

# **Richland Center Fellowship**

## **Covenant Classes**

### **Session 9**

## **Church Ministries and World Missions**

### **I. Church Ministries**

- A. We believe in the priesthood of all the saints. Therefore, all believers are called to the ministry work of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ. We do not hold the usual religious distinction between clergy and laity. Rather, all the saints are called to be actively involved in the work of the church. Some people will actually be paid for their service in the Kingdom because their calling and the need demands their full attention to the work of the ministry. Most will work in a secular job as a means of material support and do the work of the Kingdom as a service to the Lord without monetary compensation. I Peter 2:9.
- B. While there are many gifts, many callings, and many ministries, and all are important, we need to also recognize the different functions in the ministries of the church. We will not be able to address all of the gifts and functions in the church but we will attempt to identify some. Romans 12:3-8, I Corinthians 12:7.
- C. Please keep in mind that we don't choose our gifting and ministry. God makes sovereign choices about what gifts we should have and how they should be used. We should not seek self-promotion of our gifting nor should we try to escape from the call of God. Our desire should be to discover what giftings we have and how they should appropriately function in the body of Christ. All giftings are for the sake of the entire body of believers and should be used in the context of church authority and the general building up of the saints. I Cor. 12:7, Romans 9:16.

### **II. The Primary Identities and Callings**

- D. While the gifts that are to be used in the church and in our vocational callings are meant to give glory and honor to the Lord, all of these gifts and callings are to be considered secondary. The biblical requirements for people to serve as elders or deacons reveal the necessity to have the primary callings of relationship with God and family in order that a person is capable of serving in secondary callings.
- E. There are four possible primary callings that someone can have. These primary callings are what allows a person to be released effectively in a secondary (ministry or vocational) callings. These four primary callings have a specific order of priority

and purpose. Developed properly, these callings will overflow from the highest priority to the lowest priority so that there may be greater release and so that the servant of Christ may honor Jesus in his life and efforts.

F. These are the four primary callings (identities):

1. **Son/daughter** of God—this is the calling for us to first and foremost become a child of God that is growing and developing in a healthy and godly way. In order for this to happen, there must be an increasingly intimate and dynamic relationship with the Lord. A child seeks to love and serve the parents. Knowing we are a loved child of God is the foundation of health in our identities and the working out of what God has for us to do.
2. **Husband/wife**—this call/identity is for those who are married or will be married. The calling is to have an intimate and longing relationship with one person of the opposite sex that is meant to mirror the relationship between Jesus and His church. This calling is the highest calling of human relationship that is available to humans. A husband and wife loving each other the way Jesus wants us to love will be a strong identity and testimony. This couple will be able to overflow in the strength and calling of the Lord to other areas of life. Some people will choose to not marry and so serve the Lord in a more dedicated way. In that case, this calling/identity would not be a primary identity for that person.
3. **Father/mother**—this calling/identity is the special relationship that God has created in the context of family. As a father and mother, the high calling is to raise children according to God's instructions contained in the Bible. As this primary calling is carried out, the family becomes a strong, godly unit that can overflow with the love and power of Christ to others. In rare situations, married couples are not able to have children or are not called to have children. The calling of father/mother would not apply in the natural sense for these couples, but they still may be called to be father/mother to new believers.
4. **Brother/sister**—this calling/identity is in relation to others who are followers of Christ. Jesus wants us to become brothers and sisters within His family (the church) so that the family of God can overflow in strength and wisdom to the lost world and to the secondary callings of God. The bonds of being a brother or sister in Christ are eternal bonds, as we will have this same family after this life on earth.

G. It is of paramount importance to pursue the primary callings and identities and become healthy in those identities before we expect to be released by the Lord in full measure into these callings. This is the preparation to become the body of Christ that Jesus desires.

## II. The Five-Fold Ministry Eph. 4:1

A. The five-fold ministry was given to the church by the Lord to equip the saints for works of service to establish the church in unity with the Power, Wisdom, and

Character of Christ. In this sense, these five functions are foundational in the church so that other saints can be equipped and released in their gifting. We believe the five-fold ministry is not only valid today but still very much needed in the church. While RCF only partially functions in the five-fold ministry, we continually seek God for more of these giftings among us. I Cor. 12:28-30; Eph. 4:12-13.

B. **Apostles**: Means, “*one who is sent.*”

1. All believers are sent, but an Apostle is one who is specifically sent out with special authority to establish and build up the church. I Cor. 12:28.
2. **Distinguishing Signs of an Apostle**:
  - a. Signs and Wonders—Acts 2:43, 4:33, 5:12, 8:18; Rom. 15:18-19, II Corinthians 12:12.
  - b. An ability to impart spiritual gifts to others—Romans 1:11, 2 Tim 1:6.
  - c. Suffering and Sacrifice—1 Cor. 4:9-12, 2 Cor. 11:23-28, Phil. 3:10, Col 1:24.
  - d. Calling and wisdom to lay foundations—1 Cor. 3:10, Eph 2:20.
  - e. Special grace to build up the body and establish unity. 1 Cor. 9:1-2, 2 Cor. 3:1-2.
3. Apostles have a Spirit-inspired understanding of what it takes to build the church in the longer term. I Cor. 3:10-15.
4. Apostles must be spiritual fathers. 1 Cor. 4:14-16; 2 Cor. 11:28. Spiritual fathers are desperately needed in the church today.
5. There are other apostles besides the original twelve (1 Cor. 15:6-8). The original twelve have a special place in God’s eternal plan (Rev. 21:14), but there are other apostles established by the Lord until the church reaches the fullness of Christ (Eph. 4:13).
  - a. Paul (2 Cor. 1:1)
  - b. Barnabas (Acts 14:14)
  - c. Timothy and Silas (1 Thes. 1:1; 2:7)
  - d. Titus (2 Cor. 8:23)
  - e. James—the Lord’s brother (Gal. 1:19)
  - f. Other brothers of the Lord (1 Cor. 9:5)
  - g. Apollos (1 Cor. 4:6,9)

C. **Prophets**—Ephesians 4:11-13

1. A prophet brings revelation for understanding and direction and holds up the eternal standards of God. He should be able to receive valid revelation for both future and present events (Num. 12:6, Hos. 12:10, Deut. 18:18, Jer. 23:22).
2. Much error has occurred in the church as people allow their lives to be directed by prophets or prophetic words from someone else. First and foremost, each believer should be led by the Holy Spirit for their own walk with God. Personal prophecy should only be used to confirm what God has already shown a person in their life or what the scripture has to tell us. Paul rejected the prophecy of Agabus the prophet when it contradicted his direction from the Lord (Acts 20:10-14).

3. The office of prophet is distinguished from general prophetic gifting by the level of revelation, but even more so by the governmental authority that it carries (2 Cor 12:28, Eph 2:20).
4. The prophet, as the apostle, is one of the foundational ministries in the church (Eph 2:20).
5. The “Old Testament” vs. “New Testament” prophet.
  - a. The New Testament prophets are to have their prophecy judged for accuracy because of potential for human mixture (1 Cor. 14:29). Whereas, the Old Testament prophet could never be wrong in their prophecies (Deut 18:20).
  - b. The New Testament prophets prophesied out of Holy Spirit inspiration by faith (Rom. 12:6). The Old Testament prophet had a direct “*Word of the Lord*” revelation. The Old Testament judgment of the prophetic Word was more severe (Deut. 18:20).
  - c. There are many more New Testament prophets than Old Testament prophets. See 1 Cor. 14:26,29 and Acts 2:17.
  - d. The New Testament prophetic utterance is more likely to be confirming through strengthening, encouragement, and comfort; whereas, the Old Testament prophetic utterance was usually directive or corrective in nature (1 Cor. 14:3).
6. The test of a prophet’s ministry is that he should lead people into a closer relationship with God and away from sinful ways (Jeremiah 23:9-32).

**D. Evangelists—Ephesians 4:11**

1. The evangelist is called to preach the Good News to the lost with signs and wonders and awaken the Body of Christ (2 Tim 4:5).
2. Philip is the primary example of an evangelist in the New Testament.
  - a. Started as a faithful deacon (Acts 6:1-6).
  - b. Faithful father with Godly children (Acts 21:8-9).
  - c. Signs and wonders (Acts 8:6-7).
  - d. Large gatherings or one person (Acts 8:6, 25-40).
  - e. Preceded the work of establishing the Church. He provided many converts for the churches to be built (Acts 8:14, 9:31).
3. Evangelists are given to the church to build it up, not their own ministry.
4. Evangelists are to be connected with others in the five-fold ministry and should have a church home.

**E. Pastors—Ephesians 4:11-13**

1. Pastors are to maintain the work of the church in a local setting on a day-to-day basis. They usually have other gifts such as teaching and preaching and often function as an elder.
2. Pastors focus on personal care of people more than the other five-fold ministries. There must be a certain level of intimacy between pastor and people for this ministry to be effective. Many times, pastors are also identified as shepherds over the flock (1 Pet. 5:2-4).

3. Pastors need the other parts of the five-fold ministry so the church does not become inward and stale.
- F. **Teachers**—Ephesians 4:11-13
  1. Teachers are gifted with the ability to teach the Word with revelation. Knowledge and insight of the Scriptures and the ability to pass on those things to others are special characteristics of the teacher.
  2. All elders must be able to teach, but the teacher has a special gifting in this area.
  3. The teacher is one who establishes by his teaching in the church and is third in the governmental structure of building the local church (1 Cor 12:28).

### III. Other Church Ministries and Giftings

- H. There are many other ministries of the Church that are so numerous we will not discuss them all here.
- I. Two ministries that we will briefly discuss are the “elder” and the “deacon.”

#### 1. **ELDERS**

- a. Elders are those who have governmental authority and act as overseers in the Body of Christ. Elders do not necessarily function in one of the five-fold ministries; however, typically, this is the case. There are very specific qualifications of righteousness for elders. See 1 Tim 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9.
- b. For more information concerning elders, see Covenant Class #10.

#### 2. **DEACONS**

- a. Deacons are “servants” of the people. I Cor. 12:5, 16:15, II Cor. 8:4, Ephesians 4:12, Col. 4:17.
- b. Deacons offer support ministries to the governmental ministry.
- c. The Lord Jesus was the highest example of a deacon. He modeled ultimate service and humility.
- d. Everyone in the Body of Christ is called to serve in a deaconing function, but there are those who hold the special honor of deacons in the local church.
- e. To be a deacon is a valuable call in God and may be the ultimate ministry call of a person’s life. It may also be a transitional step to eldership or one of the five-fold ministries.
- f. The qualifications for the position of deacon are similar to those of an elder. Not only does a deacon serve, but he is to also serve in faith and with the power and anointing of God. I Tim. 3:8-13. Stephen was such a deacon— Acts 6:8-10.

4. Here is a brief list of some giftings that God gives to people for ministry:

- a. **Knowledge:** Consistent insight into matters, knowing and sometimes understanding, not simply because of the accumulation of facts but rather

because of inspired discovery or revelation. Acts 5:1-11, I Cor. 2:4, 12:8, II Cor. 11:6, Col. 2:2-3.

- b. **Discernment**: The ability to determine whether a certain action or motive has its source in God, man, or Satan. Matt. 16:21-23, Acts 5:1-11, 16:16-18, I Cor. 12:10, I Jn, 4:1-6.
- c. **Giving**: The ability to give freely, cheerfully, and sacrificially of money, resources, and time without thinking about what is owed in return. Mt. 12:41-44, Rom. 12:8, II Cor. 8:1-7, 9:2-8.
- d. **Helps**: The ability to unselfishly meet the need of others, serving them so that they may be more completely released in the work of the Kingdom. Mark 15:40-41, Lk. 8:2-3, Acts 9:36, Rom. 16:1-2, I Cor. 12:28.
- e. **Exhortation**: The ability to encourage, comfort, challenge, or rebuke others to help turn them in the right direction. Acts 14:22, Rom. 12:8, I Tim. 4:13, Heb. 10:25.
- f. **Leadership**: The ability to provide vision, oversight, and leadership for the body of Christ so as to faithfully guide the people to work together for the Lord. Lk. 9:51, Acts 7:10, 15:7-11, Rom. 12:8, I Tim. 5:17, Heb. 13:17.
- g. **Evangelism**: The ability and compelling desire to share the Gospel with unbelievers in such a way that they respond and become followers of Jesus. Acts 8:5-6, 26-40, 14:21, 21:8; Eph. 4:11-14; II Tim. 4:5.
- h. **Pastoring**: The ability to care for, feed, and protect the long-term spiritual needs of people in the Body of Christ, helping people grow in love and maturity. Jn. 10:1-18, Eph. 4:11-14, I Tim. 3:1-7, I Peter 5:1-3.
- i. **Mercy**: The ability to show great empathy and compassion for people suffering physically, emotionally, or spiritually, and to assist those in need. Matt. 20:29-34, 25:34-40, Mark 9:41, Luke 10:33-35, Acts 11:28-30, 16:33-34, Romans 12:8.
- j. **Prophecy**: The ability to proclaim God's present and future inspired truth and hold up the standards of the Lord so as to turn people away from sin and towards God. Lk. 7:26, Acts 15:32, 21:9-11, Rom. 12:6, I Cor. 12:10, 28, and Ephesians 4:11-14.
- k. **Hospitality**: The ability to provide an open house and a welcome atmosphere for those in need of food and lodging, and spiritual direction, even if they are not part of the immediate family. Acts 16:15, 21:16-17, Rom. 12:9-13, 16:23, Heb. 13:1-2, III Jn. 5-8.

- l. **Administration**: The ability to provide organization for the goals of the body of Christ by designing and executing an effective plan of action. Prov. 24:3-6, Acts 6:1-7, 15:7-12, Rom. 12:8, I Cor. 12:5, 28, I Tim. 5:17, Titus 1:5.
  - m. **Teaching**: The ability to accurately communicate revealed and applicable truth so that people grasp it. Acts 18:24-28, 20:20-21, Rom. 12:7, I Cor. 12:28, Eph. 4:11, I Tim. 3:2.
  - n. **Faith**: The ability to supernaturally trust God with extremely high confidence that He will work out His purposes in every situation. Acts 11:22-24, 27:21-25, Rom. 4:18-21, I Cor. 12:9.
  - o. **Wisdom**: The ability to offer pertinent spiritual insight in the midst of situations where guidance is needed. Acts 6:3, 10; I Cor. 2:1-13, 12:8; James 1:5-6, II Pet. 3:15-16.
  - p. **Serving**: The ability to identify unmet needs and use whatever resources necessary to meet those needs. Lk. 22:22-27, Acts 6:1-7, Romans 12:7, II Cor. 8:19-29, Gal. 6:2,10; II Tim. 1:16-18, Titus 3:14.
  - q. **Artistic**: The ability to be creative and think abstractly so as to produce something enjoyable and meaningful to glorify the Lord. Exodus 31:4, and II Chron. 2:7.
  - r. **Craftsman**: The ability to produce high quality work with one's hands. Exodus 30:22-25, 31:3-11, II Chron. 34:9-13, Acts 8:3, 16:14.
  - s. **Intercession**: The ability to pray intercessory prayers often and for extended periods on a regular basis and be easily moved toward specific burdens. Acts 12:1-17, 16:25-31, Col. 4:12, I Tim. 2:1-8, James 5:14-16.
  - t. **Music**: The ability and desire to use one's voice or musical skills to praise and worship the Lord. Dt. 31:22, I Sam. 16:16, I Chron. 16:41-42, II Chron. 5:12-13, 34:12.
  - u. **Writing**: The ability to formulate thoughts, ideas, revelations, and inspirations in a meaningful, written format so that readers will be encouraged and edified. Ps. 45:1, Acts 15:19-20, Phil. 3:1, I Tim. 3:14-15, Jude 3.
5. A gifting survey is available upon request for anyone to complete.

### III. World Missions—Matt. 28:17, Acts 1:8

- A. We are committed to seeing God’s ways and His Kingdom go out to all the earth. We recognize that this will take sacrifice and commitment as well as the empowering of God.
- B. We believe that God wants us to participate in this work of reaching and discipling the nations through various means.
  - 1. We are to support and encourage existing works.
  - 2. We are to offer ourselves for short-term deaconing efforts and short-term evangelism efforts.
  - 3. We are to join with others to establish new works, especially in areas where the Gospel has had little impact.
- C. There are two types of missionary labors.
  - 1. Establishing churches.
  - 2. Deaconing labors that serve the local church through compassion ministries.  
\*Note: We are committed to both of these types of work in order to see the local church build up throughout the earth.
- D. The traditional missionary model is to send out unproven people to labor long-term in foreign lands by planting churches or aiding others in doing so.
  - 1. Many of these missionaries do not have fruit in their lives that would indicate their ability to carry out their tasks. Oftentimes, these missionaries do not have the manifestation of God’s power in their lives over demons, sickness, etc.
  - 2. It appears counter-productive to send out “green,” untried people who have little experience in building a local church and little understanding of the importance of “team” in labor and authority.
- E. We desire to send out, or help send out, teams of laborers with the anointing and wisdom of God—that they would have significant impact upon the areas in which they labor. We see our roles as identifying people among us and outside of our immediate fellowship as God raises them up, so that we can support and encourage them and send teams out from RCF to participate in this work of world missions.