

Bridgeway Community Church  
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## HIGH FIVE!

### Mighty in Faith

“Maturing believers know **what to believe** and they know **why they believe it.**”

As believers mature they gain the ability to remain in unity with other believers, even though they may hold different theological or biblical views. Because a mature believer decides not to fight over every theological view that may be different than theirs and it doesn't mean that they're being wishy washy or being weak in their beliefs. It simply means that as you grow and mature as a believer, you become wiser as the enemy's schemes to try to divide, distract, and bring division and diversion.”

“As mature believers in Christ, you learn how to let go of arguments and how to let go of the different debates that can so suck you in that you get off of your purpose and get off point.”

“We may hold strong doctrines boldly. We may teach strong theology rigorously. We may actually preach and teach and write but the need to argue down others because of a different belief system is less important with Christian maturity.”

Philippians 3:15-16 NIV84

All of us who are mature should take such a view of things. And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you.

<sup>16</sup>Only let us live up to whatever we have already attained.

“This is true about many areas of life when you begin maturing. You start to see that there are battles that are worth fighting and there are others that are not. That's maturity, not weakness.”

“While you and I have strong beliefs, we are disinterested in spending lots of energy trying to make everyone believe the way we do. We share, we love, we persuade the best we can, then we trust God, pray and get out of the way. Let God be God.”

“Stop nagging! Stop arguing! Stop manipulating! Stop trying to be the Holy Spirit in someone else’s life.”

And the older you get the more you begin to realize how much you actually don’t know the more mature you become. This maturation process tends to temper the arrogance of your younger self when you thought you knew EVERYTHING, doesn’t it?! The younger, less mature Christian version of yourself is often more dogmatic than the more mature you, where you leave some of the greatest unknowns up to God.

- You learn to just love people & let grace cover a multitude of sins and/or unknowns.
- You learn that putting other believers down doesn't bring unity. It creates dissension, division, and artificial spiritual hierarchies.
- Mature and mighty believers don’t need to bully other believers into their convictions.

“Instead, mature believers help those who are weaker in their faith to become stronger by lifting them up, by teaching them, by speaking to them with respect, by correcting them where necessary, and loving them through the process so that they would become stronger in the Lord over time.”

Question: How do we get to this level of maturity? How do churches get to this level of maturity?

Answer: God endows the church with spiritual leaders who help us grow towards such maturity & mightiness in Christ.

Leaders who can help us become fruitful & faithful.

Let’s discover and define who these leaders are and how we can learn from them.

“It doesn’t mean people don’t have personal responsibility, where they have to engage growth...no doubt about it...to help yourself grow in the faith, to spiritual respond to God and to take from the leaders that God has given you to help you grow to become the kind of mature Christians that I know you want to become.”

There are spiritual leadership offices from Ephesians 4:11-16 to help us understand the role of spiritual leadership in our lives.

## A WORD OF CAUTION

While these offices have assigned roles and anointings, the people who serve in them are STILL HUMAN BEINGS who are also given the heroic role of serving the body of Christ. These are not perfect people!

- They deal with temptation, sin, negative emotions, hurts, habits, and hangups; and sometimes even depression and anxiety, just like you do!
- They have marriages that falter, and sometimes even fail.
- money problems
- morality challenges
- wayward children
- flawed siblings
- mentally disturbed relatives
- traumatic upbringings
- Etc...just like the followers they are trying to lead.

As a result, they are called to live in the crucible of leading God's people while navigating their own personal challenges in a way that doesn't cause others to stumble or blow up their own lives & families in the process.

"Some...no, many, have had to come out of ministry because the crucible is just too crushing for them to survive the emotional & spiritual anguish that ministry demands and spiritual leadership requires."

### **Practical Application:** PRAY FOR YOUR SPIRITUAL LEADERS

"As we go into this passage, we are going to see that one of the things that God has done is he's set up these divine offices to actually help the church of Jesus Christ operate in a functional and might way on the earth but he is using normal and everyday people to do it, but these leaders and these offices are a gift to the ministry."

Ephesians 4:11-16 NIV84

It was he who gave some to be the apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, <sup>12</sup> to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up <sup>13</sup> 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. <sup>14</sup> Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. <sup>15</sup> Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. <sup>16</sup> From

him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

God has established the Church as His primary vehicle of spiritual growth for His people so that they would represent His kingdom on the earth. In order to do this, the church has to become mature & mighty in Christ.

God established spiritual offices, which is referred to by many as the 5-Fold offices/ ministry (Apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, & teacher).

**“Today I want to break down to you what is the five fold ministry according to the passage...these five offices...”**

Apostle      Prophet      Evangelist      Pastor      Teacher

The goal of such offices of spiritual leadership is to equip and prepare the people of God for works of service to do the ministry.

Question:      How do the 5 spiritual offices operate and how can our faith grow because of them?

Let's define the offices:

**APOSTLE** – The office of the Apostle can be defined as a parental overseer of multiple ministries that he/she has founded and gives spiritual covering over. The office of the Apostle also encapsulates the idea of a Bishop.

**PROPHET** – The human voice of God's truth to His people, or in the land, predicting coming actions from heaven calling the people of God to come in agreement with that which is spoken.

- This prophet's role in the Old Testament was much more about foretelling, while in the New Testament the role of the prophet is much more about “forth” telling the truth and declaring God's truth in line with the written word of God.
- This is why I am excited about the **30 hour revival service** on October 30th (29th-30th). Sign up: [Bridgeway.cc/thirty](http://Bridgeway.cc/thirty)

- We will have PROPHETIC DECLARATIONS! This will be a time where a prophetic person will *declare & decree* what they believe God is saying to the church after the word of God is preached!
- This is an introduction to a new dimension of ministry in our church

**EVANGELIST** – The Evangelist is the mouthpiece of God to preach the gospel, sharing the good news of salvation to an unsaved world compelling them to trust Jesus Christ as Lord and savior.

- The Evangelist could also be synonymous with what we might call a “**Preacher**”, one who proclaims the gospel, “**evangel**”, good news.

**PASTOR** – The office of Pastor is the role of a caring under shepherd who tends to the flock of one church, leading and feeding the people of God with the tender, and sometimes, tough hands of care, nurture, and spiritual influence.

**TEACHER** – The teacher is the one who explains the scriptures and trains learners in the knowledge and ways of God. The teacher communicates God’s word in a way that the learner can grasp and understand the elementary and deeper truths of God.

**ANALOGY** - One way of thinking about these spiritual offices are:

The **Apostle** establishes and builds the house.

The **Prophet** promotes and keeps the rules of the house, while warning rule breakers inside and outside of the house.

The **Evangelist** brings new people into the house.

The **Pastor** tends to and cares for the people who come into the house.

The **Teacher** feeds those in the house like a good chef while also explaining the rules and benefits of the house so they can teach others.

- While the first 3 offices are foundational to the church, it is the last 2 offices that are necessary for spiritual growth on a regular basis.
- The foundation offices build and sustain the house, but the pastors & teachers are the ones who are leading & feeding, caring for & tending to the flock.

- The Apostles, Prophets, and Evangelists are not the hands of care in the church
  - They are the bones, the structure, and the pillars that keep the church ordered, organized, and operating according to God's desire and design.
- However, the pastors and teachers are the ones shepherding you and feeding you God's word.
- The Elders, the Apostle (me - church planter) are the overseers of the house that provide covering for everyone
  - The reason why you have clergy that are flowing in unity with their gifts and ministry is because you have the apostle and elders covering the house where they can flow.
  - As the top under-shepherd, I am the one who gives credibility, platforms, opportunities, and entrusts spiritual influence to clergymen and women to steward in this house.
  - It is a ministry of trust! I am placing your spiritual lives in their hands. If I trust them, you can trust them. If I don't trust them, then you should wonder why.
- Pastors/Teacher's ears should be bent to the prophets. Taking it in, praying about it.
  - In addition, Pastors/teachers should partner with the Evangelists to receive new sheep into the flock.

**This is God's dream team and plan for the organization & organism of the church.**

**The three-fold fruit from the five-fold ministry from verse 13 in the passage:**

Ephesians 4:13 NIV84

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.

1. Unity in the Faith (v.13)
2. Knowledge of the Son of God (v.13)
3. Becoming mature (v.13)

## 1. UNITY IN THE FAITH

Luke 5:17-20 NIV84

One day as he was teaching, Pharisees and teachers of the law, who had come from every village of Galilee and from Judea and Jerusalem, were sitting there. And the power of the Lord was present for him to heal the sick. <sup>18</sup> Some men came carrying a paralytic on a mat and tried to take him into the house to lay him before Jesus. <sup>19</sup> When they could not find a way to do this because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and lowered him on his mat through the tiles into the middle of the crowd, right in front of Jesus. <sup>20</sup> When Jesus saw their faith, he said, "Friend, your sins are forgiven."

That biblical example shows us the faith of 4 friends. What you may not have noticed is that in order for those 4 friends to accomplish this goal, they had to be in unity!

"While there's always room for debate & deliberation, there is also a time when believers are to come into agreement & unity to accomplish moves of faith."

"People get healed when leaders are unified. People get healed when people grow together under a ministry where they are mature & mighty in Christ."

This is a picture of the church of Jesus Christ working together to achieve great spiritual results. Spiritual Leaders call people to come together to achieve amazing results. When you have spiritual leaders within a ministry that can no longer pick up their corner of the mat to selflessly serve others, then it is time for them to move over and let someone else serve.

"Find a place that you can be excited about serving selflessly because ministry is not about ME. It's about WE! We don't have time for individual agendas! There are too many people who are paralyzed on the side of the road who need a savior! We don't have time for church drama. We don't have time for church division over minor matters. We don't have time for church dissension on who wears what, who said what, who is dating who. We need to get back to the Father's business and compel people to get their corner!"

## 2. KNOWLEDGE OF THE SON OF GOD

The word “knowledge” is the Greek word - *epignōskō* - knowledge gained through a first-hand relationship & experiential knowing.

There are other Greek words for intellectual learning, but this word is NOT

The second fruit that comes from those who are spiritually leading is encouragement to gain first-hand knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. Your spiritual leaders want you to know/experience Jesus for yourself. They encourage to have your own experiences with the son of God so that you are not dependent on them only

- **Cultic leaders** want you to depend on them for everything
- **Healthy spiritual leaders** leave room for you to struggle with God yourself

Healthy spiritual leaders are guardians of the “unity of the faith” and encouragers of you gaining personal, first-hand “knowledge of the son of God”

## 3. BECOMING MATURE

**SPIRITUAL MATURITY EQUATION:** Unified Faith with Others + Firsthand Experiences with Christ = Spiritual Maturation

As you join your faith with others in a ministry; and as you have firsthand experience with Christ; you will grow spiritually! FAST!

## CONCLUSION

The five-fold ministry should produce three-fold fruit

That fruit is Faith, Knowledge, and Maturity

The Spiritual Maturity Equation is this - FAITH + KNOWLEDGE = MATURITY

## PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

### 1. Make Prayer for your Spiritual Leaders a Priority (Hebrews 13:18)

Hebrews 13:18 NIV84

Pray for us. We are sure that we have a clear conscience and desire to live honorably in every way.

### 2. Make it a Joy for Your Spiritual Leaders to Lead You (Hebrews 13:7 & 17)

Hebrews 13:7 NIV84

Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith.

Hebrews 13:17 NIV84

Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a JOY, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.

Not just obedience but honor too.

Ephesians 6:2 NIV84

“Honor your father and mother”—which is the first commandment with a promise

“Honor is about not just obeying when you’re told to do something. It’s really about trying to live a life that is honorable to God and to the people who have authority and influence in your life.”

### 3. Make the Prayer of Hebrew 13:20-21 Your Personal Desire

Hebrews 13:20-21 NIV84

May the God of peace who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, 21 equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.