

Unity and Maturity **Ephesians 4:11-16**

¹¹ And Christ Himself 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 full knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ, ¹⁴ so that we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming, ¹⁵ but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, that is Christ, ¹⁶ from whom the whole body, being joined and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the properly measured working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

Topic: Church leadership is a gift to the local congregation. The purpose of giving the church leaders is for the equipping of the people for works of ministry and service and to build us up toward unity and maturity.

- Do you suppose that the offices of apostle, prophet, and evangelist are still in operation within the church today or that the gifts of apostleship, prophecy, and evangelism are still operative?
- The office of Elder encompasses all the others listed in 4:11 as evidenced by Peter, an Apostle, referring to himself as a “fellow elder” in his letter. How do you see our elders leading our congregation toward unity and maturity?
- As our church body grows in unity and maturity, we will overcome false doctrine and trickery. What false doctrines or tricks does GCC regularly refute? How does GCC regularly promote truth in love, sound doctrine, and unified maturity?

Association: The job of church leadership is to equip the congregation for works of service and ministry which build up the body.

- In what ways do you serve or minister to the body?
- If each individual part plays its part, what part of the body do you consider yourself to be?
- Sometimes it is difficult to balance truth and love. Is it easier for you to demonstrate truth or love? Explain, or give some examples.
- Have you studied your spiritual gifts? Have you prayed about possibly trying to serve in a new or in another area?

Guidance: The theological foundation for unity with God and with fellow believers was laid in chapters 1-3. Demonstrations of maturity are described in chapters 4-6. Spur one another onto a greater unity and maturity.

- Ask your partner what areas he or she thinks you might be growing equipped in which to serve.
- Consider your spiritual gifts. Read Romans 12:1-13 and 1 Corinthians 12:1-13 together.
- Visit spiritualgiftstest.com for more information on spiritual gifts. There is a lot of good information there.
- Pray with and for one another about participating in the unity and maturity of GCC.