. What are we to mature in? **everything**, every single thing.
- ii. **HOW? Speaking truth in love** - being truthful in love. (note end of v.16, in love)
- iii. **How does this all work itself out?**
 1. Christ is the Head. No one else has this role. **Christ is the one to whom we MUST submit in the Church.**
- iv. ***Is Christ your head? Or are YOU the head of your life?***

b. Serve for Christ (16) — we *all* serve one another

- i. Notice that Christ is also the source of our growth (“out of whom”).

Ephesians 4:11-16 – “A Biblical Philosophy of the Church: Worship, Fellowship, and Your Role in It”

1. *As the human body receives its vitality and direction in all its parts through the joins which hold it together, unite it to its head, and make possible communication, nourishment, and coordinated action, so the church is supplied by its head with all that it requires for spiritual growth*
- ii. **This verse** talks about how the **whole body** causes the growth of the body for the *building up of itself* in love. Every single member serves!!
 1. joined together
 2. fitted together
 3. By means of every joint working with the measure that has been sovereignly granted to it.
- iii. You are to be joined together, fitted together, working together, serving together in the body of Christ so that ***the Body of Christ is built up*** to all fullness.
- iv. This is the submission and the role of the church.

CONCL-

Concluding Illustration

- **So how do you know your ROLE and your GIFT and HOW you should use it in the church?**
 - Begin by studying what the Bible has to say about Christians, your involvement in the Church, and the “One Another’s” and Using your gift in the Church body.
 - Bathe your thinking, reading, and study in prayer.
 - Make a sober assessment of your spiritual strengths and abilities (base it on Scripture, not your “feelings”). Ask questions like: “*what am I good at? What do I enjoy? Do I currently use this gift in any way? Are people blessed when I minister in this way?*”
 - Seek the wisdom of other Christians where your gifts are concerned. Ask other believers, pastors, and elders to affirm and confirm your gifts.
 - No one should be on the sidelines; but everyone is a player in this game!