

**Apostles**  
**The Fathering Servant**  
**A Fresh Biblical Perspective on Their Role Today**  
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**Introduction**  
**Apostolic Confusion**

I think we will find that biblical, apostolic ministry is a fathering ministry given to the church to assist people, leaders, and individual local churches in coming to a place of maturity. We will find that apostolic ministry is also a serving ministry that stands along side of other ministries to lift and encourage them in the fulfillment of their respective destinies. In other words, an apostle is to be a fathering servant.

**Chapter 1**  
**Ministry Motivation**

*“Whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”*  
*(Mark 10:43b-45)*

The word “ministry,” as it appears in many translations of the Bible, simple means “service.” Instead of asking, “What is my ‘ministry?’”? I should be asking, “What ‘service’ am I able to render to others that might be a strength and blessing to them?”

**Who is the Greatest?**

Too many believers are jockeying for position and trying to determine who is the greatest in the kingdom of God. Too many people are looking for a position where they can sit and be served rather than looking for the towel or the apron of humility with which to wash the feet of others.

**To Rule or To Serve**

There is something in the heart of every man and woman that is equally selfish. We want position, power, or a name for ourselves.

Jesus knew that if He were to build a church with this group of apostles, he would have to start with the first and most important thing – the motivation in their hearts.

**Ministry Equals Service**

When you are called into the ministry, you are called into a life of service. If you want to be great in the kingdom of God, you must humble yourself, become like a little child, and become the servant of all.

## **Servants First, Apostles Second**

If we find out that the ministry of an apostle is a position that requires a death to the self, a life of humble service and sacrifice, and a willingness to be discredited for the sake of the Gospel, we might not be so eager to see it restored. An apostle is to be a servant above all things.

Unfortunately, at times it also seems that there is a dangerous phenomenon taking place where the apostle appears to be elevated above the other ministries in the body of Christ.

### **People Want a King**

People are always looking for a king. People love to have an ultimate figure that they can place up on a pedestal and salute. The word apostle lends itself to this use (or abuse) because it has an authoritative sound to it.

A few years ago the popular title was “bishop.” A bishop in New Testament times was simply an overseer.

In our days, the term “bishop” is rarely used in this sense

Just as was the case with the term “bishop,” the term “apostle” is not always currently used as the Bible defines it. In some cases, unfortunately, the use of the term has highlighted man’s quest for the ultimate ministry of a king.

### **The Gentile Way**

Jesus made it clear that being motivated by a desire for preeminence was the Gentile way. The Gentile way involves hierarchy where people in authority lord it over those under their authority. He said it was not to be that way among His people.

A New Testament apostle was not a ruler among the people. The apostle was an important ministry that had a specific function.

### **The Spirit of Christ**

Jesus must be our pattern for all ministry, and especially, for our purposes, all apostolic ministry. Jesus demonstrated His preeminence when He girded Himself with a towel and washed the disciples’ feet.

## **Chapter 2 The Word “Apostle”**

When Jesus called twelve of his followers apostles, He took a word that was already used in their culture.

One of the problems that we face in defining this ministry is that we have no cultural reference point for the ministry of an apostle.

If Jesus had named twelve of his followers “plumbers,” we would easily understand what he was saying because we are familiar with plumbers and the work that they do.

## **Bridging the Cultural Gap**

It does not appear that the twelve disciples or the other people who heard Jesus make this appointment had a problem with the word. When Jesus named them “apostles,” they did not say, “That’s great Jesus, but what is an ‘apostle?’” They understood what Jesus meant.

What was an apostle in Greek or Roman culture?

### **Unraveling the Mystery**

When you translate and define the Greek word for apostle, you simply get, “one who is sent.”

Jesus was somehow distinguishing these twelve from the rest of the other disciples or followers that He had by the use of this term.

In its noun form, an apostle, or a “sent one,” was a specific title that referred to a specific function.

### **In Greek Culture**

As time went on, it came to be applied to a man or group of men who were sent out on an official expedition that was authorized by the government for a particular purpose. It carried the idea of authorization and commissioning by the higher power to act on the behalf of that power.

The focus of the word “apostle” was on two things: the purpose and the sender. An apostle was always someone sent out with a specific purpose or goal that in time could be specifically measured. In addition, an apostle was always acting on behalf of the sender. In fact, in the history of this word, the focus is more on the sender, than on the one who is sent (see Isaiah 6:8).

As such, he was to be the embodiment and true representation of the sender. The sent one was to be absolutely faithful to the purposes and intentions of the sender.

### **An Apostle is Accountable**

In Greek society and culture, the apostle was a person who had a great deal of accountability to the person or persons who had sent and commission him.

The apostle is accountable to the sender. “But who is the sender?” you may ask. “Is it God? Or is it a local church?” The truth is, it is both.

### **Called by God, Sent by Man**

Certainly an apostle is a person who is first and foremost called by God. But in reality, how is that different from any of the other ministries in the body of Christ? The pastor needs to be called by God to be a pastor. The teacher needs to be called by God to be a teacher.

In this case, we must separate calling from sending. All ministries are called by God. The apostle is a “sent one.”

Paul did not go without the sanction and sending of the local church.

## Chapter 3 Jesus – The Apostle From Heaven

*“Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus, who was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as Moses also was faithful in all His house.”  
(Hebrews 3:1-2)*

Jesus Christ is the prototype for all apostolic ministry.

### Jesus, According to John

In John, the emphasis is on Jesus’ relationship to His Heavenly Father and the mission given to Him by His Father.

Jesus was sent by the Father. He was sent as a representative of the Father. He was sent as a faithful representation of the Father. He spoke the words that were given to Him by the Father. He was sent out to establish a church. After His mission was accomplished, He returned to the Father.

### Jesus the Apostle Represents the Father

*“Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever **He does**, the Son also does in like manner.” (John 5:19).*

*“I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own but the will of the Father who **sent Me**.” (John 5:30).*

### Jesus – the Apostle as Church Planter

Jesus was sent from a different culture (heaven) to extend that culture’s rule to a new region (earth). He was sent by the Father to establish a church. (Matthew 16:18).

Jesus followed all of the principles of a good church planter when he came to the earth. He came with purpose. He knew that His Father’s business was to establish the church and from the point that His official ministry began, He worked toward that end.

He came with a mission. He came with no intention of staying. He came to establish His church and to return to the place from where He was sent.

### Jesus – the Apostolic Church Planter

He modeled a methodology that was to be later followed by Paul and many others in the New Testament Age of church growth and expansion.

Jesus had a very simple plan that involved five main steps:

1. *EVANGELISM*
2. *DISCIPLESHIP*
3. *LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT*
4. *DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY*
5. *FOLLOW-UP*

### **Jesus – the Mentor of Leaders**

Jesus demonstrated for them what He expected of them. Leaders who are not willing to be a role model will never be successful in developing leaders. People need to see the word made flesh.

Second, Jesus spent much time in personal prayer for these followers.

Third, Jesus had a specific training program for His followers. Training for ministry is not something that you merely catch. It is important to be around anointed ministries, but systematic instruction is still very important.

Fourth, Jesus taught them to function independently of Him.

Finally, Jesus opened doors of ministry opportunity for them.

### **Jesus – the Shaper of Arrows**

Jesus focused His teaching on eight primary areas:

1. *OBEDIENCE*
2. *PRAYER*
3. *EVANGELISM*
4. *SCRIPTURE*
5. *FAITH*
6. *MINISTRY BY THE SPIRIT*
7. *LOVE*
8. *TEAM MINISTRY*

The elements of apostolic function that we see in Jesus' life are accountability to a sender; evangelism, church planting, leadership training, mentoring, and releasing others into ministry.

## **Chapter 4 The Twelve Apostles of the Lamb**

Each call was unique, but they all had one thing in common: they were men of such disposition and persuasion that they were willing to leave all and follow Jesus.

### **The Twelve Apostles, A New Order**

It is interesting that prophets wrote nearly all of the Old Testament books of the Bible. The New Testament writers, on the other hand, were primarily apostles.

### **The Apostolic Commission**

Christ's commission included several key elements:

1. *BEING WITNESSES*
2. *PREACHING THE GOSPEL OR EVANGELIZING*
3. *HEALING THE SICK*

4. *MAKING DISCIPLES*
5. *PASTORING THE DISCIPLES*
6. *TEACHING THE DISCIPLES*

## **Chapter 5 The Apostle Paul and the Twelve**

### **Categories of Apostolic Ministry**

*THE POST-ASCENSION APOSTLES:* This was the order of apostles that would function throughout the church age along with pastors, teachers, prophets, and evangelists.

This is the order of apostolic ministry to which the apostle Paul belonged.

This order of apostolic ministry is to be a functioning part of the body of Christ that is given to build up and equip the church toward full maturity.

The New Testament mentions many apostles who fall into this category including:

Andronicus and Junia (see Romans 16:7)

James, the brother of the Lord (see Galatians 1:19)

Barnabas (see Acts 4:36; 13:2; 14:14)

Titus (see 2 Corinthians 8:23)

Epaphroditus (see Philippians 2:25)

Timothy and Silvanus (see 1 Thessalonians 1:1; 2:60)

Apollos (see 1 Corinthians 4:6,9)

*THOSE INVOLVED IN APOSTOLIC-TYPE MINISTRY:* In addition to the above categories, there seems to be quite a number of people in the New Testament who performed apostolic-type functions at times who were not specifically called apostles. Probably the best example of these are The Seventy who Christ sent out to do basically what the Twelve have been commissioned to do.

This seems to answer the question about many in our day who have been instrumental at some times and in some ways that might seem to be apostolic in nature and yet do not appear to be specifically called to that life ministry.

### **Paul Begins a New Order**

Paul serves as an example of the new order of apostolic ministry given to us by Christ for the present day. If Paul is not our example of apostolic ministry for today, then we do not have a good example to follow. But if Paul is to be that example, then we have some concrete guidelines for this ministry that define how it is to function in the body of Christ today.

## **Apostolic Ministry Continues Today**

If we see something in the Bible that we are told can be part of our experience and we are not experiencing it, it should drive us to seek God for that biblical experience. In this way we can bring our experience up to the level of the Word.

This would apply to spiritual things like deliverance, healing, miracles, and all of the supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit.

### **Seeking the True**

If, then, the ministry of the apostle is to continue until Christ's return, we must cease from discussing whether or not this ministry is to exist in the church today and turn our attention onto how it is to function.

As we turn our attention to his life, we will see the work and ministry of a true fathering servant to the church.

## **Chapter 6 Paul's Pattern**

Paul serves as the pattern for apostolic ministry in our day. We do not have to be bound by the qualifications and restrictions of apostolic ministry under the twelve apostles of the Lamb. Today, apostolic ministry is a post-ascension ministry that will continue to function until Christ's return.

### **Paul's Call**

Paul knew that it was God who had called him to be an apostle. He was not an apostle because his school guidance counselor told him that his natural skills matched with apostolic work. He was not an apostle because a ministry placement committee got together with him and helped him discover his hidden talents. He was not an apostle because a particular man or a group of men laid hands on him. Paul knew he was an apostle because of what Christ had done in him (see Galatians 1:1; 2 Corinthians 1:1; Titus 1:1).

As far as Paul was concerned, his being an apostle was not up for debate. He was called by God to be an apostle and, therefore, he had been given the faith and grace necessary for that work (see Romans 1:5; 12:3; Galatians 2:8-9).

### **Paul's Preparation**

Even though Paul had some excellent credentials in the natural realm, he still had to graduate from the school of the Spirit before he was ready to be released into his call.

### **Paul's Work**

1. *HE MINISTERED IN TEAMS.* Paul was never intentionally alone in his apostolic work. Just as Jesus sent out the twelve and the seventy two-by-two, Paul tried to function within this principle.
2. *HE FOCUSED ON CHIEF CITIES.* Paul focused on the places where the Holy Spirit seemed to be moving. Again he followed the instructions Jesus gave His disciples to not focus on places where they were rejected, but to

preach where they were welcomed..

Where is the Holy Spirit moving? Where are converts coming to the Lord in numbers? Where does the Spirit of the Lord seem to be stirring the waters?

This does not mean that you would never send apostolic ministry to hard areas. Hard areas would come under the guidance of a direct word from the Lord.

Paul followed the direct leading of the Holy Spirit.

Finally, Paul focused on chief cities.

3. *HE PREACHED OPENLY TO ALL.*
4. *HE GATHERED A NUCLEUS.*
5. *HE TAUGHT INTENSELY.*
6. *HE TRAINED LEADERS.*
7. *HE SET IN A PROVISIONAL LEADERSHIP TEAM.*
8. *HE LEFT THEM FOR A SEASON*
9. *HE RETURNED TO BRING ADJUSTMENT.*
10. *HE SET IN ELDERS.*
11. *HE LEFT AGAIN.*
12. *HE FOLLOWED UP ON THEM.*

### **Paul's Fruit**

The fruit will reveal the type of tree that it is. An apple tree will produce apples!

He was a fathering servant who had apostolic fruit. The fruit of his ministry was strong believers, strong leaders, and strong churches. To Paul, the word “apostle” was a function, not a title.

### **Chapter 7 Apostolic Work**

***“Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers through whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one? I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase... For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, you are God's building. According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another build on it.”***

***(1 Corinthians 3:5-6,9-10)***

I wonder how many people desire the actual work of an apostle.

Eldership is first and foremost a work.

## **Apostleship is a Work**

### **Spiritual Fathers**

Perhaps the key to understanding the ministry of an apostle is the word “father.” Paul said that while “*you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet you do not have many fathers*” (1 Corinthians 4:15). Paul did see himself as the spiritual father of the Corinthian church. In his life and ministry he would have many spiritual sons and daughters.

Being a spiritual father begins with having the heart of a father.

*But we were **gentle** among you, just as a nursing mother cherishes her own children. So, **affectionately longing** for you, we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives, because **you had become dear** to us. (1 Thessalonians 2, emphasis mine)*

Here Paul makes it clear that he had the people of God in his heart and his ministry to them was not selfish on his part.

Paul compared himself to a nursing mother who is gentle with her newborn child.

Paul further stated that he ministered to them like a father does to his own children. Paul viewed people as his spiritual children. He possessed a sense of responsibility to see them become mature and function effectively on their own.

### **The Father’s Heart**

Apostolic ministry must spring from a love for the church and the purposes of God. It must spring from a father’s heart that puts others ahead of self, is willing to become poor so that others can become rich, and is willing to get intimately involved with both the successes and failures of those under its charge.

1. *A HEART OF LOVE*
2. *A HEART OF SELF-SACRIFICE*: A true father is always willing to put the needs of others ahead of his own..

When a true father makes a decision, he makes it on the basis of what is in the best interest of his children.

3. *A HEART OF PATIENCE*: Parenting requires a lot of patience because children make a lot of mistakes.
4. *A HEART OF FAITHFULNESS*: A father’s heart is a faithful heart. A father’s relationship to his children is not a fair weather relationship. Jesus said, “*I will never leave you nor forsake you*” (Hebrews 13:5).

### **The Apostle as a Father**

1. *FATHERING BELIEVERS*. The heart of the father in the apostle reaches down to the smallest level – that of the individual. An apostolic heart is not just concerned with crowds, but beats deeply for every person with whom it comes into contact.

2. *FATHERING MINISTRIES*. Paul was a spiritual father to many young, developing ministries. It appears that the call to apostolic ministry involves an anointing to raise up and release others into ministry.

Wherever he went, it seems that someone was with him being trained to do what he was doing. He had many other spiritual sons who were able to carry on his work after he departed.

Some have said that there is no success without a successor. For the apostolic church planter, this is always true. When Paul established churches, he had to be able to disciple ministries and raise up leaders.

3. *FATHERING CHURCHES*. Paul referred to the Corinthian church as the seal, or proof, of his apostleship (see 1 Corinthians 9:2). Wherever Paul went, churches sprang up.

The fostering of church plants and the nurturing of churches will mark all apostolic ministry. This does not necessarily mean that every apostle will plant a string of churches themselves, but the fruit of their ministry will be the existence of local churches.

They trained leaders, equipped them, sent them, encouraged them, and followed up on them.

4. *FATHERING OTHER APOSTOLIC MINISTRIES*. There is a biblical principle of reproduction that goes all the way back to the first chapter of Genesis.

One of the marks of a true apostolic ministry is that apostles are able to reproduce other apostolic ministries.

### **The Work of the Apostle**

As you study the life and ministry of those named apostles in the New Testament, it becomes very apparent that no two apostles were exactly alike in their work and ministry. This is just like God. Even though we have general categories of ministry, every person is quite different in their expression of personality and function in that ministry.

Because of this, it is essential not to become too stereotypical in our discussion of any ministry.

There are some common threads that seem to run through the Scripture when attempting to piece together a profile of this ministry. The work of an apostle includes, but is not limited to, the following:

1. *APOSTOLIC MINISTRIES WILL BE ZEALOUS TO ESTABLISH AND PRESERVE APOSTOLIC DOCTRINE.*
2. *APOSTOLIC MINISTRIES WILL BE A RESOURCE TO OTHER LOCAL CHURCHES AND THEIR LEADERS AS THE NEED ARISES.* Because

Paul had such a strong father's heart and love for the churches, he made himself available to other churches and their leadership teams.

Many ministries only work with their piece of the pie. If it does not personally relate to them, they are not available for help. Apostolic ministries are able to see and literally carry a burden for the needs of other leaders and churches in the body of Christ.

Many apostolic leaders end up reaching out to other pastors and leaders in their geographical region. They love to bring leaders together for fellowship, mutual edification, equipping, and mission fulfillment. They may even find themselves organizing minister's fellowships that are designed to strengthen, equip, and envision like-minded leaders. These leaders and their churches actually become their spiritual congregation..

### **Ministry After Ones Heart**

Apostolic ministry is not something that you can manufacture. It must come from the heart. It cannot come out of the heart unless it is in the heart. Apostolic ministry must first and foremost be a heart ministry.

Apostolic ministry is a function, not a title. Christ wants fathering ministries or servants who reflect His heart of love for the people and purposes of God. The need is great, not for people with more titles, but for people who will lay their lives down for others.

### **Chapter 8 Apostolic Preparation**

***“And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry.” (1 Timothy 1:12)***

I do not believe that apostolic ministry is meant to be a rare expression in the body of Christ – reserved only for select company. If the New Testament is to be the pattern for ministry in the world today (and I believe it is), it would be easy to conclude that apostolic ministry will abound.

Because there is a great need for new churches, there is a need for those who can father ministries in the body of Christ. The church needs those who can serve as a fatherly resource to pastors and their churches.

### **Being a Christian**

It begins with being a Christian who is fully submitted to the Lordship of Christ in all areas. This includes a strong personal relationship with the Lord that is characterized by a life of prayer and daily meditation in the word of God. Many people want to talk about their future destiny but seem unmotivated to lay the simplest foundations for their future.

Our foundation is a lifestyle of hearing and responding to the voice of the Holy Spirit every day. People who live this kind of life do well on their jobs, have exemplary

marriages, enjoy families that are a model for others to follow, and have lives that are characterized by dedication, loyalty, the fruit of the Spirit, and righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.

### **Becoming Faithful**

When Paul talked of his own choosing by God, he indicated that it was his faithfulness that caught God's eye (see 1 Timothy 1:12). Jesus made it clear that the road to maturity would be marked by three tests of faithfulness (see Luke 16:10-12).

The first test of faithfulness is learning to be faithful in that which is least (see Luke 16:10), or as Matthew says, "*faithful over a few things*" (25:21).

The second test of faithfulness is learning to be faithful with natural riches, or money (see Luke 16:11).

The third test of faithfulness is learning to be faithful with that which belongs to another man (see Luke 16:12).

### **Becoming a Servant**

Paul had a lot of dying to do. He had to die to himself, his own plans, his former concepts of ministry, and his future aspirations.

God wanted to get Paul into a place of dependency. He wanted Paul to learn how to serve others.

### **Qualifying as an Elder**

1. *CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT*: You must be emptied of selfishness and your own personal agenda if you are going to have what it takes to bring baby Christians to maturity.
2. *PEOPLE SKILLS*: Apostolic ministry is a people-oriented ministry. An apostle cannot be hard, harsh, angry, violent, or unapproachable. The apostle must have the heart of a pastor who genuinely cares about the needs of the sheep.

The apostle must have the ability to function with a spirit of gentleness, as he may often be called upon to arbitrate in delicate situations.

3. *FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS*: The family of the leader constitutes the leader's first church. In the family there is the leadership team of husband and wife and they have the congregation in their children. In this sense, the home becomes the proving ground for all ministry.

The home is a place where the principles and practices of a person are manifest without hypocrisy. It becomes the place where one's true ministry becomes evident.

It takes the same kind of leadership to raise up a good family that it takes to raise up a good church. The home is really a miniature church. It is a place of prayer, worship, fellowship, and communion with the Lord.

4. *FINANCIAL STABILITY*: Money can be a great stumbling block in the ministry. Paul said that if you are going to be a leader, you need to deal with the issue of money.

Apostolic ministries will have the power to abuse in this area. Paul was very careful with money. He went overboard to eliminate suspicion.

5. *DOCTRINAL PURITY*: Apostolic ministries must be steeped in the Word.
6. *LIFE TESTIMONY*:

### **Proving Yourself at Home**

Where does apostolic ministry begin? It begins at home.

Paul did not begin as an apostle. He began his official ministry as an assistant and a teacher. He worked with new converts, helping to lay foundations in their lives and be transformed into model Christians (see Acts 11:26).

Paul was faithful to those over him in the Lord.

As he disciplined new converts, people became more Christlike. As he was faithful to fulfill his call, he was able to raise up and release other teaching ministries.

Paul had effectively demonstrated at home what he wanted to do on the field. He had demonstrated his ability to father new converts. He had demonstrated his ability to bring these converts to maturity.

He wanted the elders of the church to lay hands on him and send him out when he had not demonstrated to anyone that he could do what he said he felt called to do. Paul had the fruit of ministry *before* he was sent out to function fully in his calling. (A young man who wanted to go to the mission field).

### **Mentoring**

A key part of the preparation process for any ministry is that of being mentored by older, more experienced ministries of the same order.

Barnabas had the heart of a father and was willing to invest himself into those younger ministries who had a call but needed some fine tuning if they were going to be productive in that call.

I will say that for mentoring to take place, senior ministries must be willing to get a genuine burden for younger ministries.

1. The apostle will have a definite call of God to his ministry.
2. The apostle will have to have a thorough knowledge of the Scripture.
3. The apostle will experience a period of preparation covering several years during which he will prove himself and his ministry on the local level by which he will gain the necessary wisdom, knowledge and experience.
4. The apostle will usually train specifically for a time under the ministry of other apostles.
5. The apostle will not be sent by God until the preparation is complete.

6. The call and timing of the going of the apostle will be confirmed by the brethren among whom he is ministering.
7. The sending church will participate and identify with the work of the apostle by the laying on of hands (see Acts 13:1-3).
8. The apostle goes forth in the power of the Spirit, often times in company with others, to do the work God has called him [or her] to do.

## **Chapter 9**

### **Apostolic Mentoring**

***“But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, that I may also be encouraged when I know your state. For I have no one like-minded, who will sincerely care for your state. For all seek their own, not the things which are of Christ Jesus.”***  
***(Philippians 2:20-21)***

#### **Leaders Must be Discipled**

Mentoring is a lot like apprenticeship. An apprentice is someone who is linked with an experienced artisan.

1. *SPENDING TIME WITH THE APPRENTICE.* It is difficult to give up a certain amount of privacy and independence, but ministries who will in fact mentor other ministries will have to be willing to include others in what they do.

There is no question that we learn best by example.

We teach more by what we do than by what we say.

2. *PRAYING FOR THE APPRENTICE.* If you want to develop a strong burden for people, spend quality time in prayer for them. Not only will God increase your burden for them, but He will also give you significant insight into their life. This information from the Spirit will be highly beneficial as you seek to mentor them into a place of leadership.

Praying for them should include three aspects of prayer. First, it should involve regular daily prayer for them in the privacy of your prayer closet.

Second, it should involve praying with them one on one or as a group.

Third, it should involve praying for them with the laying on of hands.

3. *SYSTEMATIC INSTRUCTION.*
4. *PROVIDING TRAINING EXPERIENCES.*
5. *ACCOUNTABILITY*
6. *SHEPHERDING CARE.* Being a mentor must be seen as a selfless act on the part of the one doing the mentoring.

## 7. ENCOURAGEMENT AND EXHORTATION.

### **Chapter 10 Apostolic Authority**

***“Not that we have dominion over your faith, but are fellow workers for your joy; for by faith you stand.” (2 Corinthians 1:24)***

#### **Apostles Last**

Paul says that as an apostle he is “*nothing*” (2 Corinthians 12:11), he is a “*servant*” (see 1 Corinthians 4:1), and he states that apostles in general have been made as “*the filth of the world, the offscouring of all things*” (1 Corinthians 4:13).

#### **Which is it?**

I do not believe there is a spiritual hierarchy in the body of Christ. I do not believe that one ministry is more important than another. I do not believe that one particular ministry rules or superintends over the other ministries.

#### **No Pecking Order**

All ministries are to submit to the headship of Christ and to the authorities that God has placed in the local church.

#### **The Area of Rule**

The key to their authority was an understanding of their area of rule. Every ministry has an area of rule. As long as a ministry stays within that area of rule, they have great authority and freedom to function. As soon as they step outside of that area, or their God-ordained sphere, they cease to have authority.

The area of rule applies to two different issues. The first issue is that of calling. It is God who decides what ministry we will have. It is God who equips us with the gifts and graces necessary for function in the ministry to which He has called us.

The second area of rule has to do with your specific responsibility within your prescribed area of ministry. You are a pastor, but to whom? You are an apostle, but to whom?

#### **The Sphere of Relationship**

What made the Corinthian church part of Paul’s sphere was his relationship to them.

This was not a structural authority that belonged to him because his name was listed in the church by-laws as the apostle. It was a spiritual authority that was understood by virtue of Paul’s past involvement and pastoral care in the church.

Paul understood that even though he was an apostle to these churches, it did not automatically make him an apostle to other churches. An apostle to one is not an apostle to all. A ministry may be truly apostolic in nature, but everyone does not need to recognize that fact for the apostolic ministry to function in their God-ordained area of rule.

It is just like fatherhood. A father is always a father, but he is not a father to everyone who is a son. He is a father to his own sons and his own daughters. Just because I am a father, it does not give me authority in my neighbor's house with my neighbor's children.

There is no authority without relationship. Paul had a special relationship with the churches that he established.

*“For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you, with many tears, not that you should be grieved, but that you might know the love which I have so abundantly for you.” (2 Corinthians 2:4)*

*“I thank my God upon every remembrance of you...” (Philippians 1:3)*

*“...I have you in my heart...” (Philippians 1:7)*

*“For God is my witness, how greatly I long for you all with the affection of Jesus Christ.” (Philippians 1:8)*

*“Therefore, my beloved and longed-for brethren, my joy and crown...” (Philippians 4:1)*

Paul had this special love for all of the churches that he established.

### **The Apostle and the Elders**

Apostles are not leaders without authority in their lives.

Some ministries today function with no local church covering.

### **Authority for Edification**

A father seeks to bless rather than how he might be blessed.

There is no hierarchy of ministries in the body of Christ. Every ministry, regardless of title, is important to the success of the whole. If the body of Christ is to fulfill its destiny all ministries must flow together, be under proper authority, experience a call from God, and function in their God-ordained area of rule.

## **Chapter 11 An Apostolic Church**

### **Characteristics of an Antioch Church**

Church planting sometimes takes your very best.

I have been part of a leadership team that believed and practiced church planting. During this process, I have lost many of my very closest friends to the field as they followed the call of God on their lives. It was a painful, yet glorious experience. At least now I can go almost anywhere in the world and get free lodging.

There is a cost to being an apostolic church. The cost includes the sacrifice of time, talent, and finances. It includes saying goodbye to friends and family who join with

others in team outreaches. It includes being willing to let go of pastors and church leaders that we have grown to love and appreciate. It means seeing your senior pastor move out of his or her position and become more apostolic in nature. It means being willing to share your leadership with the world.

The Antioch church believed that the primary function of leaders was to raise up, equip, and release the body of Christ for ministry (see Ephesians 4:11-12).

Leaders of apostolic churches cannot be jealous leaders who suppress other would-be leaders in the church. They need to have confidence in their own calling in God and be willing to acknowledge the gifts and ministries in others. They will find joy in seeing others. They will find joy in seeing others reach ministry goals and destiny.

I am sure that the Antioch church had a vision for their city, but they also had a vision for the world. Antioch became the center for world missions and church planting teams.

Apostolic churches believe in world missionary activity that takes the Gospel to the uttermost parts of the earth.

### **The Foundation of the Antioch Church**

Acts 11:23. Other translations of Barnabas' admonition to these believers include:

“To make up their minds to be faithful to the Master.” – TCNT

*“To be resolute and steadfast in their devotion to the Lord.” – GDSPD*

### **Chapter 23 Questions and Answers**

#### **Common Questions Concerning Apostolic Ministry**

*The bible often speaks of apostles and prophets together, do these ministries have a special relationship to each other?*

By nature of their call, prophets must be very sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit. They are often dramatic in their revelations, and strong in exhortation and vision. This is very important in apostolic ministry and church planting.

Apostles, on the other hand, will tend to be more practical, more matter of fact, more cut and dried and strategic in how they approach things.

*Paul talks about the signs of an apostle. He mentions signs and wonders. Do all apostles function in signs and wonders?*

The presence of the supernatural is one of the things that should distinguish the church from other charitable and social organizations.

The fact is that all believers are to operate in signs and wonders (see Mark 16:17). Paul did function in signs, wonders, and mighty deeds (see Romans 15:18-20). Peter had signs and wonders follow him (see Acts 5:12-16). Philip, the evangelist, was used in sign and wonders in Samaria (see Acts 8:6). Stephen, one of the seven deacons, operated in signs and wonders as well (see Acts 6:8).

There is no question that God-anointed ministries should function in the power and authority of the Holy Spirit. All ministries should desire to be used of God to break spiritual bondage, set captives free, and bring healing, deliverance, and strength to those who sit in the chains of darkness.

There are two possible ways in which this verse (2 Corinthians 12:12) can be translated. One way suggests that the signs and wonders were part of Paul's verification or proof of apostleship. This way is best exemplified in the *New International Version*, which says, "*The things that mark an apostle – sighs, wonders, and miracles – were done among you with great perseverance.*"

There is another way to translate this verse that suggests that the signs of an apostle were worked in their midst and these signs were accompanied by patience and a display of the miraculous. This way of translating the verse is best exemplified in the *New English Bible* where it says, "*The marks of a true apostle were there, in the work that I did among you, which called for such constant fortitude, and was attended by signs marvels, and miracles.*"

*I have heard of some apostolic ministries that seem to exercise a lot of control over churches that are under them – almost to the point of smothering the local leadership. What do you think about this? Does the Bible shed any light on this?*

Some people do seem to take their apostolic ministry too seriously. Raising up a church is a lot like raising a family. When the children are small, they need a lot of attention and supervision. But as they get older and respond to your teaching, you are able to give them more and more freedom until you are almost unnecessary. Hopefully, you will always have a good relationship with them and they will always have a desire for your counsel; but if you have done your job well, they will be able to make their own decision most of the time.

*Will everyone have an apostolic relationship in his or her life? Should they? What does that look like in practical function?*

If the church were functioning the way God designed it, everyone would have spiritual fathers and mothers.

But for centuries the church has not been functioning the way God originally designed it.

There is a hunger for relationship, not control. There is a desire for spiritual covering without sacrificing the autonomy of the church.

*How do we recognize apostolic ministry in our lives?*

This is a little like asking, "How do I recognize my father." Your father is a natural relationship that you actually had no choice about. Some have fathers and some do not. In all of these situations there is a desire for fathers who genuinely love, really care, and who can be trusted to have the best interests at heart.

Usually, we can spot spiritual fathers and mothers because of a natural relationship.

*The Bible indicates that in the last days there will be false apostles and false prophets. How can we identify and guard against these ministries?*

#### Right Apostolic Spirit

- In truth
- Blamelessly
- As a nursing mother
- As God-pleasers
- In gentleness
- In love and affection
- As a father to his children
- Not burdensome

False ministries prey on new converts (see Amos 6:4), the weak and immature (see 2 Peter 2:14), the gullible (see 2 Timothy 3:6), and the wounded and vulnerable (see Jeremiah 6:14). They are fueled by people who are discontented, unhappy, and weak in the faith.

False ministries are motivated by selfish ambition (see Philippians 1:16), covetousness (see Philippians 3:19), pride (see 1 Timothy 6:4), and the desire for a following (see Acts 20:30). They care more about themselves than they do the sheep (see Romans 16:18; Ezekiel 34:2-3,8). They speak smooth, persuasive, and flattering words (see Romans 16:18; Colossians 2:4).

Every leader has the potential to become a false ministry. To keep this from happening we must be willing to do five things:

1. Examine our own hearts
2. Focus on the basics
3. Exalt the Word
4. Be willing to judge and screen ministries
5. Cultivate first love

### **Chapter 13** **Apostolic Interview**

*How would you define an apostle?*

He is fathering the fathers, and that would almost certainly require age. There would have to be some longevity in his ministry, a proven track record that would give him the respect and credentials needed to function as an apostle.

I also think of an apostle as someone having a heart beyond his won immediate circle of fellowship. They give their strength, not just to their own family, but also to other families.

*Would you say that a person is to be recognized as an apostle because he has real relationships with people he is “apostling” and not just because he has some kind of word that he is one?*

Working with leaders is very interesting. Lots of people don't understand that leaders are very hard to work with. Because they are leaders they're very strong and have this instinct to go out ahead of others. So if you haven't earned their respect and if they don't trust you, if you haven't proven over the years that you love them and are there to serve them, they won't follow your “fatherly” advice just because you showed up.

*Would you say apostolic ministry is really in some ways a certain kind of relationship?*

A father-son relationship. This level of relationship is not just for information. You are now “walking together in the Gospel.” As a father to a son, you want him to succeed, and as he succeeds, it is like your son succeeding. His success is your reward, that's your paycheck, that's what makes you rejoice.

*Would you say apostolic authority functions voluntarily?*

Absolutely! Absolutely! To me, that is the spirit of an apostle, “I'm not taking dominion over your life, I'm a helper.”

Everything is relational. It's in the spirit realm, in the natural – everything is about relationships.

So whenever you try to define an apostolic relationship in terms of a hierarchy, things will break down very fast. It's hard to respond to people because you have to.

*Could you describe how apostolic relationships work for you today?*

It humbles you and you find yourself praying, “God help me now. Help me to be able to help them through this situation, and not to give them wrong advice.”

I walk in fear and trembling. I would rather not even get involved in a situation unless it is clearly the leading of the Lord for me to do so. In other words, I'm not looking for authority or responsibility. It has to come to me. I have such a great respect for the pastor and leadership team in the local church. I just want to help them. I don't want to be a burden to them.

In my experience 95%, and maybe higher, of local church problems are in leadership.

*Does the nature of your apostolic relationships with other leaders grow and change over time?*

In the case of a new church plant, I make more of an effort to speak into that church in its embryo stage. But then as the church grows, the nature of our relationship changes.

It's kind of like raising a child.

Once a son has his own children, his own family, then it is abnormal for someone to come in and tell them how to raise their family.