

Bethel Prophetic Minister: What Happened to All of the Apostles and Prophets?

Is everyone called to the fivefold ministry? I often get asked, "How do I know if I have been called to the office of a prophet, pastor, apostle, teacher or evangelist?" Within this question often lies an undertone of the desire for a clear-cut title and status of significance.

I'd propose we have missed the point if prestige is what we are searching for. The truth is, we were never told to desire an office or a title; rather, we were commanded to desire the gifts of the Spirit, especially prophecy. (See 1 Corinthians 14.)

Now, let me be clear: I understand the heart longing to know if you have been called to an office or even the simple desire to better understand the God-ordained purpose of a prophet, evangelist, pastor, apostle or teacher. It can often feel elusive and enigmatic to determine if you have been called to an office yourself. It can be even more confusing if the church largely preaches and portrays solely pastors, evangelists and teachers, leaving a large population unsure if there is still a purpose in the call of a prophet or apostle.

I'd propose that it is detrimental not only to the body but also to society when we silence the roles of prophets and apostles. Mankind's lens often becomes tainted by their own fears and failures, causing them to read between the lines and create a philosophy that fits their own comfortability and reasoning. However, we serve a God that has a much greater frame of reference; a purpose knit within the DNA of every structure and function in the body.

The Rise of the Pastor

There are many people in the global church who don't believe apostles and prophets are for today. In a time that has been inundated with resounding opinions on what still carries significance, I'd like to highlight a few statistics found in Scripture on the roles of the fivefold ministry.

- The word *pastor* was used one time in the New Testament (Eph. 4:11).
- The word *teacher* was used 68 times in the New Testament, and 52 of those times were in reference to Jesus.
- The word *evangelist* was used three times in the New Testament.
- The word *prophet* was mentioned 122 times in the New Testament alone.
- The word *apostle* was used 70 times in the New Testament.

Now to dig a little deeper—there are 25 named apostles in the New Testament, one named evangelist, and not a single named pastor. Now let me be clear: I am not saying the fact that there weren't any named pastors in the New Testament means there weren't any pastors in the early church. It is very likely that pastors were a core of the early church. Lastly, there are nine named prophets and four named teachers in the New Testament.

Isn't it interesting that in the early church we had all five offices present and the most widely used name was *apostle* and the second was *prophet*? Yet we seem to call nearly everyone in leadership today a pastor, even though there were none mentioned by name in the Bible. Following this line of reasoning, why do we think that apostles and prophets are destined to fade away in the time of the modern church while pastors, teachers and evangelists are destined to arise and lead the church in this day and age?

Ephesians 4:11-13 (NASB1995) says, "And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints

for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.” Did you catch that? It says *until* we all attain to the unity of faith. I’d propose the entire body is not unified and doesn’t fully look like Christ; therefore, the offices of the prophet and apostle are still essential in the body of Christ today.

The Office vs. the Gifting

In the questioning of purpose and importance in the office of a prophet and apostle, it is crucial to understand the difference between an office and a gifting. Here are just a few takeaways to help you better understand the differences.

A fivefold calling:

- The office is your identity; it is who you are.
- You cannot earn the call of the fivefold ministry.
- The office is not for your own benefit. The purpose of the fivefold ministry is to equip the body of Christ. “And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ” (Eph. 4:11-12).
- The gifts given by Christ are irrevocable. You cannot get fired, because you didn’t get hired; it is who you are.

A gifting:

- There are nine spiritual gifts listed in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10. However, I’d propose there are more giftings than just these nine.
- Spiritual gifts are gifts from the Holy Spirit, but we have also been instructed to earnestly seek them.

Therefore, you can ask to grow in spiritual giftings.

- Spiritual gifts are not a reward; you cannot earn or achieve them. They are simply gifts.

School of the Prophets

I am passionate about bringing clarity and understanding to every office within the fivefold ministry because when I first had an encounter and was shown the call of a prophet that was on my life, I was left uncertain about how to live it out. I was not surrounded by other prophets and did not know how this role was supposed to play out in the church.

If you have found yourself questioning whether or not you have been called to an office, or if you are worried you won't be given crystal clear direction, I want to encourage you to take a deep breath—the Lord works beyond our confined timelines. If you have been called to the office of a prophet but are impatiently waiting to see this play out in your life, I'd propose there is always a journey from the promise to the palace that prepares us for our God-given destiny. It was 20 years after my private encounter with the Lord that I was publicly acknowledged as a prophet. {eoa}

For the original article, visit .

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