



# THE FIVE SPECIAL GIFTS

Apostle and Prophet,  
Evangelist, Pastor and  
Teacher – Each one  
important and  
exceptional when in  
unity and in partnership  
with Christ.

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# The 5 Special Gifts, offices in the Church.



On the day of Pentecost, the church of Jesus Christ was birthed. the Holy Spirit fell upon the 120 in the upper room and Peter rose up and spoke the word that resulted in 3000 people being saved and baptised. God's earthly ministry had been provided by our Lord for the purpose of leading the church:

1. **Evangelisation of the world** – (Mark 16:15-20) “Go into all the world...”
2. **Worship of God in Spirit and truth** – (John 4:23-24) “Yet a time is coming and has now come...”
3. **Building a Body of saints being perfected in the image of His Son** – (Ephesians 4:11-13)

*So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip (align) 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.*

James, brother of Jesus, came into his ministry after the LORD's ascension, as leader of the Jerusalem council. James was a key leader in the church (referred to in Acts 12:17), a leader in the important council of Jerusalem (speaking as a leader with authority in Acts 15:13) and he was martyred in c.AD62, an event recorded by the Jewish historian Josephus (Antiquities, 20.9.1). The structure of the church reflected a simple church order – officers of the church are called “elders” (James 5:14) being those who pray over others: *Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord.* and “teachers” (James 3:1) – the chapter of the ‘tongue’: *Not many of you should become teachers, my fellow believers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly.*

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Later, Paul introduced various offices as Christ's gifts by quoting from Psalm 68:18: *When He ascended on high, He led captives in His train and gave gifts to men.* The gifts given to men are apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers (Ephesians 4:11):

## Apostle

An Apostle is a delegate; an ambassador of the Gospel, an official commissioner of Christ, sent with a mission. Apostles have the unique responsibility of establishing the church and building it through the Word of God, including the planting of churches. Apostles are called to influence and impact communities and nations with the Gospel of Jesus Christ, from the witness in the early church that whenever the apostles stepped into communities, they influenced the entire community. But the apostle is dependent upon its relationship with THE PROPHET, in which the two officiate together. The apostolic function is similar to the task of the pioneer missionary today. Ephesians 2:19-22: *Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, built on the foundation the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.* Ephesians 3:4-5 ... *the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to people in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets.*

## Prophet

According to the Bible, the prophet is a *speaker* of, or for, God. The words of prophets are not the production of their own spirit, but come from a higher source. The prophet is, at the same time, a *seer*, who sees things that do not lie in the domain of natural sight, or who hears things that human ears do not ordinarily receive. (1 Samuel 9:9, where *nābhī'* – speaker – and *rō'eh* – seer – are used as synonymous terms: *Formerly in Israel, if someone went to inquire of God, they would say, "Come, let us go to the seer," because the prophet of today used to be called a seer.*).

Prophets are those in the apostolic church who have a special ministry of inspired knowledge. While the apostles and evangelists took the gospel to the unsaved world, the prophets exercised their edifying ministry to the various churches. For example, Judas and Silas, who themselves were prophets said much to encourage and strengthen the church (Acts 15:32).

Prophets have seen in the spirit, that which they prophesy, although they may have seen it in the form of a real vision. They can also "see" words with their inner eyes (Isaiah 2:1). 'To see' is an expression in

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Scripture where God has spoken to the prophet. Similarly, to have heard a voice phonetically and not through the natural ear either is commonplace for the prophet.

## Evangelist

ē-van'jel-ist: is a form of the word ordinarily translated as “gospel” (*euaggélion*), except that here it designates one who *announces* that gospel to others (*euaggelistés*, “a bringer of good tidings”).

In that sense, God Himself is an evangelist, for He *preached the gospel beforehand unto Abraham* (Gal 3:8); Jesus Christ was an evangelist, for He also *preached the gospel* (Luk 20:1); Paul was an evangelist as well as an apostle (Rom 1:15); Philip the deacon was an evangelist (Act 21:8); and Timothy, the pastor (2 Ti 4:5); and indeed all the early disciples who, on being driven out of Jerusalem, *went everywhere preaching the word* (Act 8:4).

But Eph 4:11 teaches that one particular order of the ministry – distinguished from every other – is singled out by the Head of the church for this work in a distinctive sense. All may possess the gift of an evangelist in a measure, and be obligated to exercise its privilege and duty, but some are specifically endowed with it. *He gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers.*

The evangelist has no fixed place of ministry, but moves about in different localities preaching the gospel. As unbelievers come to the saving knowledge and are united to Jesus Christ by faith, the work of the pastor and teacher begins to instruct them further in the things of Christ and build them up in the faith.

## Pastor

The term “Pastor” can also be translated as “shepherds.” Jesus called Himself the Good Shepherd who gathers the flock, cares for them, knows them, rescues them when they stray and lays down His life for them (John 10:2-16). He remains the Chief Shepherd (Hebrews 13:20). Like the shepherd, the pastoral gift for Pastors is having the ministry and responsibility of caring for and protecting God’s flock. It involves helping acts around healing, sustaining, guiding, reconciling and the nurturing of persons who have troubles and concerns in family, perhaps business, finances, and ultimately issues arising in the context of daily interactions. This is so important. It encompasses the relational well-being and healthy relationships with boundaries, that we as a body are interacting appropriately. Pastoral care is the emotional, social and spiritual support for religious and non-religious communities, imitating the attitudes and characters of Christ.

1 Timothy 3:1-13 provides instructions for the selection of these local and elected officers. The first of these is the “elder;” a term indicating age and maturity. In the Greek-speaking world, the term “bishop” was used as the equivalent of elder. Bishop literally means “overseer or superintendent”. Acts 20:28 indicates that they were also expected to have the ministry of shepherd or pastor: *Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.* Pastors serve, inspire, and live as a role models for the assembly. Formal ordination in the

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traditional church does not make them ‘ministers’; it recognizes the ministry God has already given them. Pastors are not automatically qualified to teach, but often the gift is coupled with a teaching proficiency, understandably, of the Word, as a pastoral elder has significant experience and qualification in the Scriptures.

## Teacher

Teachers have a special ability to explain and interpret the truth of God’s revelation (Mathew 28:19-20): *Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.*”, (2 John v10): *If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not take them into your house or welcome them.* Some were itinerant, going from church to church. However, Ephesians 4:11 seems to connect pastor and teacher as a twofold ministry, though regrettably the church has been in error for assuming ‘The Pastor’ is automatically ‘The Teacher’. The responsibilities of each office is quite diverse; the goal is one and the same, but so is each of the five-fold: To glorify God and see the Kingdom of God advance. Every office is essential and although our calls may be different, unity is key. Self-promotion and propelling oneself into international offices, should be tested and judged thoroughly, the false prophets and teachers (and apostles) however well meaning, are in the church, well and good.

There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but they all come from the same Spirit. There are different ways to serve the same Lord, and we can each do different things. Yet the same God works in all of us and helps us in everything we do. – 1 Corinthians 14:4-6: *Anyone who speaks in a tongue edifies themselves, but the one who prophesies edifies the church. I would like every one of you to speak in tongues, but I would rather have you prophesy. The one who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in tongues, unless someone interprets, so that the church may be edified. Now, brothers and sisters, if I come to you and speak in tongues, what good will I be to you, unless I bring you some revelation or knowledge or prophecy or word of instruction?... v12: Since you are eager for gifts of the Spirit, try to excel in those that build up the church.*

### Ask yourself:

**How have these Offices of the Church impacted your faith journey?**

**What do you think your calling is and why?**

[Additional reference after Scripture, \* <https://revivenations.org/blog/2012/02/28/five-offices-church/>]