

SERVANTS



IN THE KINGDOM

by Randolph Dunn

Servants In the Kingdom

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Organized and Functioning as an Organism

Introduction

Paul planted the seed of salvation, the Gospel of Christ: "... *Apollos watered (Greek word *epótisen*) supplied the source for growth and how to live righteously, but God made it grow.*" (1 Corinthians 3:6-7) The seed is the Word which Paul taught to those who did not know Christ. Apollos taught Christians the way of the Lord, perhaps like Priscilla and Aquila who explained the way of God more adequately. (Acts 18:26)

In New Testament times evangelists proclaimed the Good News while the elders/watchmen/sentinels/shepherds, men skilled in instructing, taught the new Christians how to live sacrificial lives pleasing to God; thereby helping them to mature into the nature of God," His likeness.

On Pentecost Day men and women who accepted God's message of redemption delivered by Peter and the other apostles were immersed into Christ death and "*devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. All the believers were together and had everything in common.*" (Acts 2:42-44)

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A Functioning Organism – Christ’s Body

The Bible does not appear to provide instructions for the frequency of or location for meeting together. In fact, Jesus stated to the Samaritan woman that the location was not important. (John 4:3)

“Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another.” (Heb 10:25)

*“You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, **that you may proclaim the excellences of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.**”* (1 Peter 2:9)

Much is recorded about the actions of these 1st century “called out people:”

- a. Devoted themselves to apostles’ teachings. Acts 2:42
- b. Had everything in common. Acts 2:44
- c. Met together daily, ate, shared what they had, gathered at Solomon’s Colonnade. Acts 5:12
- d. Elite Hebrew Jews ignored the Greek speaking widows, Jews from different parts of the Roman Empire. Acts 6
- e. The church body chose servants to provide for the needs of the Greek Christian widows. Acts 6
- f. Buried Stephen and mourned deeply for him.
- g. Remained faithful while being persecuted. Acts 8
- h. Fleeing persecution, abandoned their home and non-Christian family.
- i. Upon arrival in their new land, they taught the Gospel. Acts 8:4
- j. So, the disciples determined, everyone according to his ability, to send relief to the brothers living in Judea. Acts 11:29-30
- k. Many were gathered together **praying**. Acts 12:12
- l. Gathered the church together for a **report**. Acts 14:27
- m. Then it seemed good to the apostles and the elders, with the whole church, to choose men from among them and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. Acts 15:22
- n. Gathered the multitude together - **deliver the letter** Acts 15: 31
- o. The disciples **came together** to break bread. Acts 20:7
- p. When you are assembled in the name of the Lord Jesus ... deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit (soul) may be saved in the day of the Lord. 1 Cor 5:4-5
- q. In the presence of all **rebuke** sinning elders. 1 Timothy 5:20

Comment: When the **whole church** came together in one place, their meetings were of a functioning body, freedom, vibrancy, open participation to all, but not necessarily always in unity.

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing, psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word (say) or deed (do), do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.” (Col. 3:16-17)

Comment: “You” includes both men and women who may have a psalm, teaching, prophesying, revelation, or interpretation. But not everyone would be performing all these functions.

Comment: Don’t take glory from God unto yourself.

“But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor. Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work.” (2 Timothy 2:20-21)

*“Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that confess his name. And do not forget **to do good and to share with others**, for with such sacrifices (offerings) God is pleased.”* (Hebrews 13:15-16)

Comment: “Fruit of lips” is not limited to singing.

The Church Christ built is an organized organism, not an organization with positions of authority or rank. It is a body of faithful, obedient and believing people with differing functions (gifts) in a way that the Christian body may fulfill its mission of seeking the lost, care for one another and carry out all the services that Jesus Christ, the Head of the Body, gave them to do. No one was inferior or superior - all are necessary for the Body to function properly. The Body is one in Christ and united in Him and His purposes rather than in agreement of opinion and interpretation.

*“For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith. For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. Having then gifts (functions) differing according to the grace that is given to us, **let us use them.**”* (Romans 12:3-8)

Comment: One is not important because they have a special gift, such as speaking in a language unfamiliar to them, a tongue.

Comment: Functions are not based on education or on secular occupation but on needs of the Christian family.

Comment: Man’s heart is no more important than his intestines. So, one Christian’s function is no more important than another’s.

Those in Christ, His Body, are called out of sin unto righteousness, a changed forgiven people and part of the One Body - a living organism, with many parts. It is compared to the human body with its many parts all functioning in harmony, with each part performing its unique function.

Therefore, the Church Christ built is a body of **faithful, obedient** and **involved** people organized a way that the body may grow and fulfill its mission by caring for one another and performing services that Christ, the Head of the Body, gave them to do.

However, in the church in Corinth there appears to have been chaos – all talking at the same time not one following another and little respect for one another.

“What then shall we say, brothers? When you come together, everyone has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. All of these must be done for the strengthening of the church. If anyone speaks in a tongue, two — or at the most three — should speak, one at a time, and someone must interpret. If there is no interpreter, the speaker should keep quiet in the church and speak to himself and God. Two or three prophets should speak, and the others should weigh carefully what is said. And if a revelation comes to someone who is sitting down, the first speaker should stop. For you can all prophesy in turn so that everyone may be instructed and encouraged. The spirits of prophets are subject to the control of prophets. For God is not a God of disorder but of peace. As in all the congregations of the saints, women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the Law says. If they want to inquire about something, they should ask their own husbands at home; for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church. Did the word of God originate with you? Or are you the only people it has reached? If anybody thinks he is a prophet or spiritually gifted, let him acknowledge that what I am writing to you is the Lord's command. If he ignores this, he himself will be ignored. Therefore, my brothers, be eager to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues. But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way.” (1 Corinthians 14:26-40)

Begin Corinthian Church Comments:

1. Under these conditions the Corinthian Christians could learn little and few, if any, were edified. Perhaps many felt “my function is more important than yours I can _____.”

2. Teaching was more important than being heard.
3. Orderliness and understanding are important.
4. Participation by all Christians important.
5. Edification is necessary for faithfulness and growth so, do not abandon coming together.
6. Respect of others enhances unity.
7. Respect of law and customs cannot be ignored.
8. A wife's conduct dishonored her husband or someone else by their questions that appeared to be a challenge.
9. Disrespect of others by trying to talk louder than them.
10. Their actions needed to display their love for each other so any observing outsider would glorify God.

End Corinthian Church Comments

“If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory and the power forever and ever.” (1 Peter 4:11b)

“Let brotherly love continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. Remember those [Christians] who are in prison, as though in prison with them, and those who are mistreated, since you also are in the body.” (Heb 13:1-3)

Comment: “Show hospitality” is to take care of the needs of others, including travelers but not those who taught a message contrary to Christ’s Gospel.

*“Whatever you do, **work heartily**, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.” (Colossians 3:23-24)*

*“Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may **see your good deeds** and glorify God on the day of visitation.” (1 Peter 2:12)*

*“Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins. Show hospitality to one another without grumbling. As **each has received a gift use it to serve one another**, as good stewards of God's varied grace whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever.” (1Peter 4:8-11)*

Comment: “Grumbling” – Why do I have to do this? Or, I don’t want to but, I will do it out of duty.

*“If anyone does not **take care of** (provide for) his own relatives, especially his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.” (1 Timothy 5:8)*

*“A religion that is pure and stainless according to God the Father is this: to **take care of orphans and widows** who are suffering and to keep oneself unstained by the world.” (James 1:27)*

*“For God is not unjust so as to overlook **your work** and the love that you have shown for his name in serving the saints, as you still do. And we desire each one of you to show the same earnestness to have the full assurance of hope until the end.” (Hebrews 6:10-11)*

“Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.” (Galatians 6:9-10)

God's Sowers of the Gospel Seed

"But in fact, God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!" On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it." (1 Cor 12:18-26)

"For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you. Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully." (Rom 12:3-8)

"He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe. It was he who gave

some to be apostles,

some to be prophets,

some to be evangelists, and

some to be pastors and teachers,

to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ." (Eph 4:10-13)

He gave some (some from the Greek word *toús*)

- to be apostles and (and from the Greek word *de*)
- to be prophets and (and from the Greek word *de*)
- to be evangelists and (and from the Greek word *de*)
- to be pastors and teachers (and from the Greek word *kai*)

Comment: "Some" Greek words *toús* meaning separated from;

"and" *de* meaning to distinguish difference between;

"and" *kai* a connecting word. Since *de* separates, while *kai* connects, then pastors are connected with teachers but separated from the work of the apostles, prophets and evangelists. The better translation would have been pastors who taught. Therefore, the work of apostles was different from the work of the prophets, which was different from the work of evangelists, which was different from the work of pastors and teachers. However, all can proclaim Christ in their work.

Apostles

Christ gave "some to be apostles." Apostles is from the Greek word *apostólos* - one sent forth with orders, a messenger, one set apart, to send out. According to Acts 1:21- 22 an apostle of Jesus was *"one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us - one of these men must become with us a witness to his resurrection."*

The word *apóstolos* is used of the Lord Jesus to describe His relation to God, Hebrews 3:1 *"Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus."*

“Now many signs and wonders were regularly done among the people by the hands of the apostles. And they were all together in Solomon’s Portico. None of the rest dared join them, but the people held them in high esteem. And more than ever believers were added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women, so that they even carried out the sick into the streets and laid them on cots and mats, that as Peter came by at least his shadow might fall on some of them. The people also gathered from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing the sick and those afflicted with unclean spirits, and they were all healed. But the high priest rose up, and all who were with him (that is, the party of the Sadducees), and filled with jealousy they arrested the apostles and put them in the public prison.” (Acts 5:12-19)

“It was about this time that King Herod arrested some who belonged to the church, intending to persecute them. He had James, the brother of John, put to death with the sword. When he saw that this pleased the Jews, he proceeded to seize Peter also. This happened during the Feast of Unleavened Bread. After arresting him, he put him in prison, handing him over to be guarded by four squads of four soldiers each. Herod intended to bring him out for public trial after the Passover. So, Peter was kept in prison.” (Acts 12:1-5)

The appointing of apostles appears to have ceased following the selection of Mathias except for Paul who was appointed by Christ as an apostle out of season.

Apostle to the Gentiles

Paul is first encountered as Saul who *“approved of his (Stephen) execution.”* (Acts 8:1)

“But Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. Now as he went on his way, he approached Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. And falling to the ground he heard a voice saying to him, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?’ And he said, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ And he said, ‘I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. But rise and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do.’ The men who were traveling with him stood speechless, hearing the voice but seeing no one. Saul rose from the ground, and although his eyes were opened, he saw nothing. So, they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. And for three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank.” (Acts 9:1-9)

“Now there was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, ‘Ananias.’ And he said, ‘Here I am, Lord.’ And the Lord said to him, ‘Rise and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul, for behold, he is praying, and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight.’ But Ananias answered, ‘Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints at Jerusalem. And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on your name.’ But the Lord said to him, ‘Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel. For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.’ So, Ananias departed and entered the house. And laying his hands on him he said, ‘Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road by which you came has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.’ And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and he regained his sight. Then he rose and was baptized; and taking food, he was strengthened.” (Acts 9:10-19)

“I know a man (apparently Paul) in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows. And I know that this man was caught up into paradise—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows—and he heard things that cannot be told, which man may not utter.” (2 Cor 12:2-4)

“Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are not you my workmanship in the Lord? If to others I am not an apostle, at least I am to you, for you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.” (1 Corinthians 9:1-2)

“Now I am speaking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle to the Gentiles.” (Romans 11:13)

Paul’s work and results

“For I would have you know, brothers, that the gospel that was preached by me is not man's gospel. For I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ. For you have heard of my former life in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it. And I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people, so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers. But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and who called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with anyone; nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia, and returned again to Damascus.” (Galatians 1:11-17)

“Now those who were scattered because of the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word to no one except Jews.” (Acts 11:19)

The church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch (of Syria). *“When he came and saw the grace of God, he was glad, and he exhorted them all to remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast purpose, for he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great many people were added to the Lord. So, Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. For a whole year they met with the church and taught a great many people. And in Antioch the disciples were first called Christians.” (Acts 11:22-26)*

In Antioch *“while they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off.” (Acts 13:2-3)*

“Then some Jews came from Antioch (of Pisidis) and Iconium and won the crowd over. They stoned Paul and dragged him outside the city, thinking he was dead.” (Acts 14:19)

“They seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace before the rulers. And when they had brought them to the magistrates, they said, “These men are Jews, and they are disturbing our city. They advocate customs that are not lawful for us as Romans to accept or practice.” The crowd joined in attacking them, and the magistrates tore the garments off them and gave orders to beat them with rods. And when they had inflicted many blows upon them, they threw them into prison, ordering the jailer to keep them safely. Having received this order, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.” (Acts 16:19-24)

In Philippi *“they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace before the rulers. And when they had brought them to the magistrates, they said, “These men are Jews, and they are disturbing our city. They advocate customs that are not lawful for us as Romans to accept or practice.” The crowd joined in attacking them, and the magistrates tore the garments off them and gave orders to beat them with rods. And when they had inflicted many blows upon them, they threw them into prison, ordering the jailer to keep them safely. Having received this order, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.” (Acts 16:19-24)*

As a devout Jew, Saul (Paul) believing Christians were blaspheming God, persecuted them. But, now as Christ's apostle to the Gentiles the Jews begin persecuting him. Thinking Paul had defiled their Temple *“The whole city was aroused, and the people came running from all directions. Seizing Paul, they dragged him from the temple, and immediately the gates were shut. While they were trying to kill him, news reached the commander of the Roman troops that the whole city of Jerusalem was in an uproar. He at once took some officers and soldiers and ran down to the crowd. When the rioters saw the commander and his soldiers, they stopped beating Paul.” (Acts 21:30-32)*

After the routing crowd called down Paul spoke to them stating *“I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city. Under Gamaliel I was thoroughly trained in the law of our fathers and was just as zealous for God as any of you are today. I persecuted the followers of this Way (Christians) to their death, arresting both men and women and throwing them into prison, as also the high priest and all the Council can testify. I even obtained letters from them to their brothers in Damascus, and went there to bring these people as prisoners to Jerusalem to be punished.” (Acts 22:3-5)*

“About noon as I came near Damascus, suddenly a bright light from heaven flashed around me. I fell to the ground and heard a voice say to me, ‘Saul! Saul! Why do you persecute me?’ ‘Who are you, Lord?’ I asked. ‘I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting,’ he replied. My companions saw the light, but they did not understand the voice of him who was speaking to me. ‘What shall I do, Lord?’ I asked. ‘Get up,’ the Lord said, ‘and go into Damascus. There you will be told all that you have been assigned to do.’ My companions led me by the hand into Damascus, because the brilliance of the light had blinded me.” (Acts 22:6-11)

“And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, well-spoken of by all the Jews who lived there, came to me, and standing by me said to me, ‘Brother Saul, receive your sight.’ And at that very hour I received my sight and saw him. And he said, ‘The God of our fathers appointed you to know his will, to see the Righteous One and to hear a voice from his mouth; for you will be a witness for him to everyone of what you have seen and heard.” (Acts 22:12-16)

“When I returned to Jerusalem and was praying at the temple, I fell into a trance and saw the Lord speaking. ‘Quick!’ he said to me. ‘Leave Jerusalem immediately, because they will not accept your testimony about me.’ ‘Lord,’ I replied, ‘these men know that I went from one synagogue to another to imprison and beat those who believe in you. And when the blood of your martyr Stephen was shed, I stood there giving my approval and guarding the clothes of those who were killing him.’ Then the Lord said to me, ‘Go; I will send you far away to the Gentiles.’” (Acts 22:17-20)

“The crowd listened to Paul until he said this. Then they raised their voices and shouted, ‘Rid the earth of him! He’s not fit to live!’ As they were shouting and throwing off their cloaks and flinging dust into the air, the commander ordered Paul to be taken into the barracks. He directed that he be flogged and questioned in order to find out why the people were shouting at him like this. As they stretched him out to flog him, Paul said to the centurion standing there, ‘Is it legal for you to flog a Roman citizen who hasn’t even been found guilty?’” (Acts 22:22-25)

The Centurion in Jerusalem sent him to Caesarea to stand trial. Paul answered the charges against him before Felix, Festus, King Agrippa and finally the Emperor.

Prophets

“Some to be prophets” from Greek word *Profeétas* – one through whom God speaks, a foreteller, an inspired speaker. The "prophet" proclaimed the message given to him, as the "seer" beheld the vision of God. (See Numbers 12:6, 8) Thus, a prophet was a spokesman for God; he spoke in God's name and by his authority. (Exodus 7:1) He is the mouth by which God spoke to men. (Jeremiah 1:9; Isaiah 51:16) 1 Corinthians 13:8 states that the need for prophecies, thus prophets, would cease: *“Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they would cease.”*

Comment: “Cease” is from the Greek word *katargeo* meaning to render entirely idle, useless. (Biblesoft)

Evangelists

“Some to be evangelists” from Greek word *euangelistás* one who proclaims good tidings, good news, the gospel. Only Philip and Timothy were specifically called evangelists. Philip taught the gospel and Timothy assisted Paul in teaching the Gospel. One who goes forth to proclaim may go far or near and he could stay for a longer period of time in one location than another, as in the case of Paul. No doubt the receptivity of hearers was a criterion to determine whether to stay or go. One may also feel compelled to remain in one area, perhaps even longer than originally intended, until they have completed the task(s) they set out to accomplish.

On Pentecost Day those who accepted God’s message delivered by Peter and the other apostles were immersed and *“devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.”* (Acts 2:42-43)

Paul evangelized, taught the gospel: *“I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow.”* (1 Corinthians 3:6-7) The seed is the Word which Paul taught to those who did not know Christ - the Non-Christian. Apollos taught Christians the way of the Lord, perhaps like Priscilla and Aquila who explained to him the way of God more adequately. (Acts 18:26)

Evangelists and heralds, (preachers) generally proclaim the Good News. Mature Christians and elders/watchmen/sentinels/shepherds/overseers skilled in instructing, taught them how to live sacrificial lives pleasing to God helping them to mature into the nature of God.

Comment: “Watered,” is from the Greek word *epótsen*, – the source for growth.

“Then Philip, the evangelist, opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him, the Ethiopian eunuch, the good news, Jesus - the Christ.” (Acts 8:35)

Comment: “Told” is from the Greek word *euegelísato* meaning to proclaim, evangelize.

Pastors and Teachers Serving the Congregation

In 1 Timothy and Titus Paul tells us about the character traits of these teaching pastors who are to perform specific function within the Body. They are also known as:

Elders (*presbuteros*)— an adjective to denote seniority older man.

Shepherds (*poimen*) – a provider of nourishment and protector against dangers (a feeder).

Overseer/ watchman/guardian/sentential (*eepiskopeés*) - one who alerts others of pending danger, watches over, guards, inspects, visits (with visit meaning to take care of their needs) and teaches. (Thayer)

Is the elder/shepherd/overseer/watchman/guardian function the most important function of the Body? NO – Every function is equally important; e.g., the human body will cease to function if the colon and intestines cease to function. So, Christ's Body will cease where the Gospel of Christ is not proclaimed or works abandoned or obedience becomes unnecessary.

Perhaps an understanding of shepherding sheep and goats will provide the key to understanding the function of shepherding spiritual sheep.

A good shepherd cares for his sheep and wants to take on the responsibility of their wellbeing. He will constantly be with them calling them by name for they must recognize his voice [trust] in order to follow. It is the shepherd's responsibility to locate pastures near still or slow-moving water but away from danger. He must have knowledge of and remove toxic plants in pastures so they won't be able to eat them and become sick and die. He must be physically strong to protect them from thieves and predators. It is not a job for anyone who just needs a job or money. Recall David's 23 Psalm *"The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. ... You prepare a table before me in the presence of mine enemies."*

On the other hand, goats are independent, inquisitive and difficult to herd whereas sheep are followers and require continual care and protection.

As a young Jewish boy your father has decided it is time for you to assume the responsibilities of a shepherd. You have been with him or your older sibling while they were shepherding. Are you prepared?

- a. Do you know the sheep by name so they will follow you?
- b. Do you know how to lead or are you a driver; e.g., a cowboy?
- c. Do you know where to find green pastures and still water?
- d. Can you identify and remove food they must not eat?
- e. Can you recognize predators that are intent on killing or rustling?
- f. Are you physically strong enough to fend off the enemy?
- g. Do you have the tools necessary for tending the sheep and taking care of your safety such as a sling, pouch, stones, rod, staff and tunic? Are you proficient in their use?

Likewise

A biblical elder/shepherd/overseer/watchman/guardian need to have:

- a. A close relationship with God and Christians in his congregation.
- b. A good knowledge and understanding of the teachings of Christ and the teachings of His apostles to prepare Christians for ministry (serving) and to bring them to maturity into God's nature.
- c. Ability to recognize false teachings and provide opportunity for those under their care to learn, recognize and acquire ability to refute such teachings. For example, in their time a prevalent teaching was all flesh is evil. Jesus could not have been in an evil human flesh; therefore, He was just a phantom – Gnosticism.
- d. Knowledge of difference between an understanding/opinion and a false teaching.
- e. Ability to lead without forcing opinions on others.

- f. A clear understanding of the spiritual tools needed for performing the shepherding functions and proficient in their use to defend those under his care, to lead fellow Christians to spiritual food, to mature them into the likeness of Christ and to defend them from spiritual predators.

If “qualifications” were viewed as character traits or tools to accomplish shepherding work, they take on a different meaning; e.g., not combative, not a loose cannon, not contentious; but gentle when expressing concerns.

Functions shepherds - NOT some hireling - are to:

- a. Teach, feed, equip and bring to maturity.
- b. Exhort, admonish, edify and strengthen.
- c. Convict false teachers and their false teachings:
 - 1) One who denies Christ as God in human body.
 - 2) One is saved without being cleansed by Christ’s blood.
 - 3) Salvation is earned by what a person accomplishes.
- d. Promote unity and harmony.
- e. Comfort the physically but primarily spiritually weak and sick.
- f. Seek and restore those who have drifted or are drifting away.
- g. Pray for self, brethren under your care and the lost.
- h. Warn of dangers lurking in the pathway of life.
- i. Prepare God’s saints for work of service (show & tell).

(1 Timothy 3:2-7; Titus 1:6-11; 1 Peter 5:2-4; Acts: 20:28-30; Ephesians 4:11-15; Ezekiel 34:2-5; 1 Thessalonians 5:12-14; James 5:14 and Luke 15:3)

“Here is a trustworthy saying: If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task. Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God’s church?) He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil’s trap.” (1 Tim 3:1-7) Some early translations have “office of a bishop” rather than being an overseer.

Begin “overseer” “office of bishop” Comments:

- a. Faithful and “Trustworthy” – (Thayer - one who is convinced that Jesus is the Messiah and the atoning sacrifice; Strong - sure, true and faithful).
- b. “Overseer” or office of bishop as translated from the Greek word *episkopeés* meaning watchman, sentinel, guardian or one who watches over thus an overseer. Sentinels are to watch, guardians are to protect and another term is shepherds who are to feed. Bishop was a title for various government officials, later used for positions in the Catholic and Anglican organizations (etymonline.com). The word “office” is not in the Greek text.
- c. A “noble task,” a good work, is a function not an office. It is a work or task from the Greek word *érgou* - an act, deed or a thing done.
- d. “Overseer” is from the Greek word *episkopeés*, in biblical Greek it is the act by which God looks into and searches out the ways, deeds, character, of men, in order to adjudge them their lot accordingly, whether joyous or sad; inspection, investigation, visitation when he shall search the souls of men; i.e., in the time of divine judgment. (Thayer’s) **End “office of overseer” Comment**

The character, qualifications, of men He wants to fulfill such important functions are listed below from Timothy and Titus and an interpretation.

1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. Personal understanding

hold firmly to the message	know Him and His apostles’ teachings
above reproach	not open to censure
good reputation, blameless	good reputation with outsiders

the husband of one wife	Not a polygamist, and not still married to a “sent away” wife without a certificate of divorcement
temperate, sober minded	uses good judgment
self-controlled	disciplined, not a loose cannon
respectable	orderly, good behavior
hospitable	takes care of the needs of others
able to teach [apt KJV]	powerful in communicating
not given to drunkenness	not drink excessively, no brawler
not a striker (violent)	not combative or quick tempered
gentle	kind and considerate of others
not quarrelsome	not contentious – argue; e.g., “my understanding is from the Bible”
not greedy	does not put material things first
manage his own family	family lives within income – not a spendthrift
not be a recent convert	needs to face trials as Christian
Children-not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient	children not rebellious whether a Christian or not a Christian

Paul wrote during the persecution of Christians by the Jews and Romans. Therefore, those desiring the work of shepherding were willing to put their lives on the line to protect his fellow brethren. The spiritual wellbeing of the brethren was more important than his physical body. It was not a position of honor, power or prestige but a dangerous work which requires:

1. The desire to protect your brethren even if it cost your life.
2. Able to teach or apt means communicate effectively (from the Greek word *didaktikos* meaning skillful in teaching -Thayer).
3. Patience - not to fly off the handle or quick to judge.
4. Compassion.
5. Men known in an intimate relationship as righteous men, not pretenders intent on identifying Christians to persecutors.

Warning to Teaching Pastors

The words spoken by Ezekiel long ago to God's shepherds of Israel under the Old Covenant are also applicable to His spiritual shepherds under the New Covenant who are not performing the tasks given to them by God.

"The word of the LORD came to me: "Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel (their leaders); prophesy and say to them: "This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Woe to the shepherds of Israel who only take care of themselves! Should not shepherds take care of the flock? You eat the curds, clothe yourselves with the wool and slaughter the choice animals, but you do not take care of the flock. You have not

- a. *strengthened the weak*
- b. *healed the sick*
- c. *bound up the injured.*
- d. *brought back the strays*
- e. *searched for the lost.*"

Isn't this the work or function that New Testaments shepherds should be performing!

Christ made these decisions for all congregations – His Church.

- Be faithful to the person Christ and the Apostles teaching.
- Do Good works that glorify Christ.
- Make disciples by teaching Christ crucified.

If the above are the Shepherds' functions, then who makes decisions for local congregations? Such as:

- What teaching is scriptural or false opinions?
- Who approves or authorizes where one can teach?
 - a. In a bible class in the “church building”
 - b. Home Bible study
 - c. Using correspondence courses
 - d. Individual or one-on-one studies
- Where is the Body to assemble?
- Is assembling together for the purpose of edifying one another, fellowship, or is the purpose to conduct acts of worship as a “worship service?”
- Are acts of worship identified and commanded?
- Are examples of acts of worship required, if so, is there a specific order?
- Who is to take care of widows and orphans?
- Who decides how and where contributions are to be spent? Can one give to a specific work; e.g., a mission work rather than to the “church treasury?”
- Who exercises “oversite” (whatever that is) of a mission work?
- What should be done when one is caught up in a sin?
 - a. Excessive drinking
 - b. Divorcing
 - c. Forsaking assembling together
 - d. Fornication, when known
 - e. Greedy, liar, drunkard, gossip, not providing for family.

Paul warned the Ephesian elders *“Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood. I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. Even from your own number (among elder/shepherds) men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. So be on your guard!”* (Acts 20:28-31)

Comment: “Wolves,” people pretending to be Christians for purpose of betrayal and destroying faith. *“Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves.”* (Matt 7:15)

How could elders in sheep’s clothing "from your number" come in?

- a. The process of selecting them.
- b. The body of Christians is not being involved with each other such that their beliefs and opinions are unknown.
- c. The training and equipping method is faulty, insufficient or turned over to others.
- d. Not hearing the concerns of the spiritual meek and gentle while paying attention to voices of the vocal or are large contributors.
- e. Some men may campaign for the work they believe to be a position of power and honor.

Spiritual wolves are people within the assembly professing to be Christians but have a non-biblical agenda. How can they be prevented from drawing Christians away after their teachings? It is to equip and train the Body with knowledge by open discussion of prevalent teachings comparing them to biblical truths. Christians need to be able to recognize their teaching as false. Christians must cease being hearers, “pew warmers” only and become serious students of God's Word while receiving and participating in much instruction, discussion and edification by their, watchmen/shepherds and others knowledgeable in the Word.

“You have ruled them harshly and brutally. So, they were scattered because there was no shepherd, and when they were scattered, they became food for all the wild animals. My sheep wandered over all the mountains and on every high hill. They were scattered over the whole earth, and no one searched or looked for them.” (Ezekiel 34:1-6)

““Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the LORD: As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, because my flock lacks a shepherd and so has been plundered and has become food for all the wild animals, and because my shepherds did not search for my flock but cared for themselves rather than for my flock, therefore, O shepherds, hear the word of the LORD: This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I am against the shepherds and will hold them

accountable for my flock. I will remove them from tending the flock so that the shepherds can no longer feed themselves. I will rescue my flock from their mouths, and it will no longer be food for them.” (Ezekiel 34:7-10)

“Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; so, hear the word I speak and give them warning from me. When I say to a wicked man, 'You will surely die,' and you do not warn him or speak out to dissuade him from his evil ways in order to save his life, that wicked man will die for his sin, and I will hold you accountable for his blood. But if you do warn the wicked man and he does not turn from his wickedness or from his evil ways, he will die for his sin; but you will have saved yourself.” (Ezekiel 3:17-19)

“My people come ... to listen to your words, but they do not put them into practice. With their mouths they express devotion, but their hearts are greedy for unjust gain. Indeed, to them you are nothing more than one who sings love songs with a beautiful voice and plays an instrument well, for they hear your words but do not put them into practice.” (Ezekiel (33:31-32)

Men Servants (Diakonos)

Deacons

“Deacons, likewise, are to be men worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain. They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience. They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons. In the same way, their wives are to be women worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything. A deacon must be the husband of but one wife and must manage his children and his household well. Those who have served well gain an excellent standing and great assurance in their faith in Christ Jesus.” (1 Tim 3:8-13)

Comment: Unfortunately, the word deacon represents a position or office in the church of England. If the Greek word had been translated as servant there would be less confusion.

Comment: All Christians are priests to serve God. Thus, all are *diakonos*, servants, man and woman, performing the same type functions God commanded Adam and Eve to do but spiritual rather than physical. Such as:

Obey – If you love me you will keep my command -- do not eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Work – As you see opportunity do good – tend the garden.

Reproduce – plant the gospel seed as it is the power of salvation – be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.

Comment:

- a. “Deacons” (Greek *diakónous* - gender neutral) - vs. 8
- b. “Women” (Greek *gunaikas woman*)– (universally, a woman of any age, whether a virgin, or married, or a widow or wife depending on context from Strong’s). vs. 11
- c. “Their wives”- *idiōus* is the Greek word for their. It is not in the Greek text which has only the Greek word *gunaikas*, woman. Youngs Literal translation reads “*Women — in like manner grave, not false accusers, vigilant, faithful in all things.*” By adding “their” to the English translation the meaning was changed from women servants, *diakónous*, to wives of men servants. vs. 11
- d. “A deacon must be the husband of but one wife” excludes polygamist and men who put away a wife without a certificate of divorcement consequently they are still married to the put away wife. Here deacon is from the Greek word *diakonos*, (nominative singular masculine per Vines). vs. 12

Since these *diakonos* having similar character traits and qualifications as shepherds, their work must be closely related.

Christ’s church is compared to our physical body, it also has many working parts performing different functions. If these “church” body parts do not function, the “church” body in a weakened condition. It will wither and die.

The work of men having the character traits similar to shepherds is not specified so any understanding is an interpretation or opinion.

The following is quoted from a lesson by Joe McKinney:

“In certain context the term ‘*diakonos*’ takes on additional specific meaning and significance when it refers to a group of servants with unique spiritual qualifications as in 1 Timothy 3 where it was transliterated deacon. In a sense, this was a helpful practice, since it calls attention that certain Christians are chosen to do a special service probably assisting the overseeing watchmen in their spiritual function.

“While we do have a certain conviction about the work of Christians having these special qualifications, we should never be so dogmatic to think that this is the last word on the subject. We must keep in mind certain Biblical truths about the Body of Christ so that any interpretation will be consistent with these truths. Since their qualifications

of character and experience are already proven, it is reasonable to assume they assist the elders in their spiritual work of taking care of the spiritual needs of the church, especially those needs that are urgent. Deacons are not "junior elders" although their work would be similar to some work the shepherds perform and the experience could be good training for these men to one day may desire or aspire to the function of guardian, watchman, sentinel.

“The Body of Christ a living, growing and battling kingdom - a living organism - has many dynamic needs that are constantly changing.

“Problems arise, needs appear, emergencies occur: someone gets sick, another loses his job, families have squabbles, parents have problems with children, people die and families must be consoled, important ministries need to be developed. Not all the needs in a church are dynamic but many are and, at times, they are unforeseeable or even emergencies. When these needs appear, they must be met, and met right now! Who is going to meet these needs of the church? Who will serve? Who are the servants of the church?

“Consider that during the first century whenever a Christian failed to assemble all were concerned. Did the Roman authorities arrest him for his faith? Did a sect of the Jews do physical harm to him? If so, it would have been appropriate for the Christian family, or their watchmen to ask a brother living in close proximity to go by and check on his well-being and supply any missing need.

“All Christians are servants. All are called to serve. The church can call on anyone to meet a need (to serve). It depends on the situation. For example, in the area of finances, the church ought to choose someone with a good knowledge of accounting, who is trustworthy and has the integrity and honesty necessary to do that job. But is it really necessary for that person to be married with children in order to be the treasurer of the church? Does that person have these spiritual qualifications? Any Christian can serve and should serve in some area, independently of the special qualifications. He just needs to be qualified to do that particular job. But all Christians, man or woman, should and can serve in some area.

“Now when dynamic needs arise; that is, when emergencies occur, normally, there is neither time nor opportunity to research the talents and investigate the character of the brethren in order to discover who can serve that particular need at that moment. The church needs a group of servants, already spiritually qualified; proven and identified who are available to be called upon to assist the shepherds/ elders/ watchmen in unforeseen situations where the need is of an emergency nature and must be handled immediately.” (End quote from Joe McKinney.)

The *diakonosus* qualifications given above include being husband of one wife and managing his children and household well cannot apply to all *diakonosus* as all Christian men and women are *diakonos* servants. Therefore, the function of men with these qualifications must be different from other men or women *diakonosus*.

Some people infer that the seven selected by the Jerusalem church in Acts to take care of the Grecian widows' needs were deacons. But they are not referred to as *diakonos* nor are their qualifications given neither is it known if all the seven met the character traits in 1 Timothy.

Many today consider the work of elders as men over spiritual matters while deacons are men over physical matters. This appears to be an incorrect understanding, for by doing so, the work of all other members of the Body, man or woman, is grossly restricted. In fact, if elders do the spiritual and deacons perform the physical, there is no work left for non-deacon servants. But this cannot be the case for Peter writing to the exiles of the Dispersion states in 1 Peter 4:10 “*As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace.*” The word “each” includes men or women with and without the special qualifications. If “each” does not include women then Paul was in error by stating in Romans 16:1 that Phebe was a *diakonon*, a servant.

The contemporary concept that deacons take care of the physical needs of the congregation, such as upkeep on the building and grounds, is not derived from New Testament practice since there is no record in the New Testament of any assembly of Christians owning or maintaining physical facilities. The church's needs during the period of persecution were people needs not property or things. This is true today as the church is people not property.

Men mentioned by name

“Barnabas (which means son of encouragement), a Levite, a native of Cyprus, sold a field that belonged to him and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.” (Acts 4:36-37)

“So, Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. For a whole year they met with the church and taught a great many people.” (Acts 11:25-26)

“Now there were in the church at Antioch prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a member of the court of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’ Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off.” (Acts 13:1-3)

“Sometime later Paul (Saul) said to Barnabas, ‘Let us go back and visit the brothers in all the towns where we preached the word of the Lord and see how they are doing.’ Barnabas wanted to take John, also called Mark, with them, but Paul did not think it wise to take him, because he had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not continued with them in the work. They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company. Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus.” (Acts 15:36-40)

“My fellow prisoner Aristarchus sends you his greetings, as does Mark, the cousin of Barnabas.” (Col 4:10)

“Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, sends you greetings. And so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas and Luke, my fellow workers.” (Philemon 23-24)

“Do your best to come to me quickly, for Demas, because he loved this world, has deserted me and has gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, and Titus to Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry.” (2 Tim 4:9-12)

“We came to Derbe and then to Lystra, where a disciple named Timothy lived, whose mother was a Jewess and a believer, but whose father was a Greek. The brothers at Lystra and Iconium spoke well of him.” (Acts 16:1-3)

“When Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia, Paul devoted himself exclusively to preaching, testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ.” (Acts 18:5)

“He sent two of his helpers, Timothy and Erastus, to Macedonia, while he stayed in the province of Asia a little longer.” (Acts 19:22)

“Therefore, I urge you to imitate me. For this reason, I am sending to you Timothy, my son whom I love, who is faithful in the Lord. He will remind you of my way of life in Christ Jesus, which agrees with what I teach everywhere in every church.” (1 Cor 4:16-17)

“I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, so that I too may be cheered by news of you. For I have no one like him, who will be genuinely concerned for your welfare. 21 They all seek their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. But you know Timothy's proven worth, how as a son with a father he has served with me in the gospel.” (Phil 2:19-23)

“But God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus, and not only by his coming but also by the comfort you had given him. He told us about your longing for me, your deep sorrow, your ardent concern for me, so that my joy was greater than ever.” (2 Cor 7:6-7)

“As for Titus, he is my partner and fellow worker among you; as for our brothers, they are representatives of the churches and an honor to Christ.” (2 Cor 8:23)

“In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Grecian Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. So, the Twelve

gathered all the disciples together and said, 'It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word.' This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also, Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism." (Acts 6:1-6)

"Now Stephen, a man full of God's grace and power, did great wonders and miraculous signs among the people. Opposition arose, however, from members of the Synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called)-Jews of Cyrene and Alexandria as well as the provinces of Cilicia and Asia. These men began to argue with Stephen, but they could not stand up against his wisdom or the Spirit by whom he spoke." (Acts 6:8-10)

"But Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off men and women and put them in prison. Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went. Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Christ there." (Acts 8:3-6)

"In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias." ... "Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, 'Brother Saul, the Lord-Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here — has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit.' Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized, and after taking some food, he regained his strength." (Acts 9:10...17-19)

"During this time some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. One of them, named Agabus, stood up and through the Spirit predicted that a severe famine would spread over the entire Roman world." (Acts 11:27-28)

"Philip the evangelist, one of the Seven. He had four unmarried daughters who prophesied. After we had been there a number of days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. Coming over to us, he took Paul's belt, tied his own hands and feet with it and said, 'The Holy Spirit says, 'In this way the Jews of Jerusalem will bind the owner of this belt and will hand him over to the Gentiles.'"' (Acts 21:8-11)

"They (Paul and Barnabas) had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company. Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus, but Paul chose Silas and left, commended by the brothers to the grace of the Lord. He went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches." (Acts 15:39-41)

"To Philemon our dear friend and fellow worker, to Apphia our sister, to Archippus our fellow soldier and to the church that meets in your home: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ... I hear about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints." (Philemon 1-3, 5)

"I appeal to you (Philemon) for my son Onesimus, who became my son while I was in chains. Formerly he was useless to you, but now he has become useful both to you and to me." (Philemon 10-11)

"My fellow prisoner Aristarchus sends you his greetings, as does Mark, the cousin of Barnabas." (Col 4:10)

"Epaphras, who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends greetings. He is always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured." (Col 4:12-14)

Women Servants (Diakonos)

“For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for **you are all one in Christ Jesus**” (Galatians 3:26-28). God is not partial.” (Acts 10:34) All are priests to serve God. (Revelation 5:10)

The Greek word *diakonos* is a gender-neutral, either male or female. The Latin word for *diakonos* is minister, while the English word is servant. *Diakonos* or its variants occur 28 times in the New Testament, one of which refers to Phebe, a female servant (*diákonon*) and twice as deacon in Philippians 1:1, 1 Timothy 3:8-13 and Rom 16:1.

“Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues.” (1 Cor 12:27-29)

God through Paul set forth character traits for the shepherding function.

Following the character or qualifications of these men Paul discusses character traits, qualifications of servants who apparently help in this important work of the overseeing watchmen, guardians, sentinels. Functions by other members of the Body are just as important, necessary, essential and indispensable whether performed by man or woman.

Women Identified by Name

In the New Testament several women are identified by name while inclusive words such as, all, each, everyone, include men and women. By examining activities of God’s *diakonos* one should be able to determine if there are any functions Christian women are required to do or are prohibited from doing.

“But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property, and with his wife's knowledge he kept back for himself some of the proceeds ... about three hours his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. And Peter said to her, ‘Tell me whether you sold the land for so much.’ And she said, ‘Yes, for so much.’ But Peter said to her, ‘How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord?’” (Acts 5:1-2; 7-9)

Comment: Sapphira and Ananias **lied to the Holy Spirit**, an intentional sin.

“Now there was in Joppa a disciple named Tabitha, which, translated, means Dorcas. She was full of good works and acts of charity.” (Acts 9:36)

Comment: Tabitha, Dorcas, helped the poor **by doing good and charitable works**. An activity done outside the assembly.

“He (Peter) went to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose other name was Mark, where many were gathered together and were praying.” (Acts 12:12)

Comment: Mary **used her house for saints to come together**. In this case the gathering was for the purpose of praying for safety of all Christians but especially for Peter, as a short time earlier Herod beheaded James.

“And after she (Lydia) was baptized she urged us saying ‘If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay.’ And she prevailed upon us.” (Acts 16:15)

Comment: Lydia **used her possessions to take care of the needs of Paul** and those accompanying him.

“And some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a great many of the devout Greeks and not a few of the leading women.” ... “Now these Jews (men and women) were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so. Many of them therefore believed, with not a few Greek women of high standing as well as men.” ... “But some men joined him and

believed, among whom also were Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris and others with them.” (Acts 17:4, 11-12, 34)

Comment: Damaris **believed**. She was perhaps a prominent Athenian woman as she was in attendance at the Areopagus when Paul spoke.

“After this Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. And he found a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla. ... Now a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was an eloquent man, competent in the Scriptures. He had been instructed in the way of the Lord. And being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus (as recorded in the Old Testament), though he knew only the baptism of John. He began to speak boldly in the synagogue, but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him and explained to him the way of God more accurately.” (Acts 18:1-2; 24-26)

Comment: “They,” Aquila and his wife Priscilla, **taught** Apollos not just Aquila.

“On the next day we departed and came to Caesarea, and we entered the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, and stayed with him. He had four unmarried daughters, who prophesied.” (Acts 21:8-9)

Comment: Philip’s daughters **prophesied**. From 1 Corinthians 14:21 we learn that prophesies are for believers. There is no indication that they prophesied only to women or only when not assembled.

“I commend to you our sister Phebe, a servant in the church in Cenchreae.” (Romans 16:1)

Comment: Some Bibles transliterate *diákonon* as deaconess. But every person, male or female, in Christ is a servant, *diakono*, in the Body of Christ as well as priests to serve God. The Bible is silent about the type of service Phebe rendered. All we know is she served. We also know she did not meet the unique qualifications for the work of servants having a wife translated as deacons in 1 Timothy 3:12.

“Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, who risked their necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks but all the churches of the Gentiles give thanks as well. Greet also the church in their house. Greet my beloved Epaphroditus, who was the first convert to Christ in Asia. Greet Mary, who has worked hard for you. Greet Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen and my fellow prisoners.” (Romans 16:3-7)

Comment: We do not know what work Mary performed. However, we know she was not lazy as she **worked hard**.

“The churches of Asia send you greetings. Aquila and Prisca (Priscilla), together with the church in their house, send you hearty greetings in the Lord.” (1 Corinthians 16:19)

Comment: Priscilla and Aquila’s **home was open for Christians to assemble**.

“I entreat Euodia and I entreat Syntyche to agree in the Lord. Yes, I ask you also, true companion, help these women, who have labored side by side with me in the gospel together with Clement.” (Philippians 4:2-3)

Comment: These women were apparently from Philippi. They helped Paul in teaching the Gospel. They did more than just being present to remove any appearance of impropriety. They taught the gospel as they labored with Paul and Clement.

“I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well.” (2 Timothy 1:5)

Comment: They passed their faith on to their family.

“To Philemon our beloved fellow worker and Apphia our sister and Archippus our fellow soldier, and the church in your house.” (Philemon 1-2)

Comment: “Apphia” a Christian woman known to Paul and Philemon.

Women by Inclusive Words - All, Each and Everyone

“So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.” (Acts 2:41)

Comment: “Those who **received His Word**” include men and women.

“*The disciples determined, everyone according to his ability, to send relief to the brothers living in Judea.*” (Acts 11:29)

Comment: “Everyone” includes women, so women **helped in determining**.

“*Then it seemed good to the apostles and the elders, with the whole church, to choose men from among them and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas.*” (Acts 15:22)

Comment: The “whole church” includes women. Therefore, women **participated in choosing**.

“*So, when they were sent off, they went down to Antioch, and having gathered the congregation together, they delivered the letter. And when they had read it, they rejoiced because of its encouragement.*” (Acts 15:30-31)

Comment: The “congregation” included women who **heard and rejoiced**.

“*Then he gave orders to the centurion that he should be kept in custody but have some liberty, and that none of his friends should be prevented from attending to his needs.*” (Acts 24:23)

Comment: “Friends” included men and women who **attended to Paul’s needs**.

“*There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek, but glory and honor and peace for **everyone** who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek. For God shows no partiality.*” (Romans 2:9-11)

Comment: “Every human” makes no distinction between men and women who **do good or evil**.

“*For in Christ Jesus you are all sons ^a of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*” (Galatians 3:26-29)

Comment: A son had a legal right of a father’s inheritance. But “As many of you” who **were baptized** included women. Then women in Christ acquired the right of inheritance Paul then mentions that those in Christ are one. No one in Christ is a second-class Christian for all are servants and priest to serve of God. (1 Peter 2:16 and Revelation 1:6)

“*She who is at Babylon, who is likewise chosen, sends you greetings.*” (1 Peter 5:13)

Comment: “She” could either be a Christian woman or an assembly of Christians – don’t know.

“*The elder to the elect lady and her children, whom I love in truth, and not only I, but also all who know the truth.*” (2 John 1:1)

Comment: “The elect lady” could either be a Christian woman or an assembly of Christians – don’t know.

The terms all, each and every includes women. Therefore, Women are to participate for the Body of Christ to function as a united body otherwise part of the body is considered a drag on the body or dead.

Women's Activity and Attitude

"So, whether you (male or female) eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. Give no offense to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God, just as I try to please everyone in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage, but that of many, that they may be saved. Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ. Now I commend you because you remember me in everything and maintain the traditions even as I delivered them to you. But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man and the head of Christ is God. Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoreth his head (Christ). But every woman praying or prophesying (neither prohibited) with her head unveiled dishonoreth her head; for it is one and the same thing as if she were shaven. For if a woman is not veiled let her also be shorn: but if it is a shame to a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be veiled." (1 Corinthians 10:31– 11:6)

- always seek the other person's well-being – 10:24
- whatever you do, glorify God – 10:31
- men and women, do not dishonor your head – 11:4
- do not treat the financial poor Christian as inferior – 11:21
- don't consider your spiritual gift more important – 12:
- love is most important – it last forever. – 12:31-13:13
- encourage, respect, honor one another and especially those having responsibility for your well-being, avoid confusion – 14.

Comment: "Give no offense to Jews or to Greeks" means do not be the cause of a Christian brother or sister to lose faith by ignoring their customs and traditions.

Comment: "Tradition" from the Greek word *paradóseis* meaning substance of the teaching. (Thayer's)

Comment: "Prophesying" from the Greek word *propheteuoo* meaning foretelling future events pertaining to the kingdom of God or to utter forth, declare, a thing which can only be known by divine revelation. (Thayer's)

Comment: "Every Man" from the Greek word *andrós* meaning either man or husband depending on context.

Comment: "Every Woman" from the Greek word *gunaikós* meaning either woman or wife.

Comment: "Shorn or shaven" - Women who had their hair shorn indicated punishment of whoredom, or adultery. (Adam Clarke)

Comment: Paul is reminding the Corinthians that respect and honor is of utmost importance probably more than custom when praying or prophesying. The custom of the time was for men to remove their head covering in the presence of a superior and for women not to be seen in public without a head covering. So, was the head covering an act of righteousness or a custom of respect and honor? A husband could divorce his wife for such disrespect, not having her head covered. Paul's condemnation appears to be the dishonoring of God by a man who does not remove his head covering and by a woman dishonoring the man responsible for her wellbeing (husband, father or eldest brother) by not having her head covered by a veil. Both violate tradition and custom of respect in their society, or legal rights possibly imply acceptance of pagan practices. This does not prohibit either men or women from praying or prophesying. But one's freedom and liberty in Christ must never result in or lead to disrespect of others.

"A wife ought (under obligation) to have a symbol of authority (power) on her head, because of the angels. Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man nor man of woman; for as woman was made from man, so man is now born of woman. And all things are from God. Judge for yourselves: is it proper for a wife to pray to God with her head uncovered? Does not nature itself teach you that if a man wears long hair it is a disgrace for him, but if a woman has long hair, it is her glory? For her hair is given to her for a covering. If anyone is inclined to be contentious, we have no such practice, nor do the churches" of God." (1 Corinthians 11:10-16)

Comment: Actions of a woman who disrespects her husband, her head, is not proper.

Comment: During the times before and after Christ when Rome ruled the world, most women were considered under the authority or power of men. For married women the veil covering their hair, 1) signified her marital status, 2) her submission to the husband's status as head, 3) an indication of modesty and purity and 4) protected her from men's solicitations. Women without a veil were considered rebellious often prostitutes with hair cut short, shorn or shaven heads. Customs in one culture are not binding as law in other cultures. Today in some areas of the world; e.g., India, women wear symbols of their marital status. After a Hindu marriage is consummated, the wife is never supposed to leave her arms bare. She must always wear bangles to signify that she is married.

Comment: The veil (Greek *palla*) was the symbol of a married woman, and in their culture a mark of husband's authority.

Comment: Those in Christ 'not independent of' suggest not superior or inferior but equal in value to God and needed in His kingdom. Equal in Christ does not alter God's directive that the man has the responsibility for the family unit and that the woman by creation was his helper and companion, not his servant. Any action she does that is against the teachings of Christ and His apostles or against local customs such that the community consider her actions out of place, she dishonors her husband and does not promote the cause of Christ.

Comment: Daily activities must display respect and honor which promotes unity in all relationships whether in the family, community, work place, government or church whether assembled or not. Everyone in Christ, man or woman, has equal spiritual status before God.

"What then, brothers when you come together, each one has a hymn, ¹ a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, ² or an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up (encouragement). If any (man or woman) speak in a tongue, let there be only two or at most three, and each in turn (in sequence), and let someone (man or woman) interpret. But if there is no one to interpret, let each of them (man or woman) keep silent in church (the assembled body of Christ) and speak to himself (not gender specific) and to God. Let two or three prophets (not gender specific) speak, and let the others (not gender specific) weigh ³ what is said. If a revelation is made to another sitting there, let the first be silent. For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all be encouraged, and the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets. For God is not a God of confusion but of peace. As in all the churches (congregations or assemblies) of the saints, the women (your women, wife – KJV, NKJV, YLT) should keep silent in the churches (ekkleesiais – assemblies). For they are not permitted to speak,⁴ but should be in submission, as the Law also says. If there is anything they desire to learn, let them ask their husbands (ándras - any male person, a man - Biblesoft) at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church." (1 Corinthians 14:26-36)

Comment: "Brothers" Greek *adelphos* male and female. (Vine's)

Comment: "In submission" means being respectful to her husband by not embarrassing him in public. She can ask him at home.

Comment: "Not permitted to speak... as law also says" – "In Jesus' time, women participated fully in the religious life of the community. This included participation in synagogue services and in the regular study sessions that were conducted in the synagogue's *bet midrash* (house study). There was no separation of the sexes in synagogue and women could be counted as part of the required congregational quorum of ten adults. There was, however, one inequality. For social reasons, women were not allowed to read the Scriptures publicly.

[academia.edu/35099564/The_Place_of_Women_in_First_century_Synagogues_They_were_much_more_active_in_religious_life_than_they_are_today](https://www.academia.edu/35099564/The_Place_of_Women_in_First_century_Synagogues_They_were_much_more_active_in_religious_life_than_they_are_today)

Comment: In the Babylonian Talmud and the Tosefta, we find an early rabbinic (tannaic) ruling: "All are qualified to be among the seven [who read from the Torah in the synagogue on the Sabbath], even a minor or a woman; however, the sages ruled that a woman should not read from the Torah out of respect for the congregation." [Babylonian Talmud, Megillah 23] This is apparently a reference to the same social custom or decorum that we find in Paul's letter to the Corinthians. <https://www.academia.edu/35099564>

Comment: Some have interpreted “in submission” to refer to Genesis 3:16 “To the woman he said, ‘I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.’” They then draw the conclusion that women are prohibited completely from any appearance of rejecting their submissive role to man. They must remain silent in all public instructive situations especially in the church assemblies. Others believe it refers to Corinthian custom or some tradition of the Jews.

Comment: The Christians in Corinth were assembled together as Christ’s Body where they sang, taught (*didacheén*),⁵ gave revelations and spoke in other languages through interpreters. The purpose of assembling together was to encourage Christians to remain faithful and do good works. Speakers, men or women, who were not able to be understood because an interpreter was not present, were to keep quiet. Chaos and confusion caused by all at the same time praying, speaking or singing would cause visitors to think “you are out of your mind” and preventing God’s message from being heard. Allowing everyone speak or sing in succession, one following another, is respectful to God and one’s fellow man.

Comment: “Two or three prophets speak” – a prophet is a male or female through whom God speaks. (From Thayer’s Greek Lexicon)

Comment: While still on the subject of maintaining orderliness, Paul instructs the Corinthian women to keep silent and not interrupt their (*idíous* – one’s own) husband but wait and ask him when you get home. Paul’s instructions would not apply to Christian women whose husbands were pagans, dead or had abandoned them. The key is to respect their husband who was teaching and to respect others – men, women or visitors. So, “the law” probably refers to synagogue rules or traditions.

Comment: When assembled together all Christians are to participate in an orderly manner while respecting others, not all speak at the same time creating confusion and chaos. Women are not to question or challenge comments of the man responsible for their wellbeing, whether their husbands, father or brother or display a disrespectful attitude especially toward any man.

“Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, ... Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.” (Colossians 3:12, 16)

Comment: The “chosen ones” include women and men. Both are to teach and admonish in wisdom, knowledge. The instruction is silent as to whether this is to be done in private or assembly. The text states the teaching and admonishing is done in song in the heart unto God. But teaching and admonishing one another requires one to speak from their heart whether written word or spoken.

Footnotes:

Psalmón *Strong’s* NT#:1568; Vine’s Expository Dictionary - primarily denoted "a striking or twitching with the fingers (on musical strings)"; then, "a sacred song, sung to musical accompaniment, a psalm. Strong’s Numbers and Concordance - a set piece of music; i.e., a sacred ode (accompanied with the voice, harp or other instrument; a "psalm"); collectively, the book of the Psalms. Thayer’s Lexicon - a striking, twanging.

² *Glossa, glósssee*, Strong’s NT#:1100 - 1. the tongue, a member of the body, the organ of speech: Mark 7:33,35. 2. a tongue, i. e. the language used by a particular people in distinction from that of other nations (Thayer’s Lexicon); i.e., “Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God Acts” (2:11 KJV).

³ *Diakrinétoosan* Strong’s NT#:1252 – Thayer’s Greek Lexicon - make a distinction, discriminate, distinguish.

⁴ *laleoo* NT#:2980 - Thayer’s Greek Lexicon - to use words in order to declare one’s mind and disclose one’s thoughts;

⁵ *Didaskalos (didacheén)* - Strong’s NT#:1321, - appears 97 times - 83 relating to the teachings of Jesus, Holy Spirit or the Apostles, 5 times to the Pharisees, 1 time each to John the Baptizer, women [1 Timothy 2], Jezebel and Balaam and 3 other times. *Didáskein* Strong’s NT#: 1320, occurs 59 times – 46 as master in the Gospels, once as doctor in Luke, 1 time in the epistles as teacher and once as master in James.

Opinions Of A Few Commentaries: Albert Barnes Notes

““They were not to teach the people, nor were they to interrupt those who were speaking’ Rosenmuller. It is probable that, on pretence of being inspired, the women had assumed the office of public teachers.”

Comment: They held to the didactic teaching method of lecturing / sermonizing.

Adam Clarke Commentary

“There was ‘a Jewish ordinance (note the statement “as the law also says”); women were not permitted to teach in the assemblies, or even to ask questions. The rabbis taught that ‘a woman should know nothing but the use of her distaff (a tool used in spinning).’ And the sayings of Rabbi Eliezer, as delivered, Bammidbar Rabba, sec. 9, fol. 204, are both worthy of remark and of execration; they are these: ‘Let the words of the law be burned, rather than that they should be delivered to women.’”

Roy C Deaver

“The meeting in 1 Corinthians 14:26-40 was for the purpose of exercising and receiving the benefits of spiritual gifts. Prophets were exercising their gift of prophecy. ‘The prophets’ wives were instructed to ‘keep silent in the churches.’ They were not permitted to speak [break their silence]. They were to be in subjection. If they would learn anything (with regard to the message coming through the husband/prophet) they were not to interrupt the prophecy, but were to wait and ask their husbands at home. It was ‘shameful’ for the woman (wife) to speak in that meeting.” From Contending for the Faith October/1995, p. 2; Guy N. Woods, Questions and Answers OPEN FORUM Freed Hardeman College Henderson, TN: 1976), pp. 106-109.

Guy N. Woods

“Who were the women required to keep silent in the passage under study (1 Corinthians 14:34, 35)? They were the wives of the prophets considered in the foregoing paragraph (his comments on previous verses). Forbidden to interrupt, or to make inquiry, during the process of revelation, the apostle laid down the very sensible rule that they should wait a more opportune occasion to propound the question; i.e., until they were able to ask their husbands at home. These women were married, they had husbands; their husbands were capable of answering their inquiries at home.” From Contending for the Faith, October /1995, p. 10; from Roy C Deaver, The Role of Women (Wellington, Texas: Copyright, No Date), pp.13-15.

Others

“In world in the early days of the (Roman) Republic women were not even allowed to make suggestions, but by the beginning of the Empire many men were seeking and even following the advice of their wives. It was all right to do so, provided the advice was given in private. The Athenians men considered women not much better than property.” Power rest with the strongest.

Servants in General

Teachers

“For though by this time you [man or woman] ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food, for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child. But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.” (Hebrews 5:12-14)

The common theme throughout the New Testament is to proclaim the Gospel to the lost. First century evangelists performed the function of teaching the gospel to the lost and according to Acts 8:4. The Christians, man or woman, who were scattered from Jerusalem preached the Word wherever they went.

Today preachers primarily present their interpretation of some Biblical subject of their choosing to those in Christ without any opportunity for questioning or discussing. However, some preachers teach directly from the Bible by directing their thoughts to the passage under consideration. There is no mention of proclaiming the Gospel, death, burial and resurrection, again to those already in Christ, the saved.

God relies on Christians within His kingdom to teach and proclaim the gospel so that none perish and all remain faithful as a living sacrifice. The mission of the living Body of Christ, men and women is to:

- (a) **go into all the world** and proclaim the Gospel (Mark 16:15).
- (b) **do good to all people**, especially to believers (Gal. 6:9-10).
- (c) **encourage [edify] members of the Body** (1 Corinthians 14).
- (d) **speak to one another** in psalms and hymns (Ephesians 5:19).
- (e) **offer your bodies** to God as living sacrifices (Romans 12:1).

The most effective method of evangelizing is on an individual basis. It would be rare if conversions occurred from mass communications, a method used to create awareness and to provide a source for obtaining additional information.

If the gospel is to be preached to the entire world, then congregations of Christians must place more emphasis on evangelism regardless of the English name associated with the activity; e.g., teacher, minister, missionary, evangelist, preacher, servant, pastor, elder, watchman or disciple - but using Bible names will prevent confusion.

What is to be taught?

- Gospel – Mark 15:16
- Power of God unto salvation – Romans 1:16
- Death, burial, resurrection and ascension of Christ
- Word - Acts 13:1-5
- Apostles Doctrine – Acts
- Everything I commanded – Matt 28:19

Who is to teach?

- Evangelists – 2 Timothy 4:5
- Disciples – Mark 15:16
- Christians scattered abroad – Acts 8:4

How is the teaching to be done?

- No particular method is to be excluded, nor is any specific method required.

To whom is God’s message to be taught?

- All creation – Mark 15:16

When are His servants to teach?

- Teach as opportunity becomes available.

Where are those in Christ to take the Gospel?

- Wherever they went. Acts 8:4
- Where and when a person is interested. Acts 13:7
- When assembled together. Acts 20:7
- In foreign countries- Acts 13:2-3
- All the world – Mark 16:15

“In the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers (Greek didáskaloi): Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul. While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’” (Acts 13:1-2)

“But if you bear the name "Jew" and rely upon the Law and boast in God, and know His will and approve the things that are essential, being instructed out of the Law, and are confident that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, a corrector of the foolish, a teacher of the immature, having in the Law the embodiment of knowledge and of the truth, you, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself?” (Romans 2:17-21)

Comment “Corrector” from the Greek word *paideuteén* meaning an instructor.

Comment: “Teacher” from the Greek word *didaskálous, didáskoon* or *didáskeis* meaning one who instructs

“Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly.” (James 3:1-2)

*“But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them — bringing swift destruction on themselves. Many will follow their shameful ways and will bring the way of truth into disrepute. In their greed (Greek *pleonexia*) these teachers will exploit you with stories they have made up.” (2 Peter 2:1-3)*

Comment: “False teacher” from pseudo-*didáskaloi pseudo* meaning false and *didáskaloi* meaning instructor or teacher.

Comment: Greed generally refers to a unsatisfied desire for more money but can also include an inordinate desire for power or prestige.

“And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret?” (1 Corinthians 12:28-30)

“The man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all men — the testimony given in its proper time. And for this purpose, I was appointed a herald and an apostle — I am telling the truth, I am not lying — and a teacher of the true faith to the Gentiles.” (1 Timothy 2:5-7)

“But it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. And of this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher. That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet I am not ashamed, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day.” (2 Timothy 1:10-12)

Comment: “Herald,” preach is from the Greek word *keerux*.

“And the Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will.” (2 Timothy 2:24-26)

Every Christians should be involved in teaching in some manner, Hebrews 5:11. One of the requirements for shepherds, guardians, sentinels, from the Greek word *episkopeés* is to be skillful in communicating, so they can exhort and rebuke those God has assigned to their care. Shepherds who pass their teaching function to a paid professional does not appear to be a biblical concept. According to Ephesians 4:12, they are to “equip the saints for the work of ministry (*diakonia*), for building up the body of Christ.”

Examples of some servant's actions

So, every Christian is a servant performing a work necessary to keep the body of Christ vibrant. Therefore, the following scriptures provide a few examples of their actions.

*“Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.” 37 Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?” 38 And Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.” 40 And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, “Save yourselves from this crooked generation.” 41 So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. The Fellowship of the Believers. 42 And **they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.** 43 And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. 44 And all who believed were together and had all things in common.” (Acts 2:36-45)*

“And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. 2 Devout men buried Stephen and made great lamentation over him. 3 But Saul was ravaging the church, and entering house after house, he dragged off men and women and committed them to prison. 4 Now those who were scattered went about preaching the word.” (Acts 8:1-5)

“Now those who had been scattered by the persecution in connection with Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, telling the message only to Jews. 20 Some of them, however, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and began to speak to Greeks also, telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus. 21 The Lord's hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord.” (Acts 11:19-21)

“Now in these days prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. 28 And one of them named Agabus stood up and foretold by the Spirit that there would be a great famine over all the world (this took place in the days of Claudius). 29 So the disciples determined, everyone according to his ability, to send relief to the brothers living in Judea. 30 And they did so, sending it to the elders by the hand of Barnabas and Saul.” (Acts 11:27-30)

“On the Sabbath we went outside the city gate to the river, where we expected to find a place of prayer. We sat down and began to speak to the women who had gathered there. 14 One of those listening was a woman named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth from the city of Thyatira, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message. 15 When she and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home. ‘If you consider me a believer in the Lord,’ she said, ‘come and stay at my house.’ And she persuaded us.” (Acts 12:12-13)

“He (Herod) proceeded to arrest Peter also. This was during the days of Unleavened Bread. 4 And when he had seized him, he put him in prison, delivering him over to four squads of soldiers to guard him, intending after the Passover to bring him out to the people. 5 So Peter was kept in prison, but earnest prayer for him was made to God by the church. ... he (Peter) went to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose other name was Mark, where many were gathered together and were praying.” (Acts 12:3-6 ... 13-15)

“He (Paul) was accompanied by Sopater son of Pyrrhus from Berea, Aristarchus and Secundus from Thessalonica, Gaius from Derbe, Timothy also, and Tychicus and Trophimus from the province of Asia. 5 These men went on ahead and waited for us at Troas. 6 But we sailed from Philippi after the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and five days later joined the others at Troas, where we stayed seven days. 7 On the first day of the week, we came together to break bread. Paul spoke to the people and, because he intended to leave the next day, kept on talking until midnight.” (Acts 20:4-8)

“After three months we set sail in a ship that had wintered in the island, a ship of Alexandria, with the twin gods as a figurehead. 12 Putting in at Syracuse, we stayed there for three days. 13 And from there we made a circuit and arrived at Rhegium. And after one day a south wind sprang up, and on the second day we came to Puteoli. 14 There we found brothers and were invited to stay with them for seven days. And so, we came to Rome. 15 And the brothers there, when they heard about us, came as far as the Forum of Appius and Three Taverns to meet us. On seeing them, Paul thanked God and took courage.” (Acts 28:11-15)

“What then, brothers? When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up. 27 If any speak in a tongue, let there be only two or at most three, and each in turn, and let someone interpret. 28 But if there is no one to interpret, let each of them keep silent in church and speak to himself and to God. 29 Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others weigh what is said. 30 If a revelation is made to another sitting there, let the first be silent. 31 For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all be encouraged, 32 and the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets. 33 For God is not a God of confusion but of peace.” (1 Cor 14:26-33)

“And so, we came to Rome. 15 And the brothers there, when they heard about us, came as far as the Forum of Appius and Three Taverns to meet us. On seeing them, Paul thanked God and took courage.” (Acts 28:14-16)

From the above scriptures, it is worthy to note that the Kingdom, Christ Church, is people in action. Their actions may be as individuals, only a few and whether assembled together or not.

Warning to all Christians

Peter issued a warning to all Christians, "there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them - bringing swift destruction on themselves. Many will follow their shameful ways and will bring the way of truth into disrepute. In their greed (for money, power, control or prestige) these teachers will exploit you with stories they have made up." (2 Peter 2:1-3)

Comment: Prevention of false teaching is obtaining a better knowledge of the teachings of Christ and the apostles. Another possibility of false teaching is from a hireling, a preacher, with unknown personal opinions and interpretations, a wolf in sheep's clothing - see 2 Timothy 4:3-5.

The Holy Spirit through the apostle John in Revelation 2 and 3 warned the Christians in six of the churches in Asia to repent as they had fallen away or were gradually falling away from Christ.