

He Himself Gave Pastors & Teachers to Equip

“¹¹ He Himself gave some to be emissaries, prophets, proclaimers of the Good News, and some as shepherds and teachers—¹² to equip the kedoshim for the work of service, for building up the body of Messiah” (Eph. 4:11-12)

Is there a Scriptural job description for the people who lead a Messianic Congregation? When I understood this, I was free to execute the office I had been called to. Until that time, we had thought we had to be *'the all in all'* in our congregation and the outlook was bleak because we knew we could not ever measure up to such a standard. The *mindset* associated with this passage can be summarized as: 'We who are pastors/teachers have to equip Believers to do the Work of Ministry to edify the Body.' We are ultimately trainers of ministry teams.

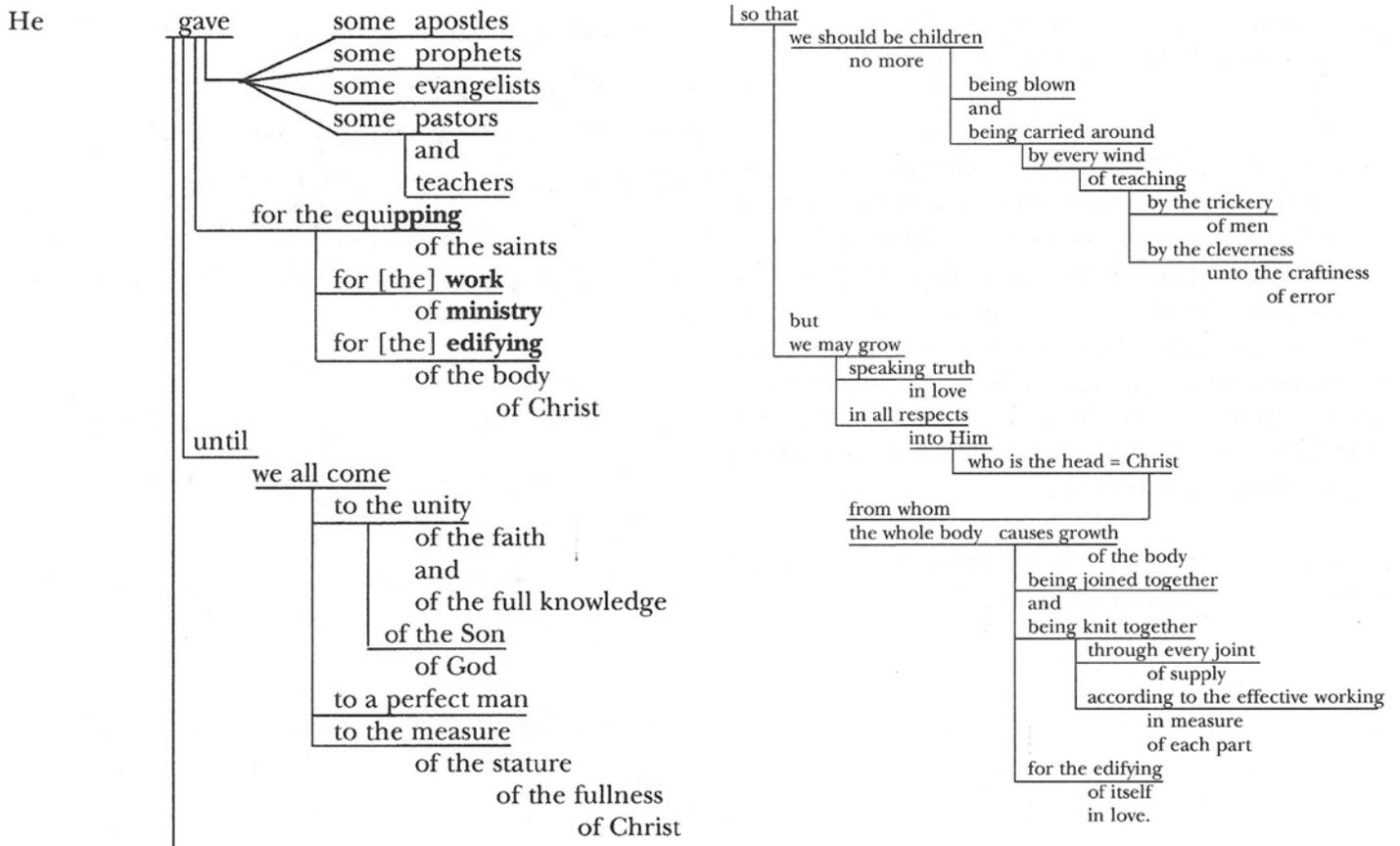


DIAGRAM VIEW OF EPHESIANS 4:11-6 'THE JOB DESCRIPTION OF THE FIVE GIFTS OF MINISTRY'

Notice that the passage starts with “He Himself.” In Greek it is as intensive as you can get. There is no question Who did it (the Almighty), and that He gave these people as gifts (*charismata*) to the Body. Why did He give them – to explain what the Bible says? No, read it again! In a typical congregational setting when someone attends a typical class or message the teacher/preacher thinks his responsibility is to tell the audience what the passage means so that when they leave they have in their head exactly what the meaning of those words is and a clear understanding of them. But that is not what Ephesians 4:11-16 says.

The key words in Ephesians 4:12 are: equipping, work, ministry and edify/building up. In the Greek, equipping (*katartizmon*) comes from a medical technical term for the setting of a bone. It is also used in Matthew 4:21 for the mending of nets, and in Galatians 6:1 for the restoration of those who have fallen into sin. More generally is used in the sense of the preparation or equipping for something – the dynamic act by which persons or things are properly conditioned. Work (*ergon*) means deed or action – the physical activity of

actively doing something that demonstrates or proves that one's faith is real, the concrete outworking of what one believes. Ministry (*diakonian*) refers to any and all acts of service in the Believing Community (1 Cor. 16:15, Rev. 2:19, Acts 11:29, 12:25, 2 Tim. 4:11, 2 Cor. 11:8, etc. Edify or building up (*oikodomen*) refers to spiritual strengthening, construction, causing growth and expansion of the Believing Community through the Spirit. Spiritual gifts are therefore judged according to what they contribute to the edifying of the community.

In this context, the following axioms are evident. Equipping is the responsibility of pastors and teachers. It occurs best when these leaders assume their Biblical role. Equipping is evaluated by what the people do outside the congregation and should impact both congregant character and conduct. It should focus more intensely on the most committed because equipping requires knowledge, skill and long-term commitment. The ultimate goal is to duplicate oneself, that is, train a team of equippers to train others in a life of service and edification.

The **methodology** steps that should be used in accomplishing His goals for His body are:

1. To **Instruct** or **Educate** and **Prepare**. This can be summarized in “*I tell you.*”
2. To **Illustrate**, **Expose**, and **Preview**. We demonstrate what we are doing so that “*You watch me do it.*”
3. To **Involve**, **Experience** and **Practice**. This is where “*We do it together.*”
4. To **Improve**, **Effectively**, **Perform/Produce**. Here is where “*I watch you do it.*”
5. To **Inspire**, **Encourage** and **Perfect/Professionalize**. Here is where we communicate, “*Keep it up.*”

Therefore:

Train your audience until they are successful independent users of the skill.

Reproduce yourself by focusing on their skill, not your methodology.

Alter equipping according to your people's characteristics and circumstances.

Increase motivation by relationship, retribution and reward. We follow *Yeshua's* model “*if you love me, you will keep my commandments.*”

Nail down the basic before trying to develop advanced skills.

Encourage often and especially during early training. Become a people blossomer.

Reaffirm people independent of their level of performance.

As we all evaluate ourselves in order to become true disciples of messiah we should all ask ourselves “How have we been equipping others in my ministry? What needs to change? How should I accomplish that change?” Limited time and opportunity require that we carefully invest our lives. Paul said to pass the truth on to faithful ones. Therefore, we should spend our time equipping our '*Timothys*' and '*Tituses*.' Choose carefully and always start with your family. Remember the principle of multiplication – we are to raise more disciples for Him. It has been said that motivation is the key to success. As such, we should consider carefully *Yeshua's* use of the Three R's – the motivations of *relationship*, *retribution* and *reward*. Let us also not forget that even veteran professional football or baseball players review the basics every year in training camp or spring training. Entreat the Lord: 'how can we best equip your Body?' Shabbat Shalom!