

Knowing the Ministries of God

Foundational Truth Volume 9

By Peter Tan

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PREFACE

Every born-again Christian has a ministry although every born-again Christian may not be called to the fivefold ministry (Ephesians 4:11-12). The purpose of the fivefold ministry is to prepare the believers for their ministry. The essence of ministry is service and not lordship. He that desires to be the greatest of all must learn to be a servant of all (Matthew 23:11).

In this book, we seek to give some brief definitions of what is the ministry of the apostle, the prophet, the evangelist, the pastor and the teacher. Without understanding what each ministry consists of one will never be able to move into them.

The nine ministries of believers are further discussed and defined in this book. We pray that through a description and definition of each of these ministries, the body of Christ would be helped into the respective ministries that God has called each one into.

Pastor Peter Tan

CHAPTER 1

THE NINE MINISTRIES OF BELIEVERS

The Bible says that the fivefold ministries will equip the saints for the work of the ministry (Eph. 4:12). All believers have a special ministry from the Lord. Not everybody may be called to the fulltime ministry but everyone is called to some aspect of ministry. These ministries have special functions in the body of Christ different from operating in the gifts of the Holy Spirit in a meeting. Believers must both learn to operate in the gifts of the Holy Spirit as well as function in a particular ministry that God has called them to.

The nine ministries of believers represent offices or positions in the church separate and different from the fivefold ministries. The call to these nine ministries does not represent a call of God into the fulltime ministry. However, when these nine ministries serve a fivefold minister, the demands made upon their ministries may require that they devote their time fully to the work of the ministry.

The Ministry of Prophesying

The ministry of prophesying is not the ministry of a prophet. The ministry of a prophet is a special call of God into the fivefold office whereas the ministry of prophesying is only a specialized function in the gift of prophecy in the church. The ministry of prophesying may be ten thousand times stronger in anointing than the simple gift of prophecy. The ministry of a prophet could be millions of times stronger than the simple gift of prophecy.

The gift of prophecy manifests as the Holy Spirit wills in a meeting (1 Cor. 12:10, 11). The ministry of prophesying is a ministry of a believer who has been endowed with the gift of prophecy and who has made it a special and regular feature of his life and ministry. Those who have the ministry of prophesying must prophesy in proportion to their faith (Rom. 12:6).

The fact that the Bible says that they need to learn to prophesy in proportion to their faith shows that this is a ministry that can be developed and not just a gift of prophecy that comes as the Holy Spirit wills. Paul was referring to this ministry when he spoke to the Corinthians exhorting them to learn to prophesy (1 Cor. 14:24, 31).

This is to be the most prominent ministry of the church and Paul encouraged the whole Corinthian church to move into it (1 Cor. 14:5). The testimony of Jesus Christ is the Spirit of prophecy (Rev. 19:10). In the last

days, the Holy Spirit will be poured out upon menservants and maidservants and they shall prophesy (Acts 2:18). Even sons and daughters will prophesy (Acts 2:17).

The Ministry of a Deacon

Paul said that those who have the gift of ministry, let them use it in their ministering (Rom. 12:7). The word 'ministry' comes from the Greek word 'diakonia' and it refers to the deacon's ministry. This is the same ministry of serving tables to which the apostles appointed seven men (Acts 6:1-3). The ministry of a deacon is, in the fullest sense of the word, the ministry of a servant. This is a fully service-oriented ministry. It serves in the background, sometimes doing the most menial tasks. Yet the requirements to be full of the Holy Spirit are still essential (Acts 6:3).

This ministry is also called the ministry of helps (1 Cor. 12:28). It is a help to other ministries. Without the ministry of a deacon, other ministries may not be able to run smoothly. The deacon functions in running the daily routine day to day physical tasks of the church. In every organized activity of the church, there is always the need for many physical routines to be carried out. It is the deacons who have the gift of God to do all this background work.

The deacon also functions as a servant to the other fivefold ministries. Joshua functioned in the ministry of a deacon to Moses (Ex. 24:13; Jos. 1:1). Elisha functioned as a deacon to Elijah (1 Kgs. 19:21; 2 Kgs. 3:11). Paul had people who functioned in the role of a deacon, ministering to his needs (Acts 19:22). Many men of God started their ministries as deacons to other more established ministers. Jesus had women who functioned in the role of a deacon, ministering to his needs (Lk. 8:3). It takes a special grace of God to minister to men of God; some of them have such idiosyncrasies that only those with this special grace can minister to them.

Deacons work where 'the rubber hits the road.' They are at the frontier of actualizing spiritual goals through physical tasks. The evangelist comes and conducts miracle services but it is the deacons who run the day to day logistics of the meetings. They are those who bear 'the heat of the day.' It is usually the deacons who receive complaints and grumbling too. For that reason, deacons must have good control of their tongues (1 Tim. 3:8).

Deacons also serve the role as stabilizers in a ministry. Sometimes men of God are not good businessmen. They tend to be imprudent in the handling of the affairs of this life. Their zeal for God sometimes causes them to do things prematurely beyond their faith level. Their faith in God is not

tempered by sound business principles. It is the deacons who help to hold the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience (1 Tim. 3:9). They help a ministry not to expand beyond its present faith level; thus keeping to the guidance of the conscience in knowing where its faith level is (1 Tim. 1:19).

However, the deacons need to be men or women of integrity who are not greedy for money (1 Tim. 3:8). Businesslike Christians have sometimes taken advantage of the church and made money from the church. Furthermore, their prudence must be differentiated from unbelief to take a step of faith. Blessed are those ministries that have true and gifted deacons.

The Ministry of Teaching

The ministry of teaching is different from the fivefold office of a teacher. The fivefold teacher is called to teach the whole body of Christ in a fulltime ministry whereas the ministry of teaching is specific to a local body of believers. Paul told Timothy to commit what he has heard to faithful men who will be able to teach others also (2 Tim. 2:2). Paul was referring to the ministry of teaching which God has enabled some to fulfil (Rom. 12:7).

Those who have been established in the foundational principles of Christ were supposed to be matured enough to move into this ministry and teach others (Heb. 5:12). Aquila and Priscilla functioned in the ministry of a teaching believer. When Apollos, a new Christian but called into the fulltime ministry, was in Ephesus, they took him aside and explained to him the Word of God more accurately (Acts 18:26). They were leaders in the church of Christ and had a church in their own home (Rom. 16:3-5; 1 Cor. 16:19).

This is an important ministry in the local church because it is teaching that builds the local believers into their own ministries. The maturity and quality of any Christian depends largely upon the teachings that they have been brought up under. Even the fivefold office of a teacher is above the fivefold office of an evangelist and a pastor in the church (1 Cor. 12:28).

The Ministry of Exhortation

The ministry of exhortation operates in three functions: the function of a soul-winner, the function of a psalmist and the function of an intercessor. Not all who enter into the ministry of intercession functions in all these three functions. Usually, people who are gifted by the Holy Spirit in this ministry specialize in one function. Generally, this ministry is called the ministry of exhortation (Rom. 12:8).

The ministry of soul-winning is in a sense like the ministry of a fivefold evangelist except that it functions on a one-to-one basis. Jesus started his ministry in the ministry of exhortation. He was so adept at it that his name was changed by the apostles to Barnabas, which means the Son of Encouragement (Acts 4:36).

In the Bible, we see the ministry of the 'silent theys.' They are the unnamed and unknown people who brought others to be healed by Jesus. They themselves were not sick but they encouraged others to the meetings (Matt. 8:16; 9:2; 15:30). These are those with the ministry of exhortation. They bring others to the Lord or to the Lord's servants to be ministered to. It was Barnabas who helped Paul receive recognition from the apostles and also into the beginnings of Paul's ministry (Acts 9:26, 27; 11:25, 26).

The second function of the ministry of exhortation is that of a psalmist. The psalmist is an exhorter who helps others into the worship of God. The psalmist makes use of the instruments of music to aid him in his exhortation ministry. Paul instructs that we speak to one another in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in our hearts to the Lord (Eph. 5:18, 19). It was this ministry that helped Elisha to function in the prophet's anointing (2 Kgs. 3:15).

Those who are called to function in this area of ministry must be filled with the Holy Spirit and be rich in the Word of God (Eph. 5:18, 19; Col. 3:16). It is not just musical talents alone that will sustain music ministries but it is the Holy Spirit and the Word of God in the lives of the musicians that will establish them. In the gathering of believers, it is the ministry of exhortation with music that leads people in the worship of God and prepares them to receive the other fivefold ministries.

The third function of the ministry of exhortation is in intercession. The ministry of prayer is the ministry of exhortation through the spiritual realm. It brings encouragement and help to those being prayed for. It is a special labour in itself. Epaphras always laboured fervently for the Colossians in his prayers (Col. 4:12). Paul requested that the church in Rome strive together with him in the ministry through prayers (Rom. 15:30).

Many times when all else fails, we can still apply the spiritual principles of prayer to encourage and help a person. Intercessors working together with soul-winners will bring a great harvest of souls into the kingdom of God. Jesus, foreseeing the fall of Peter, comforted him by saying that he has prayed for his restoration (Lk. 22:32). Ninety percent of church problems can be solved by prayer. It is the prayerless church that seeks to solve problems by human wisdom.

The Ministry of Giving

This is the special gift of God to be a Christian entrepreneur. God has called some in the church to function as businessmen to harvest financial prosperity for the support of the church of Jesus Christ. The Bible calls this the ministry of giving (Rom. 12:8). Those who have this gift should learn all the principles of prosperity as given in the Bible and specialize in them.

The Spirit of wisdom works powerfully in this gift to give ideas, methods and inventions that will bring in the wealth of the world into the hands of believers. It was the wisdom of Joseph that brought him a place in Pharaoh's administration. Joseph could have interpreted Pharaoh's dream and stop there. But the gift of wisdom in his life helped him proposed a plan to Pharaoh of conserving the grain in the first seven years of plenty (Gen. 41:25-36). It was the advice of Joseph that impressed Pharaoh and his servants (Gen 41:37).

It is never a money problem that people face. It is an idea problem. If people have the right ideas as to where to and how to generate the funds, there would be no money problems. The best ideas always come from God through the wisdom available from the Holy Spirit. This ministry of giving can bring forth some of the best ideas, plans and inventions that the world has never seen before. It is predetermined by God that the wealth of the sinner comes into the hands of the righteous (Pro. 13:22).

The Christian entrepreneur should bring in all the wealth that God has brought into his hands to the work of the ministry of God. The purpose of this gift is not that such people should spend the rest of their lives in uncontrolled luxury. The finances that God has enabled them to bring in are to be spent in the perfection of the body of Christ and in bringing the gospel to every creature.

The Ministry of Administration

This ministry is also called the ministry of leading (Rom. 12:8). In the book of Corinthians, this ministry is called the ministry of administration (1 Cor. 12:28). It comes from the Greek word 'kuber' which means 'to steer, pilot or direct.' Every time human beings congregate they need appropriate organization. The world recognizes this and places high value on good organizers. At the Tower of Babel, communication breakdown made organization impossible causing the work on the Tower of Babel to be abandoned (Gen. 11:8, 9).

The ministry of administration, however, does not rely on natural wisdom or skills. It is a gift imparted by the Holy Spirit and is based on totally different principles and concepts. It is the ability given by the Holy Spirit to place the right people in their right place of function. Barnabas demonstrated this gift when he went to Tarsus to seek Paul to assist in the church of Antioch (Acts 11:25, 26).

In Egypt, Joseph ably demonstrated this gift so that everywhere he went, he was placed in a position of leadership. He was placed in church of Potiphar's household (Gen. 39:4). While in prison, Joseph was placed in charge of the prisoners; whatever they did, it was his doing (Gen. 39:22). Finally, he rose to be the chief administrator of Egypt (Gen. 41:40).

There are two important keys in leadership. True leadership must be leadership by precept and by example. Jesus' leadership in the body of Christ was by precept and by example. He gave us his teachings. And he gave us His example (Jn. 13:15). Paul's leadership was by precept and by example (Acts 20:27, 35). He advised Timothy to lead the church by precept and by example (1 Tim. 4:12).

The Ministry of Mercy

This is the ministry to the poor, needy and destitute. It is bringing the love of God in a practical way to those in need. This ministry demonstrates the love and the mercy of God. Therefore, it is called the ministry of showing mercy (Rom. 12:8). There are three particular groups of people that God has especially pointed out as worthy of receiving mercy. They are the strangers, the fatherless and the widows (Deut. 24:19-21).

The early church had a ministry to the poor and to the widows. Seven deacons were specially chosen to take care of the widows (Acts 6:1-6). When Paul was given the right hand of fellowship, he was exhorted to remember the poor (Gal. 2:10). The sharing of worldly goods and blessings has always been part of the revival of love that the Holy Spirit brings (Acts 4:34-37; 11:28-30). The abundance of one Christian could be meant for the need of another (2 Cor. 8:14, 15).

This ministry need to be guided by sound biblical principles. It is not the mere show of sympathy and physical help to the poor. It is possible to give without love (1 Cor. 13:3). There are two key principles that must guide this ministry. Help must be rendered only based on the capacity of the helper to do so (2 Cor. 8:12). Secondly, the physical help rendered must lead the recipient to a closer relationship with God. If both these principles are not adhered to, it is not the ministry of mercy. It would be mere sympathy.

Many people have allowed their zeal to help others destroy their own lives and families. Some people have got into great financial debt because of standing surety for others. Others have loaned hard-earned money without the possibility of recovery. There will always be more people to be helped than we have the capacity to handle. Help must only be given based on our ability to help. The helper must not be allowed to be overburdened himself (2 Cor. 8:12, 13). Even then, the people worthy of help must first meet the second principle.

Not everybody who asks for money is worthy to be helped. In Christendom, there are professional ‘leeches’ who live off the sympathy of other Christians. If a person is not willing to work, the person should not eat (2 Thess. 3:10). A person who does not work to support their family is worse than an infidel (1 Tim. 5:8). If we support such a habit in another, we are answerable to God for keeping and encouraging a person to remain in their condition.

The ministry of mercy is rendered not to those capable of working but rather to those who are in conditions where they are completely helpless. Paul instructed that only widows who are truly without relatives and who trusted God, spending time with God day and night, are worthy to be helped (1 Tim. 5:5). Those who live in pleasure are not to be helped (1 Tim. 5:6). The principles for helping the poor and the destitute are clearly defined here. Only those who have trusted the Lord and who have sought God need to be helped. In helping them, we become the answer to their prayers. God will reward us for allowing Him to use us to answer a prayer (Pro. 19:17).

The Ministry of Healing

God has called the church as a healing body to a sick, suffering and dying world. There are fivefold ministries that God has called to demonstrate the healing gifts of God. There are also believers upon whom God has placed healing gifts to minister to the local body of Christ. It is a part of the ministry of an elder (Jam. 5:14). In fact, the ministry of an elder (which in the Bible typifies the ministry of a fivefold pastor), includes also the ministry of teaching and the ministry of administration (1 Tim. 5:17; Tit. 1:9).

It is possible to function in one of these nine ministries of believers without being in the fivefold ministries. On the other hand, those called to the fivefold ministries are required to operate in some of the gifts of the Holy Spirit and function in some of the nine ministries of believers. There is a distinction between the gifts of healings, the ministry of healing and the

office of an evangelist (Evangelists are also known as workers of miracles) (1 Cor. 12:28, 29).

This ministry of healing is referred to be the phrase ‘gifts of healings’ in Corinthians (1 Cor. 12:28). Those with this ministry usually function within the local body of believers. This ministry is a further development from the simple gift of the gifts of healings. It has the same furtherance of development as the ministry of prophesying has over the simple gift of prophecy.

The Ministry of Tongues and Interpretation

Paul referred to this ministry when he spoke about the varieties of tongues in the church (1 Cor. 12:28). This is a special ministry given by God both to deliver a message in an unknown tongue and to interpret it. Sometimes it can even be delivered in a song. The function of both the two gifts of the Holy Spirit together equals to the ministry of prophecy (1 Cor. 14:5).

In India, there is a certain lady who has written a whole book based on this ministry. Her book was a compilation of the interpretation of tongues that she received. She would speak in tongues for hours and then she would speak the interpretation forth. She had someone record it all for her. I have read her book and it edified me.

The church today has not seen the development of this ministry much. Men of God have admitted that they have edified themselves privately by tongues and interpretation. Imagine the impact if that becomes a ministry in the local body. It may be rare today to see prophecies that are one hour long or tongues and interpretation that are one hour long. In the New Testament days, this phenomenon was probably normal.

CHAPTER 2 THE FIVEFOLD MINISTRIES

God has placed the fivefold ministries in the church to perfect the body of Christ (Eph. 4:11, 12). Without the fivefold ministries, the church of Jesus Christ on planet earth will never be perfected. Through the fivefold ministries, the church will reach the full stature of Jesus Christ and be no longer tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine that comes (Eph. 4:13, 14).

The Qualifications of the Fivefold

Those who stand in the fivefold ministries are equipped and qualified by God to function by a combination of the gifts of the Holy Spirit and the nine ministries of believers. There are different combinations for each office of the fivefold. Of course, character qualifications are also essential for the successful fulfilment of the call of God in the fivefold ministry.

The fivefold ministries have also been referred to as the five ministry gifts of Christ (Eph. 4:7-11). Being gifts in the fullest sense of the word, it is possible for a person, called to the fivefold ministries, to function in their respective offices without proper character development. The ministry gifts, like other gifts, are given based on grace and not on works.

Jesus Christ in the Fivefold Ministries

Jesus Christ functioned in the fivefold ministries when He was on this planet earth: He was an apostle (Heb. 3:1), He was a prophet (Mk. 6:4; Acts 3:22-26), He was an evangelist (Mk. 1:14), He was a pastor (Jn. 10:11), and He was a teacher (Mk. 4:1, 2; Jn. 3:2). When Jesus Christ ascended to be seated at the right hand of God, He imparted these ministry gifts to the church (Eph. 4:10, 11). The anointing that He carried was left on this earth with the church.

Some men of God function in more than one office. The apostle Paul functioned in three offices. He was an apostle, an evangelist and a teacher (2 Tim. 1:11). The fivefold ministries are a direct reflection of the ministry of Jesus Christ. The only reason why we have not seen a ministry like Jesus' is that very few men of God stand in all five offices like Jesus did.

The Ministry of an Apostle

There are two types of apostles mentioned in the Bible. There are the twelve apostles of the Lamb (Rev. 21:14). These are the original twelve

apostles chosen by the Lord Jesus Christ except for Matthias, who replaced Judas Iscariot. The qualifications for these twelve are that they must have been with Jesus physically from the baptism of John until His ascension (Acts 1:21, 22).

The apostle Paul would not have qualified under this category because he had not been physically with Jesus in His life and ministry. However, Paul did meet the Lord Jesus after His resurrection (1 Corinthians 11:23; 15:8). As true apostles function as part of the church foundation stone of which Jesus is the chief cornerstone, they would need to be equipped by an encounter with the resurrected Jesus or at the minimum receive a foundational revelation from Jesus for the church (Ephesians 2:20; 3:5).

The second type of apostle can be classified as the Pauline type of apostle. These are individuals called and sent by God to a nation, tribe or race to establish churches. Paul was called to the Gentiles whereas Peter was called to the Jews (Gal. 2:8). The distinct mark of being a church builder must be eminent (1 Cor. 3:6, 10). Sometimes people claim to be in the apostolic ministry without having started even a single church. In conversing with them, I find that they can never offer any help as far as the apostolic ministry is concerned because they don't understand the intricacies involved in starting a church.

Moreover, the ministry of an apostle does not just consist of knowing the principles of church planting. It also requires special signs and wonders to be demonstrated. A good fivefold teacher could probably teach on some of these principles. However, to stand in the apostolic ministry, one has to have the signs and wonders of an apostle (2 Cor. 12:12). The apostle must be equipped with the power gifts of the Holy Spirit; especially the gift of faith and the working of miracles.

In addition to the power gifts, the apostle must have the revelation gifts of the Holy Spirit functioning in his ministry. Paul said that the mystery of Christ, which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, has now been revealed to the apostles and to the prophets (Eph. 3:5). In view of his leadership position, an apostle also needs to have functioning in his life the ministry of administration.

Apostles have a certain measure of authority over the churches they started but they have completely no authority over churches which they have not started (1 Cor. 9:1, 2, 11, 12). It was the apostles who appointed the seven deacons after they were selected by the congregation (Acts 6:3, 6). Paul and Barnabas were the ones who appointed elders over the churches they started (Acts 14:23).

God has always appointed men to be in charge over His work and not just an organization. People who fear an abuse of authority should realize that it is not the system that is at fault but rather the men within the system. Christ's system of organization is such that He is the sole authority. The system of government in the Bible is very clear. The only problem is that the character of leaders sometimes does not measure up to the responsibility and authority designated for them. May God grant us men and women leaders whose characters match up with their delegated authority in the church of God.

The Ministry of a Prophet

The New Testament prophet does not function in the same manner as the Old Testament prophet. In the New Testament, prophets are only to confirm the direction that believers have already received in their lives. Prophets complement the ministry of an apostle in establishing a church (Acts 11:27-30; 15:32, 40, 41).

Sometimes people have the impression that prophets are lone hermits with long beards, mean-looking faces, and who speak with rasp voices with a constant 'Thus saith the Lord.' In the Bible, prophets seem to travel in groups and work closely with local church bodies. Agabus came with a group of prophets to Antioch (Acts 11:27,28). He was only one of many who came to Antioch. The Antioch church itself has a group of prophets and teachers who worked closely together (Acts 13:1).

Prophets, like apostles, are required to function in the revelations gifts of the Holy Spirit (Eph. 3:5). In the Old Testament, the prophet was often called a seer because he was supposed to be regularly operating in the revelation gifts (1 Sam. 9:9). The impact of a prophet's ministry is most felt when he operates in the word of wisdom (Acts 11:28; 21:10, 11). The simple gift of prophecy imparts no revelation but a prophet operating the word of wisdom imparts many predictive confirmations.

It is also a requirement for prophets to operate in the vocal gifts of the Holy Spirit especially the gift of prophecy (1 Cor. 14:31, 32). Prophets need to be familiar with the ministry of exhortation and the ministry of prophesying (Acts 15:32). Since the anointing of the ministry of prophesying is similar in a low degree to the ministry of a prophet, it would be the natural platform for budding prophets to learn of their ministry (1 Cor. 14:31, 32). Elijah needed a musician to move into his prophetic anointing (2 Kgs. 3:15). One of the aspects of the ministry of exhortation, as

seen earlier, is that of a psalmist. Music and the ministry of prophesying are closely related (1 Sam. 10:5; 1 Chron. 25:2,3).

The Ministry of an Evangelist

The ministry of an evangelist has also been called the workers of miracles (1 Cor. 12:29). Evangelists by virtue of their call are itinerant. They go from place to place especially where the gospel has never been preached to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ. They work together with apostles to establish a church (Acts 8:4-25). It is a definite requirement for them to exercise the power gifts of the Holy Spirit. The gospel must be preached in mighty signs and wonders by the power of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 15:19).

Evangelists need to also learn to flow in the ministry of exhortation and the ministry of teaching. They may not be anointed to teach in the same manner as one called to the fivefold office of a teacher but they need to be able to teach the basics of the gospel. Philip the evangelist preached the things of the kingdom of God and the Name of Jesus Christ (Acts 8:12). In many places, unless some basic teaching is done, the grapple of unbelief will block the power of God from demonstrating. Those who work miracles do so by the hearing of faith (Gal. 3:5). For faith to come some basic knowledge of the Word of God must be imparted.

The full-fledged evangelist should proclaim all the five aspects of the gospel. In fact, the word 'evangelist' (euangelistes) comes from the same Greek word as the word 'gospel' (euangelion). Evangelists should be carriers of the gospel (Mk. 16:15-18; Lk. 4:18,19). The message they bring reveal different aspects of Christ as follows:

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|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Salvation from sin and sins | Our Saviour |
| 2. Baptism in the Holy Spirit | Our Baptizer |
| 3. Healing, casting out devils | Our Healer and Deliverer |
| 4. Jubilee (Lev. 25:8-17, 39-41) | Our Provider |
| 5. Kingdom of God | Our Coming King |

Philip preached Christ to the Samaritans (Acts 8:5, 12).

One of the aspects of the ministry of exhortation is soul winning, which is a mini-scale of the ministry of an evangelist. Many evangelists started from the platform of soul winners in the local body of believers. The anointing is similar except that the office of an evangelist is millions of times stronger than the ministry of exhortation. The evangelist proclaims while the teacher explains. May God raise up many more such workers of miracles in these last days.

The Ministry of a Pastor

The word 'pastor' occurs only once in the English translation of the Bible but it is translated shepherd in other passages where the same Greek word 'poimen' is used (Eph. 4:11; Jn. 10:11-16). Pastors are the local shepherds in the local churches. In the writings of the New Testament, they are more popularly called 'elders' and 'bishops.' Bishops, as defined in the Bible, appears to be the leader of a group of elders but the words 'bishop' and 'elder' have been used interchangeably (Tit. 1:5,7; 1 Tim. 3:1,2; 5:17; Acts 20:17,28).

As the vocal gifts are most prominent at the grassroot level in the local church, pastors would be required to exercise the vocal gifts of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 14:26, 31, 39). It was the pastors who form the presbytery to lay hands on Timothy (1 Tim. 4:14). The word 'presbytery' and the word 'elder' come from the same Greek word 'presbuteros.' It was this group of pastors who came together and laid hands of Timothy and prophesied over him (1 Tim. 4:14). Pastors need to learn to operate in the vocal gifts.

In the listing of the qualifications of elders and bishops, we can see that to stand in the office of a pastor, a person needs to be familiar with three of the nine ministries of believers. Although he may not be anointed to teach as a fivefold teacher, he needs to be strong in the ministry of teaching (1 Tim. 3:2). A pastor must be able to exhort and convict those who contradict by sound doctrine in the Word of God (Tit. 1:9).

Secondly, the pastor must be familiar with the ministry of administration. Although he need not function in it as an apostle does, by virtue of his leadership role, he would have to operate in this ministry. For this reason, Paul said that a pastor must be able to administrate his household well before he administrates the church of God (1 Tim. 3:4, 5; Titus 1:6).

Thirdly, a pastor must be familiar with the ministry of healing. He may not operate in it as the apostle or evangelist does but it is to him that all the demands for the healing ministry will be directed to (Jam. 5:14). He must be able to pray the prayer of faith for the sick and minister healing to the local body of Christ.

The Ministry of a Teacher

Although this ministry is listed last in the book of Ephesians, it is not the least (Eph. 4:11). In the church of Jesus Christ, the ministry of a teacher is above the ministry of an evangelist or the ministry of a pastor. It is listed third after the ministry of an apostle and the ministry of a prophet (1 Cor. 12:28). Paul was referring to the ministry of the fivefold teacher in the church whereas in the book of Ephesians, he was referring to the fivefold ministries as sent forth to the world.

It is the teaching ministry that brings a church to maturity. After the conversion of about three thousand souls, the church in Jerusalem continued steadfastly in the apostle's doctrine and fellowship (Acts 2:42). Young Christians need to be grounded in sound doctrinal teaching. It was the teaching ministry that built the Antioch church to its stature as a strong missionary church (Acts 11:26; 13:1).

It is the teaching ministry of Paul that prepared the way for a great move of God in Ephesus. Paul was teaching day and night for two years in the school of Tyrannus (Acts 19:9, 10). Can you imagine teaching seminars in one place going on for three hundred and sixty-five days times two? Yet Paul taught the Word of God daily. Paul was also called to the fivefold office of a teacher (2 Tim. 1:11). As a result of the teaching of the Word of God, all of Asia Minor heard the Word of God (Acts 19:10). A mighty move of the Holy Spirit followed where God did special signs and wonders by the hands of Paul (Acts 19:11, 12).

Jesus Himself placed teaching above healing. When multitudes pressed about Him to be healed, He got into a boat so that He could teach them the Word (Lk. 5:1; 6:17-19). He knew that they needed His teaching as much as they needed healing. Jesus said that heaven and earth will pass away but His words will never pass away (Lk. 21:33).

The office of a fivefold teacher is not limited by any requirement to operate any group of spiritual gifts. The fivefold teacher can operate in any group of the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit. Among the nine ministries of believers, the fivefold teacher must be familiar with the ministry of teaching and the ministry of exhortation. These two anointings are related to the teaching anointing in a small way. Although the office of a teacher has an anointing millions of times stronger than the ministry of teaching, it is the usual platform for the fivefold teacher to start in.

Paul exhorted in his writings that the Colossians be rich in the Word of God, teaching and admonishing one another in the Lord (Col. 3:16). There is a relationship between the teaching anointing and the anointing to exhort and admonish. Not all exhortation may contain teaching but all teaching will

always exhort. Teaching unveils truths that were seen darkly before and spurs us on with renewed zeal in our Christian walk. The teaching ministry of Apollos greatly helped those who had believed through grace (Acts 18:27).

CHAPTER 3

VARYING DEGREES OF GRACE AND OPERATIONS

All the operations of the various ministries are the result of God's grace upon our lives. Paul said that the gifts would differ according to the grace that is given to us (Rom. 12:6). When Peter, James and John extended the right hand of fellowship to Paul, they perceived that the grace of God has been given to Paul for apostleship to the Gentiles (Gal. 2:9). There are three different areas of grace: salvation grace, ministry grace and operation grace.

Three Areas of Grace

Many Christians are familiar with salvation grace. All Christians receive the same measure of salvation grace when they are born again (Eph. 2:8). Grace is given not based on our works or merit but rather based on God's love and mercy on our lives. By His grace we are made heirs and joint heirs with Christ.

Ministry grace is grace that is granted to us to perform a ministry or work for Him. God grants differing grace to each individual according to His predestined plan that He has designed for our lives. Paul recognized that it was by the grace of God that he carried out his ministry (1 Cor. 15:10). It is not men who set us in the spiritual offices. God is the one who appoints the various ministries (1 Cor. 12:28). Paul said that he was called even before he was born (Gal. 1:15, 16). In fact, God has chosen us and predestined us even before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4, 5). The doctrine of predestination will be covered in greater detail in Volume Thirteen of this Foundational Truths Series.

Up to this point, it is sufficient for us to know that it is God who makes the decision as to what we should do in this life. Our only choice is to choose to obey Him or to disobey Him. After all, God is our Creator and we can trust in His infinite wisdom. Those who find it difficult to accept are merely struggling with the human pride of independence.

Before we met God, we thought that we could do it all by ourselves; we thought that we were smarter than God. God knows more about us than we know ourselves. We need to humble ourselves to do God's perfect Will for our lives; whether it is in the limelight or in the background, recognized or unrecognized, for our reward is in heaven. We can trust that God's choice is the best for us for two reasons: He loves us with all that is within Him to the extent of giving us His son and He is infinitely wise.

As God has determined His Will for our lives, He imparts to us His grace to perform His Will. The grace of God is not just unmerited favour. Grace is an impartation of His ability and gift within us. It is a tangible impartation to our spirits. Paul said that it was not just him who laboured but the grace of God with him (1 Cor. 15:10). God said that His grace was sufficient for Paul, and that His strength was made perfect in his weakness (2 Cor. 12:9).

The word 'grace' has been used interchangeably with the word 'strength.' In the Old Covenant, grace was unmerited favour; in the New Covenant grace, is both unmerited favour and a spiritual commodity. Timothy was told to be strong in the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ (2 Tim. 2:1). Grace is imparted into our human spirits to enable us by the gifts of God to perform His Will. Ministry grace imparted in differing ways and measures will enable us to function in the various ministries of God (Rom. 12:6).

Operation grace is the prerogative of God as to how He wants to work through each vessel. There are diversities of activities (operations) but it is the same God who works all things (1 Cor. 12:6). It is our responsibility to hear from God and obey Him. It is God's prerogative as to the method He uses to speak to us. We cannot tell God how to speak to us. It is God's right to choose whatever method He pleases. When God chooses a particular method to speak to His vessels, He is working different areas of operation grace.

Sometimes God chooses to speak to His vessels through visions and revelations. Many of God's Old Testament prophets were accustomed to seeing visions. However, in His method of working with Nehemiah, there is not a single record of a vision. Yet, Nehemiah was in the perfect Will of God building the walls of Jerusalem. Neither do we hear of King David receiving visions. Yet we read about him singing, saying that he foresaw the Lord always before his face (Ps. 16:8). God's operation in David's life was different from Samuel the prophet. David was called a prophet (Acts 2:30).

There are no two prophets that are exactly alike in operation. Paul and Barnabas were called to the apostleship but their mode of ministry varies (Acts 13:2). Paul seemed to excel in the forefront of teaching while Barnabas seemed to be in the background doing follow-up work. God's operation grace working in and through each man or woman of God will be different. There can sometimes be certain similarities, like Elijah and Elisha, when there is transference of anointing. However, each minister must wait on God to determine God's modus operandi in his life.

Developments in Ministries

After we have determined God's operation grace in our lives, we need to realize that operation grace will vary and change according to the phases in our ministries that God has predetermined. The purposes of the various phases that God has designed for each life has been discussed further in the book 'The Anointing of the Holy Spirit.' At each phase in our lives and ministries, God will work and operate differently in increasing levels of ministry grace and operation grace.

Philip the evangelist started in his ministry as a deacon (Acts 6:5). From his appointment as a deacon, an increased measure of ministry grace and operation grace were manifested in his life. The same was true also of Stephen (Acts 6:8). When the scattering of Christians took place, Philip left for Samaria (Acts 8:1, 4, 5). It was at Samaria that Philip's ministry took on another new phase. God operated greatly in his life through the working of miracles (Acts 8:6). He experienced receiving instructions from an angel and being translated to a different locality (Acts 8:26, 39). From that time onwards, he preached in many cities until he entered his final phase where he settled in Caesarea (Acts 8:40; 21:8).

Paul started his ministry differently. He sincerely thought that he was serving God when he imprisoned the 'Christian heretics' (Acts 22:3). He was sincere but he was ignorant and wrong (1 Tim. 1:13). When he came into the truth, he started to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. He experienced rejection both in Damascus and Jerusalem (Acts 9:22, 23, 29). It was not time for him to begin his ministry.

He went back to his home town in Tarsus where he spent about ten silent years (Acts 9:30). He was unknown by face and had no recognized ministry (Gal. 1:22). It was preparation time. Finally after the long wait upon the Lord, Barnabas brought Paul the news that there was an open door for him to minister in Antioch (Acts 11:25, 26). At that time, Paul entered the first phase of his ministry. The ministry grace and operation grace in his life at that time was only in the teaching ministry.

After about one to two years in the church of Antioch, in a prayer meeting, Paul entered into his second phase of ministry (Acts 13:1-3). A greater measure of ministry grace was imparted upon his life. The operation grace in his life also seems different. At the island of Cyprus, he operated a sign against Elymas the sorcerer (Acts 13:8-12). In this phase, God worked many miracles, wonders and signs in his ministry (Acts 15:12).

In his third phase, Paul now had the right hand of fellowship of the Jerusalem church. God had granted him more favour and grace. He carried the decrees determined by the elders and apostles to all the churches he

planted; strengthening them (Acts 16:4). In this phase, God opened a new door to the Gentiles through the Macedonian call (Acts 16:9, 10). He also separated from Barnabas, his companion and close friend, at the beginning of the third phase (Acts 15:39-41). Paul reached the great centres of the Gentile world in his third phase. He brought the gospel to Philippi, Thessalonica, Athens and Corinth.

In his fourth phase, Paul established a teaching centre in the school of Tyrannus (Acts 19:9, 10). God also confirmed the preaching and obedience of Paul by greater measures of ministry grace and operation grace. God worked special signs and wonders by the hands of Paul (Acts 19:11). Paul remained in Ephesus for an actual period of three years (Acts 20:31). His ministry spread through all of Asia Minor in his fourth phase.

Paul's last and fifth phase of his ministry was the most difficult. He was a prisoner most of the time and had to stand in judgment before rulers and authorities (Acts 20:23; 23:11; 24:10; 25:12; 26:1). Yet this was the final fulfilment of the prophecy upon his life - that he will bear the Name of Jesus before kings (Acts 9:15). There were many lonely periods in his fifth phase (2 Tim. 4:16).

However, this was the most important phase of Paul's life. Paul wrote most of his epistles during this fifth phase. Paul through his writings have reached across the corridors of time and changed and transformed the lives of innumerable Christians and saints. Only in heaven can we know the impact and extent of the fifth phase of Paul's ministry. His fifth phase was the loneliest but it reached the most people.

We need to be sensitive to the impartation of ministry grace in our lives as well as to God's operation grace. God rewards us according to our faithfulness to His individual plans for our lives. He does not reward us by comparing our lives with one another but rather by comparing our lives with the written plan He has for our lives. Be faithful to His Will for your life.

CHAPTER 4

LEARNING FROM

THE MINISTERS OF GOD

No one can come into the full measure of God's ministry in their lives without learning from other established ministries around them. In every age, God has always placed His fivefold ministers in His church although they may not be called under their respective ministries. It is in God's intention that the church be perfected through the fivefold ministries (Eph. 4:11-14). The fivefold ministries for the next generation learn from the previous generation and continue the work of equipping the whole body of Christ.

In learning from other ministries, we need to know certain principles and guidelines. Without guidelines, we may end up following a previous generation in their errors of doctrine and practice. It is God's Will that the next generation encompass all the revelations and anointings that He has released in the previous generation; and move on into a greater revelation and a greater anointing. The failure to do so may mean a retraining program for the new generation in the things that the previous one had experienced.

Differentiating Principles from Personalities

Each man of God has his own personality quirk. The problem with many followers of his ministry is that they sometimes do not differentiate between the personality traits of the man of God and the principles he has applied. Wholesale copying of his ministry may mean a repetition of the mistakes he has made. God forbids that this should be. The most important points to harness from a ministry are the principles that the man of God has unveiled.

All methodology is based on principles. People who blindly follow a method of the previous generation end up losing the revelation behind the method. Without the same revelation, they are also in no position to improve upon the methods handed to them. The great denominational attitudes of established ecclesiastical Christianity are an evidence of this. Denominations are formed when the new generation takes over the rigmaroles of churchianity without the revelation of the previous generation. Any great move of God can become a new denomination when this happens.

Christians who want to learn from an established minister must find out the principles behind all the methodology used by the man of God. Methods can change but principles applied remain constant. Christians should reject any method that arises out of the personality quirks of a minister. Do not have a negative attitude to any minister of God. Test all things and hold fast to that which is good (1 Thess. 5:21).

Differentiating Revelation from Opinions

Every minister who stands in the fivefold ministry carries a particular revelation to the body of Christ. Sometimes this revelation is mixed up with opinions held by the minister of God. Christians must learn to differentiate between the revelation God has called the man of God to bring forth to the body of Christ and the personal opinions of the man of God. Failure to do so may perpetuate doctrinal error.

All revelation must pass three tests: it must be in line with the written Word of God, it must glorify the Lord Jesus Christ and it must bear fruit in the life of the minister. The written Word of God is the sole authority for all doctrine and practice (2 Tim 3:16). Any so-called revelation, whether by spectacular visions or thunderbolts, must have scriptural basis. The purpose of all revelation is the exaltation of the Lord Jesus Christ (Jn. 16:13, 14). All true revelation will bear the fruit of holiness, love and righteousness in the life of the minister of God (Matt. 7:20; 1 Jn. 3:6-9).

Each time you hear a teaching from any established minister, don't just swallow everything. Judge all teachings by the written Word of God. This does not mean that we are rejecting a minister but rather we are following what Jesus said by putting His Word first in our lives (Lk. 21:33).

Any man of God who refuses to be subjected to the test of God's written Word is not worth hearing. He is a law unto himself and borders on cultic attitudes. If he is not checked, he can go into extreme practices since there is no written Word to which he adheres to. All sincere men of God, with true revelations from God, will be humble enough to be subjected to the test of the written Word of God. No man, no ministry, no vision nor revelation is above the written Word of God.

Transference of Mantles

If we have to discover all revelations and truths by ourselves, we may be hoary headed by the time we are ready to be used by God. Some of the principles and revelations that men of God have discovered took umpteen years to perfect and comprehend. If we are open to their ministries, we can receive it from them and start operating in those same areas in a much shorter time. This is the purpose for having a teachable attitude and learning from all available ministers.

Joshua sat under the wings of Moses for many years until it was time for him to start his ministry. Before he died, Moses laid hands on him and imparted the Spirit of wisdom upon him (Deut. 34:9). From that time

onwards, he moved in the miraculous realm like Moses. The River Jordan parted for him as the Red Sea parted for Moses. He stopped the sun and wrought a great victory for God's people.

Transference of the anointing will be more effective when one has sat under the ministry of a chosen vessel of God. Elisha was close with the prophet Elijah for about ten years before he ventured to ask for the double portion of anointing (2 Kgs. 2:9). His ministry became twice as powerful as Elijah's.

When the seven deacons were laid hands upon by the apostles, they also received an impartation of the anointing upon the apostles. We read of two of them performing signs and wonders, very much like the apostles, only after the laying on of hands (Acts 5:12;6:6,8;8:6). The anointing is transferable. The mantles and anointings of previous generations were never intended to terminate with their departure. It was supposed to be continued and enhanced by the new generation. However, because of a lack of teaching in this area, mantles and anointings have ceased after their manifestation to the body of Christ.

The level and type of anointing received depends on four factors: the spiritual office of the minister we sit under, the closeness of the association with the minister, the hunger level of the recipient and the call of God in our lives. This is covered in greater detail in the book 'The Anointing of the Holy Spirit.' Different ministers carry different anointings. Some stand in more than one spiritual office.

At this point, we merely want to emphasize on the fact that if we are not called to a particular ministry, no amount of hand-laying can place us into it. However, if we are called to a similar office as a minister (as Elijah and Elisha were both called to the same office), the anointing imparted upon our lives through transference can increase our ministry manifold. The increase is even greater when we also understand fully the principles which the minister had operated under.

Nevertheless, even if we do not stand in the same office as a minister, we can receive an enhancement of our anointings to a certain degree, through the transference of the anointing. For example, if we are only called to be pastors and an evangelist imparts an anointing upon our lives, the healing anointing in our lives is enhanced. Transference can never place us into offices which God has not called us to but it can enhance any of the operation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit and the nine ministries of believers in which we are operating.