

## **GIFTED MINISTERS**

"I, therefore, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all. But each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift. The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ until all of us come to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the full stature of Christ. (Ephesians 4:1-7, 11-13)

Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, and third teachers. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? (1 Corinthians 12:27, 29)

"As in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness." (Romans 12:4-8)

"By speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love." (Ephesians 4:15 & 16)

"Allow the prophets to give thanks as much as they will. Whoever will come and teach you all the aforesaid, receive him. But if the teacher himself turn and teach another doctrine, do not listen to him. If it be to the increase of righteousness and of the knowledge of the Lord, receive him as the Lord. As concerning the apostles and prophets, do according to the teaching of the gospel. Let every apostle that comes to you be received as the Lord. He should stay but one day, or two, if need be, but, if he stays three days, he is a false prophet.

"Not everyone who speaks in the spirit is a prophet, but only if he has the ways of the Lord. Therefore, by their ways shall be known the false prophet and the prophet. Every prophet that teaches the truth, if he or she does not do what he or she teaches, is a false prophet.

"Let everyone who 'comes in the name of the Lord' be received; then, when you have proved him, you will know, for you can know the right hand from the left. If he wishes to live among you, being a craftsman, let him work and eat. If he doesn't have a craft, use your common sense to provide that he may live with you as a Christian, without idleness. If he is unwilling to do so, he is a 'Christ-monger'. Beware of him.

"Every prophet who wills to live among you is 'worthy of his food'. In like manner, a true teacher is also, like the laborer, 'worthy of his food'. Bishops and deacons (are) worthy of the Lord, men who are gentle and not covetous, true men and approved. They also minister to you the ministry of the prophets and teachers. Therefore, do not despise them, for they are to be honored by you with the prophets and teachers."

The Didache, or Teaching Of The Twelve Apostles (c 100), XI, XII, XV