

Guidelines for the Exercise of the Lord's Day Prophesying Message Eight : Fully Accomplish Your Ministry"

I. Overview :

In the eyes of the Lord there is just one ministry. Though the apostles were twelve in number, their ministry was uniquely one—this ministry, a corporate ministry in the principle of the Body of Christ. All the apostles carried out the same ministry to bear the unique testimony of the incarnated, resurrected, and ascended Jesus Christ. All the apostles' works are to carry out this unique ministry, the ministering of Christ to people for the building up of the Body of Christ. The ministry in the New Testament is corporate, certain other verses indicate that the ministry is also personal. According to the members, there are many ministries; however, according to the Body as a whole, there is just one ministry. The many gifted persons in Ephesians 11 have only one ministry, that is, to minister Christ for the building up of the Body of Christ. This is the Lord's recovery, this is our commission, this is our burden, and this is our ministry. How blessed we are to have a part in this ministry!

II. Truth and Enlightenment:

Day 1 —

A. Expound in the eyes of the Lord there being one ministry in the New Testament age. The twelve apostles were all in "this ministry". This indicates that there is one unique ministry in the New Testament. I have spent time to study the pure Word regarding this matter. My eyes have been opened to see that the twelve apostles were all in "this ministry." Therefore, when the apostles prayed about a replacement for Judas, they asked the Lord to show them whom He had chosen to take the place of this ministry.

B. Explain the words in Ephesians 4:11-12.

Some may say that "this ministry" is limited to the twelve apostles. But the verse in Ephesians 4:11 is related to the whole period of time from the apostles until the Lord's second coming. In God's New Testament economy there are many apostles, prophets, evangelists, and shepherds and teachers and verse 12 says the work of the ministry. Although there are thousands of gifted persons, all are for the work of the one ministry.

Day 2 —

A. Explain the unique ministry of God's New Testament economy.

This ministry is the ministry of the Spirit, who gives life. This ministry is the ministry of righteousness, which brings in justification unto life. The ministry of the law was the ministry of condemnation unto death, but the ministry of the faith, the New Testament, is the ministry of justification unto life, so it is altogether organic. The work of the ministry to build up the Body of Christ is directly by the perfected saints in the growth in life.

B. Expound as the corporate ministry being also the personal ministry.

In 2 Timothy 4:5 Paul charges Timothy to fully accomplish his ministry. This was Timothy's personal ministry, but this personal ministry was a part of the corporate ministry, "this ministry", the unique ministry of the New Testament. The ministry in 2 Corinthians 4:1 is the corporate ministry of all the New Testament ministers. All the ministers have their own portion of the ministry.

Day 3 —

A. Expound the ministry in the New Testament economy being a corporate ministry.

The ministry in the New Testament economy is a corporate ministry, a ministry that includes thousands of gifted people. In 2 Corinthians 4:1 Paul says, "Having this ministry." Paul, his co-workers, and the other apostles all had this ministry, the one ministry in the New Testament. The ministry is the service; all the ministers are the serving ones carrying out this service.

B. Explain the apostolic ministry of the New Testament.

By letter in 2 Corinthians 3:6 Paul means the written code of the law. The Spirit is the Spirit of the living God, with whom the apostle ministers Christ into the believers. The apostolic ministry for the New Testament is not of dead letters like the Mosaic ministry for the Old Testament but of the living Spirit, who gives life. Hence, their ministry is one constituted of the Triune God of life by His life-giving Spirit.

Day 4 —

A. Explain that the ministry in the New Testament is corporate, and also is personal.

Although these verses reveal that the ministry in the New Testament is corporate, certain other verses seem to indicate that the ministry is personal. Acts 20:24 refers to Paul's personal ministry. In 2 Timothy 4:5 Paul charged Timothy, "Fully accomplish your ministry," apparently encouraging him to fulfill his personal ministry. Colossians 4:17 evidently points to Archippus's personal ministry.

B. Expound that a member has its function, but the ministry as a whole is corporate.

We need to realize that all the believers are members of the one Body. Although there are many functions in the Body, the ministry in the Body is one. For example, my speaking is my body's ministry. This ministry is corporate. However, each part of my body also has its own ministry.

Day 5 —

A. Expound the New Testament ministry is uniquely one and corporate.

But because this ministry is the service of the Body of Christ and because the Body has many members, every member has its own ministry. Thus, according to the members, there are many ministries; however, according to the Body as a whole, there is just one ministry. Your ministry should not be separate from the corporate ministry.

B. Explain the four Gospels speaking the same thing, but they all from different angles.

The four Gospels speak the same thing, but they speak the same thing from different angles. Matthew wrote from the angle of the kingship; Mark, from the angle of service; Luke, from the angle of redemption through the proper humanity; and John, from the angle of Christ's deity. In the Gospels we have four biographies of one person; one person is viewed from different angles.

Day 6 —

A. State the grammatical construction of Ephesians 4:12 with its spiritual meaning.

According to the grammatical construction of Ephesians 4:12, the phrase unto the building up of the Body of Christ is in apposition to the phrase unto the work of the ministry. This indicates that both phrases refer to the same thing; hence, the work of the ministry is the building up of the Body. The apostles, prophets, evangelists, and shepherds and teachers perfect the saints unto the work of the ministry.

B. Expound how the building of the Body being accomplished.

However, this building up is not accomplished directly by the gifted ones but by the saints who have been perfected by the gifted ones. The work of the ministry is both of the perfecting ones and the perfected ones; the building up of the Body is the work not only of the apostles and the other gifted ones but also of all the perfected saints.

III. Conclusion:

In the New Testament, there is just one unique ministry, the whole period of time from the apostles until now, and the ministry has not been ended. I believe that we are the continuation of this ministry. We are in this unique ministry according to the New Testament economy. We all have a part of this ministry. You have your part and I have mine. When we have all the functions and aspects, we have the body's ministry. We need to be clear that we are not following one person. However, we are supplying the same thing from different angles and aspects. In this way, rich abundance can be manifested, and we have the glory of one. This is a ministry that includes many ministries. Now we are all supplying the Christ of life and everything, so that the local churches can be built. This is the Lord's recovery, and this is our commission.