

Why Do We Need the Five-Fold Ministry?

In many churches, people get excited when one of the so called “five-fold ministries” comes to town. (The name “five-fold” comes from the passage quoted below in Ephesians 4.) They hope to receive a personal prophetic word from the prophet, or see many people become Christians when an evangelist gives an altar call. They like to receive good teaching from someone with a teaching ministry. They hope to see these people showcase their gifts in an impactful way.

The only problem is that this is not the purpose of these gifts that Jesus has given to the church.

This is what Ephesians 4:11-12 says: “He gave some to be apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, for the equipping of the saints, for the work of service, and for the building up of the body of Christ.”

According to this passage, these people are gifts of Jesus to His church. The five-fold gifts of Ephesians 4 are there to equip God’s people to do the work of ministry. This means they impart to others, training them in the skills that are needed to function in their particular area of gifting. They are not doing all the work of ministry themselves.

The apostle trains others to think strategically about the kingdom, starting churches, etc.

The prophet teaches others to prophesy.

The evangelist teaches people to spread the good news of the kingdom and make disciples.

The teacher trains others in how to teach.

The pastor teaches people how to care for others.

The purpose of Ephesians 4 ministries is not that they showcase their gifts, but they train others with the skills they have been given.

*Adapted from **Felicity Dale**'s blog, Kingdom Women. Felicity Dale is an author and an advocate for women in the church. She trains people to start simple, organic house churches around the world.*