

Ephesians 4

I bring you greetings from Faith Community Bible Church and Pastor Travis Heneha.

Itinerary

I've entitled today's sermon: "**Developing the Local Church**"

Ephesians 4:11

Let us stand for the reading of God's Holy Word.

Ephesians 4:11-16

Let us pray.

You may be seated.

Jesus said, I will build My church

Developing the local church

Eph. 4 is the most succinct form of God's plan by which Christ produces church growth.

Church growth – there is a pile of books on this subject!

- Human ways of developing the church are: cappuccino and doughnuts, gym and family programs, music, offer multiple kinds of services
- All of this is on sinking sand

Jesus Christ will build His church and He will do it through **people**

How does God do it?

- God gave us a manual on how to build right here in Ephesians 4.
- How many of us have tried to build something without following the directions?
Swing Set

First, Eph. 4:11 – gifted leaders, apostles, commissioned by Christ with miraculous power, Paul and Peter

Prophets – Foretellers – Agabus

(Acts 11:27, 13:1, 15:32 – Judas and Silas, 21:10)

Eph. 2:20, 3:5

Evangelists – Preacher of the Gospel

Pastors – Shepherds

Teachers – Instructors

It is God's plan for the last three groups of gifted men—evangelists and pastors and teachers to develop His church by the general operational procedure set forth in verses 12-16.

God's church rises and falls on leadership.

What are the leaders of the church to be doing?

Vs. 12 – They are for the perfecting of the saints of the church

God's design for evangelists, pastors, and teachers is for them to be properly perfecting the saints.

Vs. 12 – perfecting, complete, finishing – equipping the saints” (saints – Holy Ones); instructive in itself

How do the leaders accomplish this equipping?

Acts 6 tells us that the leaders were to give themselves to the ministry of the Word of God and prayer. That is two ways.

God gives the Bible

II Tim. 3:16-17, *All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect (equipped),, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*

The leaders are to be administering the Word of God to God's people.

Prayer – Col. 4:12-13, *Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth [greeteth] you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.*

Through **testing** – James 1:2-4, *My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.*

Through **suffering** – I Peter 5:10, *But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.*

Are my pastors, my leaders, my S.S. teachers giving me the Word and praying for me and with me?

You may say, they don't even know me—Whose fault is that, yours or theirs?
(BOTH)

The leaders are to equip the church people for two reasons.

First, “to do the work of the ministry” (toil, labor)

- God's plan for the operation of His church is for the church people to serve.
- The leaders can not do everything a church needs done.
- All believers are to be involved in ministry-- Attendance is not enough.

What is our ministry in this church? What is it that I bring to the table?

God's purpose in God's plan is not for the leaders to do all the work; they are to equip the people to do it.

Obviously the leaders share in serving, and many of the congregation share in equipping, but God's basic design for the church is for the equipping to be done so that the saints can serve each other effectively.

The entire church is to be aggressively involved in the work of the Lord.

I Cor. 15:58 says, we are to be abounding in the work of the Lord

II Thess. 3:11, *For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies.*

When the gifted men are faithful in prayer and in teaching the Word, the people will be properly equipped and rightly motivated to do **the work of service**.

Spiritual **service** is the **work** of every Christian, every **saint** of God.

Second, to edify the Body of Christ –

- **Building up** literally refers to the building of a house, construction – architecture,
- Building of the body of Christ is number one;
 - externally – souls,
 - internally – nurtured to fruitful service, encouragement to one another, building up of one another.

It is the spiritual development of the church people of which God is speaking here.

So you see, we are all in the construction business building into each others lives.

- Who are we investing in?
- Who are we encouraging?

This work is to take place until...

Vs. 13

The building up of the church people involves a two-fold objective, which God identifies as **the unity of the faith** and **the knowledge of the Son of God**.

So the purpose is twofold:

- Unity – oneness, of the faith
- Not talking about saving faith, but the body of Christian doctrines, Bible truth, properly taught.

Oneness in fellowship is impossible unless it is built on the foundation of commonly believed truth and knowledge (deep knowledge) of the Son of God.

- Deep knowledge through a relationship with Christ that comes only from prayer and faithful study of and obedience to God's Word.
- Growing in the deeper **knowledge of the Son of God** is a life-long process.

This growth, in turn, should bring about spiritual maturity, vs. 13c

The result of following God's pattern for His church is spiritual maturity.

Christ likeness.

And if we are mature – vs. 14

1. No small children – kids in the faith
2. Stable – A double minded man is unstable in all his ways / they are all over the place, following this or that.

The Christian who is properly equipped and mature is no longer a child who is tossed here and there by waves. Because they are anchored in God's truth, they are not tricked and do not fall for every sort of counterfeit truth.

Vs. 15 - Legitimate Care

These kinds of church people are known for love and truth

Vs. 15, dominated by love and truth, mercy and truth

Proverbs 3:3-4, *Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart: So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man.*

The combination of truth and love counteracts the two great threats to powerful ministry—lack of truth and lack of compassion—people can be so harsh.

Vs. 15 – telling the truth in love, faithful are the wounds of a friend,

Truth unites – lies divide

Love unites – selfishness divides

So that we might increase in our likeness to Him, more like Him, more like the Bible;
more like the Bible, more like Christ.

When verses 11-15 are functioning then the church is healthy, vibrant and fruitful.

Vs. 16

Each person has a ministry to other believers. The body grows as the individual members grow and the individual members grow as they feed on the Word.

Christ organizes the body. He puts the body together.

I Cor. 12:18, But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.

Christ brings us together, joins us together, so that the Body produces.

- Christ holds the Body together and makes it function **by that which every joint supplies.**
- That is to say, the joints are the joining together where the spiritual supply pass from one member to another, providing the flow of ministry that produces growth.

Where God's people have close relationships of genuine spiritual ministry, God works; and where they are not intimate with each other and faithful with their gifts, He cannot work.

Above all things, the Body is to manifest love (the spirit of the fellowship of believers), and when it is built up according to this plan, the world will know it is the Body of Christ.

John 13:34-35, A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

Let us stand for closing prayer.