The Ministry

We believe in the ministries that Christ has set in His Church, namely, apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers and in the present operation of the manifold Gifts of the Holy Spirit according to the New Testament.

Gifts of the Father

These might be what we call natural gifts and abilities. They are not supernatural gifts, but they are talents that we can use spiritually for His glory.

> *"Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms... so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ." 1 PETER 4:10-11*

Gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, prophecy, discernment of spirits, tongues, interpretation of tongues.

What some call the charismatic gifts. These are the supernatural gifts that are graced upon us. We will touch on these next week.

The Gifts of Christ.

These are apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. They are often in church circles referred to as the five fold ministry. Others call them leadership gifts. Within Elim

the tendency is now to refer to them as leadership graces to emphasise they are servant functions and not elevated positions of prestige.

Then Paul, when writing to the church at Ephesus tells us what the purpose of these graces are:

> So, Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his 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.
> EPHESIANS 4:11-13

None of us are there yet! This emphasises that these leadership graces are still valid for the church today.

Apostle. Literally means sent one. The Latin word is from which we get our English word "missionary".

Some would argue that there are no modern day apostles. They point to the biblical qualification that an apostle needed to have been a personal eye witness of the risen Christ. (You will remember in Acts 1:22 when the disciples came to replace Judas a requirement was that they needed to have seen Jesus in the flesh after his resurrection.)

But that misunderstands that the bible distinguishes several classes of apostles, who vary in their role and vary in the extent of their authority.

We've got the

Great Apostle – Jesus. The one sent from his father.

The Twelve Apostles – The ones who Jesus sent out to make disciples. They went out and planted churches. Peter for example planted churches at Antioch and Rome, John oversaw and led the seven churches mentioned in the book of Revelation. They had the authority to write Scripture.

Paul

Then we have apostle Paul. He deserves a class of his own. He's had an encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus. He's a church planter, he's a church leader, his letters carry the authority and weight of scripture.

Other apostles.

But then there are others in the New Testament that are referred to as apostles apart from the twelve and Paul. Barnabas, James, Timothy, Silas, Apollos etc.

What did they do? They planted churches, they laid a firm foundation, they pastored pastors, they exercised informal

leadership beyond their local church. And I believe it's this kind of apostle that we have today.

> *An apostle assumes and exercises general leadership over a number of churches with extraordinary authority in spiritual matters and is spontaneously recognised and appreciated by those churches."*
> *PETER WAGNER*

The Apostle Governs

The Prophet Guides

A prophet is someone who is anointed to perceive and speak the mind of Christ to the nation, to churches and to individuals. They often provide a balance to the apostle who needs to hear God's voice when enacting vision. (An apostle will know he needs to plant a church, for example, and the prophet may guide them where God wants it planted.) The prophet will also teach people how to understand the prophetic gift and how to hear God's voice.

Evangelists Gather

They clearly teach the biblical truths about salvation. And the supernaturally draw non believers into a relationship with Jesus. Often, others will have previously witnessed to them, but it is the evangelist who will finally lead them to the Lord.

An evangelist will also train and equip the church to evangelise non-believers.

Pastors Guard

Pastor is the Latin word for shepherd.

A pastor is called to protect and guard the church.

They give protection and correction.

They will run to the rescue when there is a genuine need, encouraging, praying for and bringing comfort to the believers that are in their care. They will come alongside people with compassion and understanding and journey with them.

They will see someone in a hole, they will climb down take them by the hand walk them to solid ground.

A pastor will

…lead the sheep into fresh pastures of the word, which he is always searching out.

> *He makes me lie down in green pastures,*
> *he leads me beside quiet waters,*
> *he refreshes my soul. PSALM 23: 2-3*

A pastor will

…go before the sheep as a leader, and the sheep are happy to follow him, knowing that he will not lead them astray. A pastor will not push his congregation. He will lead by example.

> *He goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. JOHN 10:4*

A pastor will…

….recognize that he is an under-shepherd, responsible and accountable to the chief shepherd, Jesus Christ. The sheep are not his but the Lord's.

> *Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. 1 PETER 5:2-3*

Being the pastor of a church is not so that you can say I have 300 people in my church, the biggest building in town, the biggest car park, the most wonderful worship group who have just released an album. Being a pastor is not about yourself, it's about serving others and helping others to grow in God.

A pastor will…

…minister healing to the flock. He will seek the lost, and bring back what is driven away, bind up the broken, heal the sick, and strengthen the diseased.

> *You have not strengthened the weak or healed the sick or bound up the injured. You have not brought back the strays or searched for the lost. You have ruled them harshly and brutally.* *EZEKIEL 34:4*

A pastor will…

……be the gatherer of God's people and not say, do, or allow things that scatter the sheep

> *He gathers the lambs in his arms*
> *and carries them close to his heart;*
> *he gently leads those that have young.* *ISAIAH 40:11*

Teachers - Ground

A teacher is called to ground the church in biblical truth.

They enjoy the task of breaking down difficult chunks of scripture and doctrine and making it easy for people to understand.

They encourage understanding and the ability to divide truth from error or deception to the body of Christ.

Not every church will have a “minister” who is graced in all 5 areas.

Where there is lack the church needs to pray to Jesus to raise these people up.

The church should not be afraid to look to people outside of the local church to equip and build as necessary.

Within the church each individual will have leanings towards some of these graces. Some will really enjoy evangelism, others will enjoy teaching. Others will visionaries and see what needs to be done next. Others will be especially sensitive to God's voice when it comes to things that are happening in the nation. They will sense injustice and know God's heart on certain matters (euthanasia for example) and encourage the church to act. Others will have a heart of compassion for the needy and come alongside them help them on the journey with God. Others will enjoy extracting Truth from God's Word, and will be able to explain it to others.

Which do you identify with the most? Does this encourage you to see what role God wants you to play in the church?