

A Call to Ministry

Ephesians 4:11-13

Notes

God calls people into ministry leadership for the purpose of unifying his church in the likeness and mission of Jesus

I. INTRODUCTION

When we think of leadership, good leaders, great leaders, we often think of men like Teddy Roosevelt, King David, and Winston Churchill. For our young people you may think of Tony Stark, King Leonidas, or Superman.

Good leaders have certain qualities. Good leaders display certain things and have certain traits.

I dare say that many churches, in fact most church splits and divisions have come at the hands of poor and divisive leaders. One of my seminary professors told us in one of our leadership classes, "Churches will put up with poor preaching and even some incorrect theology, but they will not put up with an incompetent leader."

The reason that many churches have poor leaders is that they do not take the word of God serious when choosing their leaders and many pastors don't take the word of God serious when it comes to leading God's church.

Today is a special day for FBC De Soto, for today is the day that we as a church appoint two new pastors to our family. These men have shown themselves true to the Word, to living out the word as faithful disciples, and faithful supporters, servants, and leaders in our church.

These men have been nominated by the church and have gone through seminary level training for over a year; they have worked through sermons and learned how to preach; they have gone through interviews with myself and Pastors Gene and Hayden; they were unanimously recommended to the church by the personnel committee and the pastors. They were voted on by the church with over 96% approval, and so today at the end of our service we will formally ordain these men into the gospel ministry.

Before we get to that moment though, I want us to consider a text this morning.

I want us to look at Ephesians 4:11-13. In these texts we will see both the purpose of the pastor and leader.

In doing so I not only hope to show us what God is doing in our faith family, but it is also my prayer that this message sparks a fire in some of your hearts.

Maybe God has been calling you to step up and serve in one of the many ministries we have in the church. Maybe God has been calling you to leadership in a ministry position. Maybe God

has been moving your heart to be a missionary or be in part-time or full-time ministry, but you don't know what that is or what that looks like.

My prayer for you this morning is that you see God working in this church, this community, and this world and you follow him to wherever he is working. May the Lord use this message to move you to action in the Kingdom of God.

II. GODLY LEADERS POINT TO JESUS

As Paul is writing to the Ephesian church, he spends the first three chapters laying a theological foundation for chapters 4-6 which give instruction on how to live.

As he begins Chapter 4, he shows the church the necessity of being united in the Spirit of God.

In this discussion he shows them that God himself has appointed leaders in the church to aid in this unity through building up the church, strengthening the church, and pointing the people to Jesus.

The closer each individual moves to Jesus, the more the church is unified in Christ.

Paul shows us this plainly in verse 11-13.

¹¹ And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, ¹² for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; ¹³ 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.

This is one of my personal favorite passages in the New Testament regarding leadership. This passage has a general call of leadership and its purpose in the church, but this passage also shows us how God has an individual call on each of our lives.

What does Paul tell us? God himself has supplied his church with all the leaders needed to accomplish the mission of the church.

God began by giving the church apostles (Jesus' twelve), then he gave the church prophets (those who proclaim the word of God yet to come), then he provided the church with evangelists (those specially gifted in travelling, sharing the gospel, and training others in sharing the gospel).

Next, God gave to his church those who would serve in the church.

Apostles, prophets, and evangelists don't work in the church, but on behalf of the church to establish, set up, and spread the message of the church.

But those who are pastors and teachers in the church, those in ministry leadership in the church, God provided them to work within the church.

We need to notice something, and I want to say it again. God has provided for his church.

This is not exhaustive here, but in this short list we see both serving and speaking gifts.

Sometimes people will wonder why so and so is in ministry or leadership in the church and to be sure there are those who are not called into ministry but are in ministry for the wrong reasons.

For the one who is serving the church faithfully and with integrity, we need to recognize that God himself has called that person to the ministry and it is God who has placed that individual in the church.

The church may call and confirm a ministry leader, but it is God who appoints.

We know that God appoints servant leaders to his church, but why?

I'm glad you asked. Paul tells us the purpose of ministry leaders in the church is *for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; ¹³ 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.*

God's plan for ministry leadership is to strengthen and build his church in the image of Jesus so the mission of Jesus may be fulfilled.

The whole work of service in and for the body of Christ is to equip the saints; to make the church stronger.

When God brings people into the ministry, whether that be the professional ministry or the lay ministry; he may bring in a lead pastor or a Sunday school teacher; he may bring in a ministry leader or a nursery worker; he may call an evangelist or a missionary; all these individuals that God calls is for the purpose of strengthening the church so the church may fulfill its mission of developing disciples.

We recognize fully that God has called men and women into the ministry here at FBC De Soto and he has called you into the ministry so you can help us exalt Christ, equip the saints, and engage the lost world with the gospel.

You may be here, and you are not in ministry in any way, and you may have never imagined yourself in the ministry.

I was just as you. I could not imagine myself ever as a pastor, even when I went to seminary, I never would have thought I would be serving as a pastor.

You never know how or when God may use you, but can I ask you this? What would your life look like if you surrendered to what God is calling you to do?

There are many here, young, and old, full-time and part-time, who God desires to use in the ministry that have not answered the call to the ministry.

Can I ask you to respond to the call of ministry today?

Chris and Daniel are wonderful examples of men who have full-time jobs outside of the church who have answered the call to ministry.

You don't have to serve in a full-time role to be a minister of the gospel or a ministry leader.

Paul tells Timothy in **2 Tim. 3:17** that the reason for the gifts, specifically the speaking gifts of the Word is ***“so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.”***

When you step up and answer the call to ministry in the church you are allowing God to use you to equip and train others.

Here’s the thing. Every person is called to serve, but in that call, some are called to lead out in service. You may be that person today.

Paul gives three reasons, or it may be better called a time frame, but he gives three means for measuring how long we are to use our gifts in building up and equipping the church.

- ***“until we attain to the unity of the faith”***
 - We all possess the same faith. We must work at building up the faith of each believer.
 - We are to use our gifts to build up the church until we are all firmly unified in the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- Until we have ***“the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man”***
 - This knowledge is *“epignosis”* and it means a full knowledge, precise, correct.
 - The state at which knowledge is lacking is where we lack maturity. As we grow in our knowledge of God and Christ, we become more mature.
 - We are called to serve in our calling until the church has a perfect knowledge of Jesus.
 - The beautiful picture of this is that this will not be attained until we see Christ, so we are all called to serve in our areas of ministry or in ministry leadership until Christ returns.
- Until we have the knowledge so that we have ***“the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.”***
 - The ***“fullness of Christ”*** is all the attributes that make Christ who he is. When Christ’s qualities reside fully in us, we will have reached the measure of Christ.

You may be here this morning and you have been serving for a while in one area and you feel God calling you to step up into an area of leadership.

You may be here, and you are not serving in any area, but you know God is calling you to serve in an area of ministry in the church.

God may be calling you to ministry. He may use you as a pastor or missionary. He may use you to start a childcare ministry. He may use you to begin a ministry to the homeless and broken or to the addict or abused.

He may use you to lead in women’s ministry or men’s ministry.

Don’t allow where you have been or where you are right now to keep you from where God wants to take you.

As we come to a time of decision this morning, we will not have a traditional prayer time.

In just a moment Bro. Gene will come and preach a charge to Chris and Daniel.

These men have answered the call God has placed on their hearts.

They have proven to be men who meet the biblical qualifications for pastors in Jesus' church.

They have faithfully served this church and have undergone all the criteria necessary to serve in the office of pastor.

Chris and Daniel both serve as examples of humble servants and as examples of men who have answered the call of God on their lives.

They have answered the call.

My prayer and hope are that you will answer the call God is placing on your heart today.

Will you step up and step out in faith and answer the call of God today?

May we faithfully serve the Lord in whatever he calls us to do.