

## How to Be Active in a Local Church

Ephesians 4:11-16

### Introduction:

- A. Last message we learned why every believer should be active in the local church
  - 1. Because of what we have in common (It's more important and powerful than any differences)
  - 2. Because of what we have been given (a spiritual gift to be used in the body of Christ, the church)
- B. Today's message we will learn how to be active in the local church.
  - 1. Four offices are named in Eph 4:11 that Jesus established to equip those with the spiritual gifts He distributed.
    - a. Apostles - this office is no longer existent because Jesus limited the number to TWELVE (see Rev 21:14)
    - b. Prophets – no one fills this office presently but Rev 11:3 states that TWO prophets will arise in the time of the beastly government. (The purpose of the two offices of apostles and prophets was to lay the church's foundation – Eph 2:20).
    - c. Evangelists – this is the office of the missionary, church planter, where the focus is on proclaiming the gospel to the lost, planting churches, and/or making sure new believers get connected with a local church.
    - d. Pastor-teachers – this office functions by one caring for a church group like a shepherd caring for his flock and teaching them God's word.
  - 2. There are three steps given in this passage that show how to be active in the local church.

### Be teachable but not gullible (12a, 14)

- A. My duty as your pastor-teacher (12a)
  - 1. There are not three duties listed as the KJV seems to state
    - a. The prepositions are different in the Greek text and are literally translated as: *He gave some to be pastor-teachers **FOR** the equipping of the saints **INTO** a work of service, **INTO** a building up of the body of Christ.*
    - b. There is only one duty listed for the pastor-teacher which is to equip believers in a way that builds up the church.
  - 2. The act of equipping (KJV – perfecting; NIV – preparing)
    - a. The Greek word translated as equipping, perfecting, preparing
      - 1) Only used here in the N.T.

- 2) Common in other Greek literature and originally meant to furnish a house.
  - 3) This word pictures the pastor-teacher as furnishing believers with what they need to serve God and one another.
- b. Closely connected with grounding you in God's word (v. 14)
- B. Your response to my teaching
1. You are not to be gullible like little children who believe everything they hear.
    - a. Do not depend on the pastor to be the interpreter of God's word.
    - b. Check out what the pastor is teaching to make sure it accurately reflects what God's word is saying (see Acts 17:11).
  2. But you are to be teachable – receive teachings with eagerness, with an open mind (Acts 17:11)
  3. Use the tools given you
    1. The Bible (2Tim 3:16,17)
    2. Sermon notes
    3. Past messages (online)
    4. Discuss with others

### **Serve God where your gift is needed (12b, 16)**

- A. The word ministry and service (12b) - KJV reads, *ministry*, where other version read, *service*.
1. The English language often uses the term ministry to refer to what a pastor or missionary does (*He is going into the ministry*)
  2. The Biblical language sees every believer as a m\_\_\_\_\_ and everything that they do in serving God as m\_\_\_\_\_
- B. The ministry or service of every believer is pictured in the local church as the individual p\_\_\_\_\_ of a body working properly (16)
1. This shows that each one of you have something u\_\_\_\_\_ to offer to God's work that will make the local church effective.
  2. Your place in the body corresponds with the spiritual g\_\_\_\_\_(s) and abilities and your God-given desires (Prov 3:5,6)
- C. The broadest categories of spiritual gifts as given in Rom 12 (see handout with the above name)
- D. Do not mix up spiritual gifts with spiritual responses
1. Some might use their spiritual gift as an excuse not to respond (e.g. *since I do not have the gift of giving, then I don't have to give to this person in need* – but see Jms 2:15,16).

2. Every believer is required to respond, demonstrating characteristics of \_\_\_\_\_ the stewardship gifts. (see handout entitled Characteristics Every Christian Must Develop)

**Connect meaningfully with one another (12c, 13, 15)**

- A. The goal of using our spiritual gift is to b\_\_\_\_\_ up the body of Christ, the church (12c)
  1. The ongoing effort of building up one another pictures a body that is m\_\_\_\_\_ spiritually (13) - KJV uses the term perfect, where others use the term mature and either is a possible translation.
    - a. The most basic meaning of the word is to reach a g\_\_\_\_\_
    - b. Perfection is not a viable goal (no perfect church body), but maturity is (we always have room to g\_\_\_\_\_)
  2. The goal of building up the body is:
    - a. Unity of the f\_\_\_\_\_ - our relationship with one another
    - b. Unity of the k\_\_\_\_\_ of the Son of God (the term refers to a personal relationship) – our relationship with Jesus.
- B. Two specific actions that we all are to do (15)
  1. Speak the truth to one another in l\_\_\_\_\_
    - a. This requires us to get to know one another so we have meaningful c\_\_\_\_\_
    - b. Connect with one another before and after services, in small groups (like Bible Study)
  2. G\_\_\_\_\_ up in every way in our relationship to Christ.
    - a. If we speak the truth in love, we need to r\_\_\_\_\_ the truth that is spoken to us in love.
    - b. By speaking and receiving this way we will grow in our r\_\_\_\_\_ to Jesus, affecting every area of our lives.

**Conclusion** – Will you be active in the local church and stay active?

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