

Series: Everyone Gets to Play	Reference: Ephesians 4:11-13 & other passages	Title: Who Does Jesus Call?	Date: 09.09.18
Website Writeup:			
Everyone gets to play in the building of the Kingdom of God. No matter if you're introverted, extroverted, small, tall, educated, or not - all of us are called, empowered and being equipped to do the work of the ministry as a body!			

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TITLE SLIDE UP DURING INTRO

Ephesians 4:11-13 - ¹¹So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, ¹²to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ¹³until 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.

We tend to paste the word 'leadership' over top of these 5 equipping ministries. The concept of leadership has been lifted so high in the church to the sacrifice of its purpose - to serve, build up, bring unity & prepare the Body of Christ for ministry. Leadership's become the goal in & of itself disregarding God's presence - everyone else who doesn't have leadership gifting become spectators by default. Leadership often only accounts for pastors & teachers, with apostles, prophets & evangelists disregarded, perhaps because they seem vague or risky in relational practice. We need to return to a healthy understanding of these ministries, and devotion to the spiritual formation of all Believers, valuing what God can do in equipping us through each one.

Leadership serves the faith community to do the work of the kingdom. The focus being on the churches ministry. It's the underpinning which holds up the Body, teaching it to practice the Presence of God to be able to manifest Christ to the Nations! We see these 5 ministries represented, realizing, it's not just certain people with these gifts, but they're to train others in them for ministry. In other words all believers can & should operate at some level in these gifts becoming able to lead others into the presence of Christ through them. But what do these people look like? Well, basically...

Apostles are 'sent ones' who pioneer God's mission into new places crossing geographic, cultural, social & economic barriers. Restless, unsatisfied people pulling the church forward in it's calling to reach the nations. Risk-Takers. Big-Thinkers. Influencers. We need them to challenge us, but they need the rest of us to keep them grounded as well. They often become missionaries, church planters & organizational leaders.

Prophets are uniquely tuned into God's voice; operating with discernment & ability to differentiate between His voice, culture & the demonic. They bring encouraging words, lead us back into Truth, and speak what they hear the Spirit say over us. Also Risk-Takers, we need them, but they also need to be humble & open to challenge. Good

Prophets prophecy with an open palm asking it to be checked against Scripture, faith tradition & the people it concerns.

Evangelists have a unique gifting & desire to communicate the Gospel in contextual ways to those who don't know Jesus. We need them to challenge & they need also to be grounded in the importance of long term spiritual formation of believers.

Pastors/Teachers are those who make clear the meaning of Scripture & how it applies to life & speaks into our cultural context. Pastors often have ability to lead with compassion & understanding. When you think of pastors you think of preaching (proclamation of Truth), when you think of teacher you think of an exchange of information. You may be a great pastor without a pulpit, and a great teacher without a classroom. One of ours, Julie Cowen, is going to be teaching a class for us this fall!

All servant leaders in various capacities, building up the church, training & modeling these gifts that we'd grow in them as well. Remember, *Managers do things right, Leaders do the right thing*. We're not looking for managers to control, we're looking for leaders to equip & inspire! Their goals are unity & maturity in the faith - making full well-rounded disciples of Jesus who actively minister him to a lost world.

Jesus invites & entrusts all Christians into Kingdom work; training them up in these ministries to speak life into the communities in which a church resides; to minister Jesus' heart & words to the world. Introvert, extrovert, small, tall, educated, or not, everyone gets to play! ***Jesus is training disciples, are we available?***

Let's look at Matt. 25:31-45 and see at least in part what he's training us to...

"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. ³²All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. ³³He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

³⁴"Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. ³⁵For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, ³⁶I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'

³⁷"Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? ³⁸When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? ³⁹When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?'

⁴⁰"The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'

41“Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. 42For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, 43I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.’

44“They also will answer, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?’ 45“He will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.’

We also see his ministry in Luke 7:21-23, *At that very time Jesus cured many who had diseases, sicknesses & evil spirits, and gave sight to many who were blind. 22So he replied to the messengers, “Go back & report to John what you have seen & heard: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor. 23Blessed is anyone who does not stumble on account of me.”*

These are hard passages given they call us to action in ministry. **Modernism told us that faith had mostly to do with *what* we believe.** The pendulum swung to that side of the spectrum of faith-life for various reasons. **Belief (**orthodoxy/right thinking**) trumped good works (**orthopraxy/right practice**),** good works went to the wayside, or became suspect, for the most part. Instead of the biblical truth that belief should move us to good works - that they stand in balance - right belief informs right action.

*Ephesians 2:1-10 outlines this sentiment clearly which ends with the thought, 8For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— 9not by works, so that no one can boast. (**orthodoxy**) 10For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. (**orthopraxy**)*

We see here, the end result of salvation are changed people who work in partnership with God in what they do. Last week we said, ‘Extravagant action follows extravagant faith’. Good works are the result of faith, not the basis for it. **The problem we face in the Postmodern Church is that the pendulum wants to swing back to the other extreme - orthodoxy (right belief) gets sacrificed at the altar of ‘doing good’.** Notice, I didn’t say at the altar of *orthopraxy*, since to have right practice you must have right belief. If there’s no right belief, there’s no standard of right practice which is where the current worldview is taking our culture now; and the Christian subculture along with it at times. The modern spiritual narrative is - there may be a God, but he’s only there to help us when needed. He doesn’t define morality, we do. Whatever makes me feel good or happy is the right path. In our current secular worldview personal feelings are the barometer of ‘doing good’. If that’s the only barometer, although well intentioned, we’ll do a world of damage & not even know it!

What’s good must be defined by God, not culture, it’s His good we do. We should stop the pendulum from swinging to the extreme, allowing it to rest in the middle where

Truth & Deed work together for the kingdom. This is why Six:Eight seeks to provide avenues through our Community Groups working with Community Partners to ‘do good’ in our community. Which doesn’t stop with the activities we involve ourselves in, but in developing relationship with people through those activities, recognizing need & ministering to them. Bringing the Presence of Christ into their lives where needed!

Jesus challenged everyone to believe on him. He upheld the Hebrew Scriptures as God’s Truth, as we should...but right belief always leads to changed hearts, which leads to changed lives, including behavior...what we do in pursuit of personal holiness privately, and our words & deeds in relation to others publicly. The holistic person in spiritual formation of character, will, feelings, body, decisions, resources, soul, etc...all being informed by right belief in Christ, leading to the work of the Kingdom in the world! Which begs the question, what does Jesus train His Church to do? **To answer that we begin by asking, “What did Jesus do?”**

Acts 10:36-38, ³⁶You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, announcing the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. (Orthodoxy) ³⁷You know what has happened throughout the province of Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached— ³⁸how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit & power, and how he went around doing good & healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him. (Orthopraxy)

Jesus models ministry for us, an interactive learning atmosphere, not just an exchange of information; a belief system. He openly welcomed people, was anointed with the Holy Spirit & Power, practiced good works of healing & releasing captives from evil - he lived out the Father’s Heart. These are the things he calls & sends his disciples out to be & do. As they’re baptized in the Holy Spirit, a promise he made to send a Counselor, empowering us for the works of ministry, crossing boundaries & welcoming all people, they go do ministry, baptizing others into the name of God the Father, God the Son & God the Holy Spirit & teaching them to obey all that Christ commanded.

One of the greatest, yet simple & profound tools we have in ministry is prayer. Anyone can minister to others in prayer through the Spirit’s leading! All you have to do is listen well, then ask, “Can I pray for you, right now?,” and do it. So, let’s practice!!

1. Pick 4 people to come up facing me & close their eyes. No talking, no peeking.
2. Pick 4 more to come up & stand behind these people, in total silence - then bow their head & close their eyes.
3. These people will pray for their partners, but it’ll be the person in front praying for those behind them.
4. They’ll begin by verbally inviting the Holy Spirit to come & speak to them concerning their partner.
5. Then they’ll go silent until I direct them to share what they’ve heard. During this whole time I don’t want the person behind them to speak, nor do I want the people in front to look at their partner behind them. When I direct the praying person to speak, share whatever the Holy Spirit has said to you concerning your partner.

Remember, the Spirit may be challenging, but he's never shaming, his words are encouraging & life-giving. Be willing to share whatever it is you hear no matter how strange it may sound. (discuss openly how what happened)

Jesus welcomed disciples, modeled healing ministry among them, disciplined them in Truth & Action, and commissioned them to do the same. **“Are you ready to join the revolution?”** He began even before he had been crucified to send them out!

Luke 10:1-2, After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. 2 He told them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.”

Do you have a part to play in the Gospel being extended to the world of your influence? How can we welcome, heal, disciple & commission like Jesus? What would that look like in your life? Here at church, with our Community Partners, at work, at home, with your neighbors? All of us reproducing Christ Followers around us! Jesus sent those 72 out saying go do the ‘stuff’ of ministry, they returned saying, *“Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name.” (Luke 10:17)*

His last command is our first concern...*“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” (Mt 28:18-20)*

Authority resides with Christ to commission & empower us in this great work & his Presence goes with us in it. We go not only with faith *in* Jesus (orthodoxy), but in the active faith *of* Jesus (orthopraxy) by the Spirit of God!

When *Eph. 4:11-13* says, **“...equip His people...,”** **who’s excluded from that invitation?** What age? Ethnic background? Man? Woman? Child? In *Acts 10:34-35* Peter’s eyes are opened - he learns something about himself in light of Christ as he says, *“I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism ³⁵but accepts from every nation (All people groups) the one who fears him (orthodoxy) & does what is right (orthopraxy).*

We’re all called to do ‘the stuff’ of kingdom ministry. Everyone gets to play. Are we making ourselves available to Him, learning from what he did, ready & willing to face our fears to be used in building the Kingdom of God here through the ministry of this local church? Opportunity abounds. People need the Presence & ministry of Jesus! As we go into the fall each of us needs to be devoted to our own spiritual formation, engaging in the opportunities this church provides to step out in faith, led by our teachers, pastors, prophets, evangelists & apostles.