

CONVERSATION GUIDE

1. Take 5-10 minutes to discuss last week's sermon "We Are a Family", from 1 Cor 12.

INTRODUCTION

Believers are "Equipped for a Purpose" by Christ. Paul articulates how believers achieve that purpose in his letter to the Ephesians. In the first three chapters, Paul describes what Christ does for believers. By following Christ, believers are transformed. In Ephesians 4, Paul details how followers of Christ should live. Paul says in Eph 4:7-8 **But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. ... [he] "gave gifts to men."**

READ Ephesians 4:11-13

It was he [Christ] 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.

DISCUSS and REFLECT

1. What stands out to you in these verses?
2. What are the roles of the apostles? Prophets? Evangelists? Pastors (or shepherds) and teachers?

Ephesians 4:11-13 describes the ministry pattern of the early church. The aim of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers is to equip the believers to do the work of the ministry. The five groups communicate the word of God to believers.¹

The clergy serves the laity by teaching and preparing them for ministry. The clergy trains,

¹ Stedman, Ray C., sermons: Eph 4:11-12, Ch 7: How the Body Works and Ch 8: Shaping Up the Saints; Series: Body Life, 1972, <http://www.raystedman.org>.

Boice, James Montgomery, Ephesians, Ch 23: Body Life, Baker 1998.

motivates, and strengthens laypeople to do the work of the ministry. Laypeople serve others by building up the church and by ministering to those in their spheres of influence and to the world.²

Observation questions:

3. Who does the clergy serve?
What does the clergy do?
4. What are the goals of the works of service?

Interpretation question:

5. Why do these goals matter?

APPLY

6. For what purpose are you equipped?
7. How are you equipped to achieve that purpose in each role in your life, e.g. follower of Christ, friend, family member, co-worker?
8. In what ways do you experience FPC clergy equipping you to serve?

MEMORIZE

Choose 1-2 verses from the passage to memorize.

Pray for discernment and accurate assessment of your stewardship of your gifts. Consider seeking wisdom from other Christians about how you use your gifts.³

For further reading:

Stedman, Ray C. Body Life. Glendale, CA: Regal Books. 1972. Body Life, Revised and Expanded. Discovery House, 1995.

² Ibid.

³ Boice, *ibid.*