

SPIRIT OF LIFE MINISTRIES
MINISTRY SCHOOL
SESSION 51 – THE CHURCH PART 2

THE PURPOSES OF THE CHURCH

Ephesians 3:21 - ***"Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen". The ultimate purpose of the church is to bring honor and glory to its head – Jesus Christ.*** It does this as it fulfills its two purposes related to God's program for the world.

1. ***The first purpose*** of the church, as it relates to the world is ***evangelism***. This program is spelled out in the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19, 20), which has never been rescinded. This program is to "teach all nations." The way this is to be done is **twofold**:
 - A. by ***baptizing them*** in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."
 1. Water Baptism is not an optional afterthought. It is a vital part of evangelism and making disciples. By baptism, one indicates that he has been identified with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection (that is, he is a member of the universal church, the Body of Christ) and wishes to be identified with the local church. A responsible parent not only brings a child into the world, but also provides what is necessary for the child's growth. So, in the church, teaching must accompany evangelism, so that the child of God can learn all that God expects of him and has provided for him. True water baptism is by immersion, not by sprinkling. In the Old Testament they sprinkled the blood of the sacrifice on the altar. Jesus was our example of true water baptism. He was immersed in the river by John the Baptist.

2. Baptism in the Holy Spirit. This is a vital part of the Christian's walk. John the Baptist said there was one coming after him that would baptize you with the Holy Ghost fire. Jesus said in Acts 1:8 "***But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth***". This power to be a witness is absolutely necessary for a Christian to be able to be a personal evangelist to others. It also opens the door to all of the other spiritual gifts listed in I Corinthians 12.
- B. ***Teaching them*** to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." The Church is to teach us the doctrine (teachings) of Jesus Christ, along with the authority of the believer through the teachings of the Epistles written by Paul, John, and Peter. Without these being taught the average Christian remains powerless in his or her walk. Many struggle daily because they haven't been taught.

2. The ***second purpose*** of the church as it relates to the world is **edification**. According to Ephesians 4:12, the saints need to be edified (built up) for **two** reasons:
 - A. "**for the perfecting of the saints**" We are to be taught so we can come into maturity. So many Christians are still drinking milk when they should be eating meat.
 - B. and "**for the work of the ministry.**" The believers who compose the church's membership need to be built up so that they may realize all that God has provided for Christian living and that they may come to spiritual maturity. They also need to be equipped to perform that work in the Body of Christ that God wants them to perform. In a very real sense, each member of the church is to be a Christian worker so

that the work that God wants to perform through the local church can be accomplished.

THE OFFICES OF THE CHURCH

The New Testament uses many terms to describe the leadership of the church:

1. **Elder** which comes from the Greek word presbuteros which places emphasis upon the authority that the leadership has to teach or rule in the church; an elder must be able to teach, and rule, or direct their people. Pastors are elders, but not all elders are Pastors. Elders (PASTORS) that rule well, are worthy of double honour according to 1 Timothy 5:17. This speaks of money. Verse 18 tells us that the laborer is worthy of his hire.

2. **Bishop** which comes from the Greek word Episkopos which means **overseer**, which emphasizes the fact the leadership is charged with overseeing the “local church” and as such is responsible for the spiritual well-being of the church; They are not to be a novice, for pride will come if they are put into a position where they can get puffed up. Many churches call their Pastors “Bishop”. They are synonymous. See the qualifications that are in 1 Timothy 3:1-7

3. **Pastor**, which comes from the Greek word poimen which means shepherd, which places emphasis upon the responsibility of those in leadership to do for the sheep what they cannot do for themselves, and to make sure that they are in good spiritual condition so that they can do what comes naturally, that is, beget other sheep; A pastor is a sheep, but also a shepherd. Jesus is our chief Shepherd, or Pastor. A Pastor looks out for the sheep to make sure that sheep in wolves clothing do not hurt those in his flock.

4. **Deacon**, which comes from the Greek word diakonos – to minister, which places emphasis upon being a servant. They are to minister to or serve those whom the Lord has put under their care. Deacons are appointed by the people in the Church, according to Acts 6. They must be of honest report, full of the Holy

Ghost, and wisdom. In I Timothy 3:8 it says they are not be two-faced, or double-tongued, they are to be grave, or serious minded, not after filthy lucre, or money. They must first be proved, or tested, to be found blameless. Deacons are not the same as bishops. Some churches have deacons that are put in positions of leadership or ruler ship, but this is not Biblical. Deacons are to be workers, and servants. They can become an Elder in time, but deacons are not to be “rulers”. They come under submission of the Pastor, not the other way around. Deacons are to be in spiritual harmony with the Pastors/Elders and seek to assist them in implementing the goals that the Pastors/Elders feel the Spirit of God is leading them to pursue through the local church.

FIVEFOLD MINISTRY

Not every church practices the five-fold ministry, which encompasses Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. Many churches believe that the offices of apostles, and prophets ceased after the Bible was written, but according to Ephesians 4: 12-13 this cannot be true. We have not all come into unity as of this time. If that were so, the church universally would be in harmony and working together.

Spirit of Life Ministries has tried to accomplish unity through the Highlands for Jesus, and other meetings to bring this about. Many times, it is like trying to mix water and oil. Unfortunately, the delay of unity delays our Lord's return.

APOSTLE

Apostle comes from the Greek work *apostolos* which means a delegate, messenger, one sent forth with orders. They are the twelve apostles of the Lamb, which never will have added to them. Then there are apostles of the early church, such as Paul, and others. II Corinthians 12:12 says “Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds.” These are some of the things that qualify a person as an Apostle. Missionaries are apostles, but most churches do not call them that. An Apostle is a church planter. He starts churches, then turns them over to others to carry on the work. He keeps in touch with those he started as the Apostle Paul did. They look to this person as the “Father” figure, or “Mother” figure.

PROPHET

Definition: In Greek writings, an interpreter of oracles or of other hidden things and/or one who, moved by the Spirit of God and hence his spokesman solemnly declares to men what he has received by inspiration, especially concerning future events, and in particular such as relate to the cause and kingdom of God and to human salvation.

Prophets were in the Old Testament and the New Testament. Prophets are still in the Church today, although many “churches” believe that this gift ended when the Bible was finished. 1 Corinthians 14:3 says that prophecy is given for edification, exhortation, and comfort. Verse 4 says it edifies the church. 14:29 says that prophets should speak two or three and let the other judge. Verse 32 says the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. Verse 39 says covet to prophesy, which means to desire to prophesy. Verse 40 says all things are to be done decently and in order.

- A. John the Baptist was a prophet
- B. Agabus was a prophet (Acts 11:27-30)
- C. Judas (not Iscariot) and Silas (Acts 15:32-33)
- D. Anna was a Prophetess (Luke 2:36)
- E. Philip’s daughters prophesied (Acts 21:8-9)

THE EVANGELIST

Evangelist means: *a bringer of good tidings*, an evangelist. This word is only used three times in the Bible - Twice as evangelist, and once as Evangelists. Philip was a deacon in Acts and became an Evangelist in Acts 21:8. When we give out the good news of Jesus Christ, we are evangelizing. There is an office of the Evangelist, which is a person called to do this as a “call”, rather than the ordinary giving out of good news. This person will have an anointing on them that when they bring forth the word souls are won into the kingdom.

TEACHER

Teacher means to learn, teach, exercise in. It comes from the Greek:

- A. (Qal) to learn
- B. (Piel) to teach
- C. (Pual) to be taught, be trained

Training or teaching is an anointed gift from God. Many people call themselves teachers, but there is no anointing. A Pastor must also be a teacher. They go hand in hand. Without solid Bible-based teaching the sheep will be subject to many heresies. The Word of God, the Bible is the foundation for all teaching – not man's philosophies, or own ideas. Strong Bible based teaching is a true gift to any Church. There must be an anointing for any of these positions of leadership. Without an anointing, an individual is just that – just a church member. The anointing destroys the yoke and removes burdens. All of the offices of the church have one purpose, and that is to bring the body of Christ the church into unity. The Pastor, Teacher, Apostle, Evangelist, Prophet, Deacon, Elder, Bishop and any other person in leadership must work together to bring God-given results. They are not in leadership to be seen. They are there at God's direction and must follow his leadership through the local Pastor. Pray for these leaders, for they have a great responsibility!