Caring for God’s Flock as a Team

Charles McCaul
# Table of Contents

**Caring for God’s Flock as a Team**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Elders of the Church</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Qualifications of an Elder</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Heart of an Elder</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Senior Leader of the Church</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Deacons</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What does a New Church Do if They Have No one who is Qualified to be an Elder?</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What does an Old Church Do if They Have No one who is Qualified to be an Elder?</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do the Elders, Senior Leader and Deacons Work Together?</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do the Local Church Elders and Five-Fold Ministry Work Together?</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion and Summary</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Acknowledgement:**
Some of the material in this article has come from the book *New Wine* by Dr. Jeff Hammond.
Elders, Deacons and Five-Fold Ministry

God’s Method to Care for His Sheep and Leaders

**Ecclesiastes 4:9-12**

9 Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor:
10 If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up.
11 Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone?
12 Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.

This principle is part of the wisdom shared by King Solomon in the Book of Ecclesiastes. The person standing alone is easily defeated. Its sad that many Christian leaders and pastors stand alone in their ministry. The pastor or senior leader carries heavy burdens alone and face overwhelming pressures alone. They seek the will of God for their church and ministries alone. They shepherd the flock of God alone. They evangelize alone. They try to serve God alone in their ministry until they meet with a serious problem then fail, quit or fall into sin.

If there are two, or even better three, they can add strength to one another and encourage one another and protect one another. They can pray together, plan together and make decisions together. They can carry the burden together and find the will of God together.

**Proverbs 11:14**

14 For lack of guidance a nation falls, but victory is won through many advisers.

**Proverbs 15:22**

22 Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisors they succeed.

God has a way to care for his sheep and his leaders to they have good spiritual health and success. God’s way is to lead by a team. In the church God sets in a group of Elders to lead, Deacons to fulfill the decisions of the Elders in various ministries and the Five-Fold Ministry to who perhaps will serve as an elder in a local church but who also travels and gives strength to other local churches.
The Elders of the Church

Elders are a team of church leaders – some serve the church full time and receive a salary or offering from the church and others work at jobs outside the church. Together these elders receive the responsibility to shepherd and lead God’s people in a local church according to each of their spiritual gifts. Elders are set into the local church as leaders because of the calling of God on their life and their spiritual gifts.

1 Peter 5:1-3
To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder and a witness of Christ’s sufferings who also will share in the glory to be revealed: 2 Be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; 3 not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.

- Peter was an apostle who traveled a lot and encouraged various churches, but he was also an elder in the local church at Jerusalem.
- Elders shepherd God’s flock – they visit them, pray for them and teach them God’s ways.
- They shepherd Gods sheep because God has called them to do so, not because of money or a reward
- Elders do not oppress God’s people but lift them up, give them hope and help them discover their calling and destiny from God.

Jesus is head of his church. Elders are men or women who are committed to the mission, will and lordship of Jesus Christ in his church. Their passion is to fulfill their ministry tasks for this purpose, care for God’s flock and help the church grow and fulfill God’s purpose in that area. When this happens the local church will grow little by little. New believers will be added to the church and disciples made. The church will need more elders as it grows to care for the various ministries.

Who is an Elder?
There are two Greek words used to describe an elder in the New Testament:
1. Episkopos = A person who oversees or looks over a group of people
   Titus 1:7 – The character of an elder in the church
   Philippians 1:1 – Paul and Timothy sent the letter to the Philippian Church to the Saints, Elders and Deacons
2. Presbuterous = A mature person.
Acts 15:6 – The apostles and elders came together to solve a problem

1 Timothy 5:17 – The elders who rule the church well should receive more honor, especially those who teach and preach

Titus 1:5 – Titus was to appoint elders in each city

James 5:15 – If anyone is sick they should call for the elders of the church to anoint them with oil and pray for them

Another interesting word is the Greek word for shepherd of pastor:

3. Poimen = Someone who shepherds of pastors and trains others to do so

Ephesians 4:11

Consider this verse where all three words are used:

Acts 20:17, 28

From Miletus Paul called for the elders (presbuteros) of the church to come to him. He said to them, “take care of yourselves and the flock of God whom the Holy Spirit has made your overseers (episkopos) to shepherd (poimen) the church of God which he purchased with his own blood.

So we see that an elder (presbuterous) is an overseer (episkopos) in the church who shepherds (poimen) God’s flock.

We see the same in 1 Peter 5:1-2

The elders (presbuterous) who are among you I exhort who am a fellow elder (presbuterous)...shepherd (poimen) the flock of God which is among you and serve as overseers (episkopos).

- So in these verses we see that an elder is a mature Christian in the local church who also oversees the affairs of the church and leads them in God’s way and also shepherds God’s flock that is associated with that church.

- In the Bible we see that God is pleased to appoint elders – not just one – to lead the church. Among the elders may be pastors, evangelists, prophets, apostles or teachers (Ephesians 4:11).
• A new Christian cannot be an elder because an elder is someone who is a mature Christian and has received a call from God. His character is tested and he is an example to the flock. (1 Timothy 3:6)

Mr. Jeff Hammond says this about an elder:

_An elder is one who has the Father’s heart. He has a heart to reach out to the lost and a heart for unity in the Body of Christ. This is why an elder must be spiritually mature and not a new believer. He must have the capacity to be a leader, a mentor and a teacher. He or she must inspire others in their walk of following Jesus Christ and is a person who protects God’s flock. An elder is a person who helps the members of the church fulfill their potential as members of the Body of Christ._

The Trinity is the original model for an eldership team. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are the Elders of the Universe! This model of leadership in the local church reflects God’s model of leadership in the universe. God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit rule and shepherd the affairs of the universe. They are equal in their roles and their value, but they have different ministries. The same with a local church eldership: The elders are equal in their roles and value but they have different ministries.

The example of a team of elders among the New Testament Churches:

1. **Jerusalem.**
   **Acts 2:14**
   The first elders were the twelve apostles of Jesus because it was a new church and there were no other elders. But as the church grew, the apostles chose other men and women to lead as elders of the local church while the apostles traveled from church to church among the new churches. So we see the first eldership team choosing members of the eldership team as they needed as the church grew.

2. **Churches in Judah.**
   **Acts 11:30**
   When famine spread across Judah the church in Antioch took an offering and sent it to the churches in Judah. They sent the offering to the group of elders in Jerusalem to distribute to the poor. Paul and Barnabus were members of the eldership team in one church who delivered finances to the eldership team in another church.
3. **Antioch.**

**Acts 11:19-30 and Acts 13:1**

A new church was planted in Antioch, about 500 km North of Jerusalem. Barnabus was from the Jerusalem church but he moved to Antioch to help the church. Barnabus called Saul (Paul) to help the new church too. The two of them joined with other mature Christians and created the eldership team at the Antioch Church. Someone in the eldership team felt God wanted to send someone from their church to another place to preach the Gospel and plant churches. They didn’t make the decision by themselves, but they discussed it as an eldership team, prayed and fasted, discussed it again, prayed and fasted some more and then made the decision. We see the elders fasting and praying together to know the mind of the Lord regarding sending a team to plant churches in other districts and countries. The Lord showed the elders that Paul and Barnabus should go. This is how an eldership team works together. Paul and Barnabus left Antioch to plant churches in other places, but they were probably still members of the eldership team and when they completed their mission returned to Antioch to report to the elders and church and help in the church until God called them to go out again. Paul and Barnabus were apostles and prophets but also elders in the local church.

4. **The Churches in Cilicia.**

**Acts 14:23**

Paul and Barnabus traveled together on their first missionary journey and planted many churches. They had it in their heart to follow God’s pattern for church leadership and appoint elders, but the churches were too new and the believers were too new. The believers did not yet meet the qualifications for elders (1 Timothy 3:7). But as they completed their mission and returned to Antioch to report to the elders they visited the new churches again. This time they laid hands on the mature Christians whom the Lord showed them who would become the eldership team in the new church. We see that in new churches Apostles and Prophets appoint the first eldership team.

5. **Ephesus.**

**Acts 20:17**

The Apostle Paul stayed in Ephesus for three years developing the church, helping to make disciples and train leaders. Under Paul’s leadership all of Asia heard the Gospel. Paul as an apostle and was probably the senior leader of the church. However, we are sure that Paul chose other mature men and women and followed his previous pattern of appointing an eldership team to work together with him. These men and women worked
together according to their spiritual gifts to lead the church to grow and preach the Gospel in every place in their district. When Paul left he perhaps stayed as an apostle, father, advisor to the church in Ephesus but turned over the leadership to a group of men and women who were the eldership team.

6. The churches on the island of Crete.
   Titus 1:5
   Crete was a large island in the Mediterranean Sea, hundreds of kilometers south of Corinth and Ephesus and thousands of kilometers East of Antioch. Paul and his associates preached the Gospel in that place and small house churches grew up. When Paul left the Christians were not mature enough to become and eldership team, but Paul instructed his helper, Titus, to stay at Crete and appoint elders in every city. Here we see the apostle although far away appointing his assistant who knew his heart and in whom he trusted to appoint the first eldership team in the new churches. Titus was also an apostle and would be the apostle who related to the churches in that district.

7. The church at Philippi.
   Philippians 1:1
   When Paul was in prison he wrote to the church in Philippi to encourage them. He sent the letter to the group of elders, the group of deacons and the Christians at that church.

8. The Advice of James.
   The book of James was written to Christians in many different churches. James was an elder and probably the senior leader at the church in Jerusalem. He gave instructions to the believers that when they are sick they should call for the eldership team of the local church to go and pray for them. This is another example of the ministry of the eldership team – visit and pray for the sick in their city or village or church.

The Qualification of an Elder

We do not choose elders from anybody we want in the church. An elder must meet the standard of an elder that God shows us in his word. It is very dangerous to stray from choosing men and women who do not meet the qualifications that God has given in the Bible. We must remember that the church is God’s people – God’s sheep. God gives us his standard for leaders in the church for the following reasons:
1. Protect the church from one man making decisions by himself and leading the church astray.
2. Protect the church from wrong doctrine.
3. Shepherd the God’s people with good quality.
4. To have a group of men and women who are good examples to God’s people in their words, actions and character.
5. To insure that the leaders of the church have God’s heart for His people.
6. To insure that the people in that area and outside that area hear the Gospel.
7. To insure that the church grows and God’s purposes for that church are fulfilled.

1 Timothy 3:1-7 gives us the qualifications for an elder in the church:
(These definitions are taken from the Greek New Testament)

- **Blameless** – No one who knows him accuses him of any wrong-doing
- **Has the heart for one woman** – An elder cannot be a playboy, flirting with women, but he must have a heart only for his wife
- **Temperate** – Ability to control his emotions – not up and down in his emotions
- **Sober-minded** – He must be serious, not too much of a joker, but serious about his work for the Lord and life.
- **Good behavior** – This means his life must be orderly, not messy or unorganized. He must live his personal life in an orderly way, not haphazard and with no plan.
- **Hospitable** – This means the elder must love people and open his heart and home to receive them.
- **Able to teach** – Because the elder is the protector of the church he must know the Word of God and be able to feed God’s people spiritual food and lead them in the ways of God. (All of the qualifications for deacons are the same as the elder except for this one. It’s not necessary for a deacon to be able to teach because a deacon is not a decision-maker in the church – he is a servant to the decisions of the eldership team.)
- **Not a person who likes to drink a lot of wine** – The Christian leader should not get drunk nor drink a lot of wine or beer. It is not proper for him to be a bad example and to loose control of his senses because of alcohol
- Not easily angry – The elder must not be a person who is easily angry and argumentative.
- **Not greedy for money** – An elders should not put money and possessions above his heart for the Lord. He should not let his desire for money lead him. A leader who is serves God in the church for money shows his he has a heart for the world and not for God. He should not be involved in the work of the church.
- **Gentle** – An elders must be a person who is willing to give up his rights.
- **Not quarrelsome** – An elder must not argue with others all the time, but listen to them and try to understand their heart. He must be willing to receive correction.
- **Not covetous** – An elder does not love the things of this world and always thinking about how he can have more.
- **A man or woman who rules his own family well** – An elder must have children who obey him and he must relate to his family in an appropriate way.
- **Not a new Christian** – An elder must be tested first to know if he’s faithful, has some ability and a good character.
- **Must have a good testimony from those who are outside** – Non-Christians must think well of the man or woman we choose to become and elder in our church. He should have a good reputation among all unbelievers in that area.

**The Heart of an Elder**

As we are looking for elders in our churches we must look at the heart and passion of the men and women we want as elders:

1. **The heart of a shepherd.**
2. **The heart of a father or mother.**
3. **A heart for the church.**
4. **A heart to see people grow and know God’s plan.**
5. **A heart to reach the lost.**
6. **A heart to grow as a Christian and leader in his or her role as an elder.**
7. **A heart to serve.**
8. **A humble heart.**
The Senior Leader

In the history of the world whenever God wanted to do something great he would chose a man or woman. He would search the earth for a man or woman who were faithful in the small things. He would search for a man or woman who would persevere in difficulties and not complain. He would search for a man or woman who would love him and obey him and be willing to serve God’s purposes in their generation. God always looks for one man or woman to carry His vision and passion to establish his Kingdom on the earth.

In the Bible:

- Adam
- Noah
- Abraham
- Joseph
- Moses
- Joshua
- Samuel
- David
- Solomon
- Nehemiah
- Ezra
- Jeremiah
- Isaiah
- Ezekiel
- The many prophets
- John the Baptist
- Peter, James, John
- Paul, Barnabus, Silas, Timothy, Titus

In Christian History:

- John Hus
- John Calvin
- Martin Luther
- John Welsey
- Charles Spurgeon
- Dwight Moody
- John Wycliffe
- A. B. Simpson
- Johannes Guttenberg
- William Carey (India)
- Adoniram Judson (Burma)
- David Livingstone (Africa)
- Hudson Taylor (China)
- David Ellison (Cambodia)
- Oral Roberts
- John G. Lake
- William Seymore
- John Wimber

Throughout history God has always looked for faithful men and women who would receive his vision and understand his purpose for their generation and would be willing to obey him and sacrifice to insure that God’s purposes would be fulfilled on the earth.
However, these men and women did not work alone! Every Christian man and women who had success and did not fail had success because they worked together as a team. This is God’s plan for success – do not work alone or make decisions alone. Work together as a team.

Among the team there is a senior leader. This senior leader is not smarter than the others nor is he always correct. However, he is the one who is the primary voice of the eldership and the primary leader in the church. The other elders will have good ideas and the other elders will hear from God and know God’s heart in a matter. They pray together and serve God together and work together as a team as they use their various spiritual gifts and earn to submit to one another and humble themselves to one another to see God’s plan fulfilled in their sphere of ministry.

The senior leader is often called the pastor or senior pastor, however, really a pastor is one of the Five-Fold Ministries of Ephesians 4:11-12 whom God has given to equip the believers to do God’s work. The senior leader may have the spiritual gifts and calling of a pastor or teacher, or apostle, prophet or evangelist. He may have the spiritual gifts of an administrator. However, regardless of their spiritual gifts the all the elders must help in shepherding God’s flock and teaching them the ways of God.

The Deacons of the Church

The deacons of the church are the helpers to the eldership team. The elders make the big decisions for the church and the deacons help the decisions of the eldership to be fulfilled.

See Acts 6:1-7

In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Hellenistic Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, “It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word.” This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism. They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them.
So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.

The Problem: The apostles and elders were too busy taking care of the needs of the local church because they were growing so much. These small activities were taking them away from their priorities—prayer, studying the Bible and teaching to make disciples and train leaders.

The Solution: Seven faithful men who met the qualifications were selected. The elders interviewed them and approved them.

The Procedure: The seven were chosen, interviewed by the elders then the elders laid hands on them to appoint them as the first deacons in the church.

The Result: The church grew even more and more because God’s structure was set into place.

We do not just choose anyone to be a deacon on the church. When we choose a leader everyone in the church looks to that man or woman as an example. If they are a good example the people will have good character and actions, but if the leader or helper we choose has a bad example the people who follow will have bad character and bad actions.

The qualifications for a deacon (helper) in the church are the same as for an elder, but it is not necessary for a deacon to teach because the deacon does not make decisions for the church. A deacon is a helper of the elders to insure that their decisions are carried out.

Qualifications for a Deacon

- Reverant – Serious about their service to the church. Not too silly.
- Not hypocrites – Not saying one thing to the elders they serve and another thing to the people they serve.
- Not drinking too much wine – Same as an elder.
- Not greedy for money – Same as an elder.
- Living out their faith with a pure conscience – This means having a conduct that is pure and obedient to the Christian faith.
- Tested – Every leader, even a deacon, goes through a testing time where we evaluate their character, behavior, words and life.
- Blameless – Same as an elder.
Qualifications for Deacons Wives and Female Deacons

When we choose a Christian leader we must also consider the leaders wife. If these are qualifications for the deacons wife, they are also qualifications for the elders wife. These are also the qualifications for women who are deacons.

- Reverant – Same as the deacon.
- Not slanderers – In the Greek language this is the word used for the devil. It means to speak bad about another person. The women and men deacons must be careful about their words
- Temperate – Same as an elder.
- Faithful in all things – Faithfulness in the small things is the foundation for Christian leadership. If a person is not faithful in the small things they are asked to do they cannot be a Christian leader.

More Qualifications for Deacons

- Has the heart for one woman – Same as an elder.
- Ruling their house well – Same as an elder.

We can see God’s structure to lead the local church:

1. A team of elders who work together with a senior leader to make decisions for the church. They know each other’s spiritual gifts and consult with one another and no one makes a big decision by themselves. They meet frequently to report their activities, pray and plan.

2. A team of deacons who are assistants to the elders. These deacons have the same qualifications of an elder but it’s not necessary for them to teach. However, like Philip and Stephen, these and women are full of the Holy Spirit and can preach and teach if God has given them the heart to do so.

It’s also important to understand that it’s not necessary for any of these elders or deacons or senior leader to receive a salary or offering from the church. If the church has the money to pay them for their work, that’s up to the elders to decide. However, they all can be volunteers, too.
What does a New Church Do if They Have No One Who is Qualified as an Elder?

These lessons were written primarily for New Life Fellowship of Churches Cambodia. It is not our policy to adopt churches or leaders from other denominations or churches. It has been our policy to preach the Gospel and plant new churches in areas where there is no church. Therefore, when we plant a church they are all new believers. They know nothing about the One True God, Jesus Christ or the Church. Therefore, in the beginning there is no one qualified to stand as an elder in the church. Following is what we have practiced and what we recommend practicing.

1. The new congregation is not yet a church. It is a gathering of people who want to know more about the God of the Universe and Jesus Christ or they are all new believers. It is unwise to appoint a new believer to stand as a leader.

2. The new cell group our house church has probably been planted by a church-planting team with evangelists, teachers and possibly apostles on the team as well as other helpers from other churches. The elders from the church from where this church-planting team comes from will be the elders of this church until God reveals if they will become a church or stay as a cell group or house church.

3. Some house churches or small groups will never become a “church.” In our understanding a church is not a church until it has a called senior leader and elders. Until that time it is a cell group or a house church under another church. This is an important point, because many congregations in Cambodia are considered churches, but they have no eldership, no senior leader who is called by the Lord (Acts 20:28 – “The Holy Spirit has made you overseers.”) These congregations usually do not grow nor multiply and they are limited by the leadership capacity of the person overseeing the group. These congregations should be considered as a small group or house church under the authority and supervision of the church that planted it or a nearby local church.

4. Sometimes the new church is planted by an evangelistic team or person from Phnom Penh. The evangelist or a team from Phnom Penh, a nearby church or the Regional Director for that province will be the eldership team until the local church is strong enough to stand and appoint elders themselves.
What does an Old Church Do if They Have No One Who is Qualified as an Elder?

Some churches may have been a church for a long time but still have no eldership team. This is very difficult and dangerous for the man or woman standing as a senior leader (we may call “pastor.”) For one person to stand by themselves they may make wrong decisions, they may follow false doctrine, they may be lonely, they may fall into sin, they have no one to counsel them.

First, it is essential that the priority of the senior leader of any congregation is to evangelize, make disciples and train men and women as deacons and leaders. Also, his priority is the Sunday church meeting.

- Sunday Church Meeting priority
- Evangelize priority
- A clear path to make disciples priority
- Deacon and Leader Training priority

Instead of choosing men and women who are immature, not tested or unqualified, the leader of this congregation can choose:

1. Become a branch of a nearby church and join their leadership team and allow them to oversee his congregation.
2. If he or she feels he is really called by God and believes the church will grow, then he should ask the senior leader or one of the elders from a nearby church, the church who planted his church, the Regional Director of the province or someone from Phnom Penh to become one of his elders until his church is grown mature enough to appoint their own eldership team.

- Become a branch of a nearby church or the church that planted his church.
- Ask the senior leader or elder of a nearby church or the church that planted his church to become an elder.
- Ask the Regional Director to become an elder.
- Ask an apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor or teacher from Phnom Penh to become an elder.
How do the Elders, Senior Leader and Deacons Work Together?

The eldership are the decision-makers of the church. The senior leader is usually the voice for the eldership and the one called by God to set the vision for the church. The deacons are helpers in the church to assist the elders in ministry to fulfil the decisions of the eldership.

Here are some points on how this team of leaders and helpers might work together:

- The eldership team meets weekly or at least each month to pray, look at the church schedule and talk about vision, strategy and decisions.
- One of the elders might have a burden from the Lord or something he wants to do in his heart. He shares that with the eldership and they discuss it and pray about it. Sometimes they make a decision immediately and sometimes they wait for the Lord to show them more clearly.
- Sometimes the senior leader has an idea or a burden from the Lord. If it’s small he makes the decision by himself and informs the eldership. If it’s big he waits until they all meet together to discuss it.
- If everybody is in agreement about the decision they move forward. If someone strongly opposes the agreement it’s best that they wait and pray some more until God makes it clear.
- The eldership makes big decisions together rather than the senior leader making big decisions on his own:
  - Buy land or build a building
  - Help a family in the church financially
  - Buy something new and expensive for the church
    (Most financial decisions should be made as an eldership team rather than by the senior leader alone)
  - Hire or stop staff
  - Start or stop a new ministry
  - Set the salary of the senior leader and other staff
  - Agree in the vision, strategy and goals for the next year
  - Review the finances each month
• Review ministry reports each month
  ❑ The elders have responsibility in some area of ministry in the church according to their spiritual gifts.
  ❑ If the elders sin or do not fulfill their responsibilities they may be asked to step down.
  ❑ The senior leader may invite guests to preach without asking the eldership first, but he should inform the eldership.
  ❑ The senior leader should have a budget amount which he is allowed to spend without the authority of the eldership, but he must turn in receipts to the person in charge of finances.
  ❑ Sometimes the deacons may be invited to join the eldership meeting to learn or listen to something that pertains to their ministry.
  ❑ The senior leader or one of the elders should meet with the deacons each month to discuss their ministry activities.
  ❑ The deacons may oversee finances, small groups, Bible classes, the building, children, women, ministry, teams that visit or other ministries in the church. The deacons will be given a long-term assignment and responsibilities or short-term assignment and responsibilities. They will work on the assignment and responsibility and report to the eldership team or the elder overseeing that ministry.

Communication is Essential

To have unity among the elders and deacons each person must take the initiative to communicate what he or she is doing. This means you tell those above you, those beside you (your colleagues) and those below you. If we do not communicate as a leadership team there will be confusion and possibly wasted time, resources and finances and possibly broken hearts or feelings of rejection.

How do the Local Church Elders and Five-Fold Ministry Work Together?

Jesus Christ has given five different ministries to his church, the Body of Christ, in order to build up the church

Ephesians 4:11-16

11 So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, 12 to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up 13 until 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. 14 Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. 15 Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. 16 From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

The church of Jesus Christ – your church – needs all five of these ministries. Some churches only use three of these ministries:

- Pastors
- Teachers
- Evangelists

Many churches do not understand the value of apostles or prophets therefore, they lack the fullness of what God wants to do in them and through them. Perhaps this is one reason why many churches are weak, or they split or are not healthy. Perhaps this is why some pastors quit or fall into error or sin. Perhaps this is why some churches stop evangelizing or planting new churches and become stagnant. We need all five ministries if we want to be a church that grows into the likeness of Jesus Christ (Romans 8:29).

**The Restoration of the Five-Fold Ministry**

We read in church history that after the last apostles died, about 100 AD the churches began to change. In fact, they began to change and walk away from the original faith and doctrine of the apostles before the apostles died.

**Acts 20:29-31**
2 Peter 2:1-3
2 John 1:7-8
3 John 1:9-11
Jude 1:3-4

Many churches have walked away from their foundations and have been distracted by other issues. One part of this apostasy has been the structure of leadership in the local church. Local churches have leadership. Local churches have a structure. Local churches have and eldership
tam and deacons – this is the pattern in the Bible. In church history the leadership structure of the local churches changed to that of one “pastor” leading the church. The elders or deacons had authority to hire or fire a pastor and to overrule his decisions. The church leaders stopped believing in apostles and prophets, the baptism in the Holy Spirit, speaking in tongues, signs, wonders, and healing.

In 1517 a German Christian leader, the pastor of a local church in Germany, by the name of Martin Luther, nailed 95 complaints against the Catholic Church to his church door in Wittenburg, Germany. The Catholic Church began to persecute him but this was the beginning of restoration of the truths in the Bible.

Joel 2:25
25 “I will repay you for the years the locusts have eaten - the great locust and the young locust, the other locusts and the locust swarm—my great army that I sent among you.

Acts 3:20-21
20 and that he may send the Messiah who has been appointed for you—even Jesus. 21 Heaven must receive him until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets.

Year by year, decade by decade, century by century God began to restore the truths that were lost from the church for 1,000 years:

- We are saved by faith and not works
- Water baptism to show repentance
- The Bible translated into the common language of the people
- The average Christian has authority to serve in a ministry in the church
- Healing
- Speaking in Tongues
- Laying on of hands to impart God’s power and gifts
- Eldership in the church
- The Five Fold Ministry

We need everything that God has prepared for the church to fulfill his mission on this earth in our generation. We need the Five-Fold Ministry. These are five ministries given to the church.
to equip the church to do the work of Christ on this earth. These five ministries represent Jesus Christ himself working through his people:

- Jesus is the greatest apostle.
- Jesus is the greatest prophet.
- Jesus is the greatest evangelist.
- Jesus is the greatest pastor.
- Jesus is the greatest teacher.

These give gifts given to Christians continue to fulfill the ministry of Jesus on this earth.

We have written another training manual that explains the Five Fold Ministry but for this lesson we will focus only on the apostle and prophet. The apostles and prophets are the foundations of the church. Ephesians 2:19-21

The Ministry of the Apostles

There are still many tribes, nations and languages that have not been reached with the Gospel. There are new spiritual fields that have not been opened, new churches that need to be planted and new churches that must have a proper foundation laid or old foundations repaired. This is the ministry of the apostle and prophet. If a local church does not receive the ministry of the apostle and prophet it means they lack.

To better understand who or what an apostle is, let’s examine the biblical characteristics of an apostle.

1. Apostles are men and women sent by God to bring a special message and authority to the church. They represent the Kingdom of God and they bring Christ’s authority and message to his body.
   2 Corinthians 5:19-20

2. Apostles are foundation-layers and foundation-repairers so that the church may have strong foundations for healthy growth.
   Ephesians 2:19-21; Acts 19:1-7
3. Apostles are pioneers, opening new fields to the Gospel.
   2 Corinthians 10:16

4. Apostles start God’s strategy so that the eternal purposes of God might be fulfilled.
   Colossians 1:23-29

5. Apostles have the ministry of uniting the Body of Christ.
   1 Corinthians 1:10

6. Apostles are leaders and imparters of God’s vision to other leaders and the whole church.
   Acts 20:17-37; 1 Peter 5:1-4

7. Apostles are fathers revealing the heart of our Heavenly Father who wants to gather the family in unity and bring them to maturity so that they may achieve their full potential.
   1 Corinthians 4:15; 1 John 2:13-14

An apostle doesn’t have only one of the above characteristics, but he has them all. In the New Testament there are at least 23 people referred to as apostles. The first 12 are the Apostles of the Lamb of God and had a specific calling to be with the Lord Jesus Christ on this earth and to sit on 12 thrones judging the 12 tribes of Israel.

Matthew 19:28; Revelation 21:14

The other apostles are part of the Five-Fold Ministry that Jesus poured out on the church after he rose from the dead and ascended to heaven (Ephesians 4:7-11). These apostles were given by Jesus to serve him among the nations of the earth. Peter was one of the 12 Apostles of the Lamb specifically to the Jews. Paul was a Five-Fold Ministry apostle to the Gentiles (Galatians 2:7-8).

New Testament Apostles
1. Jesus, Hebrews 3:1
2. 12 Disciples of Jesus, Matthew 10:1-4
3. Matthias, Acts 1:26
4. Paul, 1 Corinthians 15:5-9
5. Barnabus, Acts 14:4
6. Andronicus and Junia, Romans 16:7
7. James the brother of Jesus, Galatians 1:19
8. Epaphroditus, Philippians 2:25
9. Silvanus and Timothy, 1 Thessalonians 1:2-6
10. Titus and other brothers, 2 Corinthians 8:16-23

The Ministry of the Prophets

There are three levels of prophetic ministry:

1. All believers can prophesy one-by-one sharing a message from the Lord because the Holy Spirit lives in all of us
   1 Corinthians 14:31

2. Some believers receive the gift of prophecy and they prophecy in various situations inside and outside the church
   1 Corinthians 12:10; 14:29

3. There are men and women who receive the gift and ministry of a prophet who serve among the Five-Fold Ministry with apostles, evangelists, pastors and teachers.
   Ephesians 4:11

The Role of Prophecy

1. Prophecy is given to build up, encourage and comfort
   1 Corinthians 14:3

2. Prophesy is given so we can receive strength and so that we can learn.
   1 Corinthians 14:31

3. The prophetic ministry is given to accompany and give direction to apostolic ministry in laying the foundations of the church.
   Ephesians 2:20
   Ephesians 3:4-6

Apostles and prophets often traveled together and worked together as a team.
   Acts 11:27-30
   Acts 13:1-3
Acts 15:30-33
Acts 21:10-11
2 Peter 1:19-21
2 Peter 3:2

Are all believers in these five ministries?

No, not all believers are in the five ministries. However every believer should have aspects of these five ministries in their life, because these five ministries are the expression of the Lord Jesus Christ through the believer on the earth. But these five ministries – Apostle, Prophet, Evangelist, Pastor and Teacher – are five special gifts Jesus gives to his church, the Body of Christ and who are given to equip the Body of Christ to do the work of the ministry.

In Ephesians 4:11 it says that Jesus gave “some people” as apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers – not that he gave all people these ministries and gifts.

These five ministries are specialists in five areas of ministry that we see in Jesus’ life. Their ministry is a special calling with a special authority.

All believers can prophesy, teach, evangelize and lead and show spiritual care to others but for these five ministries it is their calling and they have received the vision, passion and spiritual gifts to fulfil this calling to benefit the Body of Christ. They are equippers, trainers and mentors to the Body of Christ.

These five aspects of Jesus’ ministry should be seen in every church elder as mature leaders appointed by the Holy Spirit to be examples to God’s flock. Not every elder will be an apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor or teacher, but every elder should show some aspect of these ministries in their ministry as an elder.

What’s the difference between elders and Five-Fold Ministries?

All elders have aspects of these five ministries within them. Every elder is called to lead, prophesy when necessary (1 Timothy 1:18 and 1 Timothy 4:14 and 2 Timothy 1:6), evangelize and to shepherd the local church. The five ministry characteristics in a general way should be seen in every elder. From among the elders there are those who have special spiritual gifts in one or more of these five areas. Some of the elders are apostles, prophets, etc. and have received
a call outside of the local church as well (Acts 13:1-3) to equip and lay foundations in the whole Body of Christ.

**Three Levels of Ministry**

In the Body of Christ there are three levels of ministry:

1. **The Royal Priesthood.**
   
   1 Peter 2:9; 1 Corinthians 12:7-11; Romans 12:3-6; Ephesians 4:16; Revelation 5:9-10
   
   Every believer is a priest and king and has received one or more spiritual gifts and has the potential to be used by God to touch the lives of others.

2. **Elders.**
   
   Acts 20:28; Titus 1:5-11; 1 Peter 5:1-3
   
   Elders shepherd, lead, unite and develop the members of a local church as they live their life as an example to God’s flock.

3. **Five-Fold Ministry.**
   
   Ephesians 4:11-16; Colossians 1:25-29; 1 Peter 1:1-7; 1 John 3:1-3
   
   These men and women equip, train, mentor and bring unity to the Body of Christ from city to city, village to village, country to country so that we can all grow to maturity as the Body of Christ.

Unhealthy churches have leaders who oppress the church members. They rule over them and do not try to develop their capacity. Sometimes they are afraid that someone in the church will rise above them in knowledge and ability. These kinds of pastors lose their church members because the church members have no purpose or place to grow.

Each person must find his or her level of ministry according to the calling of God. They must then develop their capacity to grow in that ministry. *Matthew 25:14-30*
The Responsibilities of the Five-Fold Ministries

Ephesians 4:11-16

1. Equip the believers to do the work of the ministry:

   **Ephesians 4:11**
   - Apostles teach how to lay foundations
   - Prophets teach how to prophesy the Word of the Lord
   - Evangelists teach how to evangelize
   - Pastors teach how to shepherd and lead God’s flock
   - Teachers teach how to study the Bible and teach the ways of God

2. Bind the Body of Christ together

   **Ephesians 4:12**
   As the Five-Fold Ministry travel from church to church, city to city, country to country they impart the same vision, love, unity and foundations. They help the local church and pastor know they are not alone but a part of the Body of Christ in that area or on the earth.

3. Bring unity of faith to the Body of Christ

   **Ephesians 4:13**
   The Five-Fold Ministries educate the churches in the ways of God and what God is saying around the world.

4. Help the Body of Christ grow into the fullness of Jesus Christ

   **Ephesians 4:13**
   By praying, teaching, prophesying, laying hands and mentoring the Five-Fold Ministry helps the local church grow into the image of Jesus Christ in their character and activities. The local church becomes the mouth, hands and feet of Jesus. The Five-Fold Ministries are the helpers of the local church senior leader to help his church grow.

5. Correct False Doctrine and Lead the Church into Pure Doctrine

   **Ephesians 4:14**
   The Five-Fold Ministries are men and women who know the Word of God and the voice of the Holy Spirit. They help local church leaders and members evaluate false doctrine and understand true doctrine or doctrine that is being restored by God.
6. **Help the church to focus on Jesus Christ**  
*Ephesians 4:15*

Often the local church and the local church leaders lose their focus and priorities. When the Five-Fold Ministries are invited to assist a local church they help the local church evaluate their focus and priorities and especially help us to focus on the Lord Jesus Christ himself.

The local church senior leader and eldership must understand the Five-Fold Ministries, look for them and invite them to help them in their local church. The Five-Fold Ministries come as a team or one-by-one according to the needs of the local church. They meet with the leaders, meet with the members, teach, pray, train and impart spiritual life to the church because of their spiritual gifts. The Five-Fold Ministry works together with the local church senior leader and eldership to help the church grow and release God’s people into their ministry.

The local church senior leader can’t do it alone, he needs the eldership. The eldership can’t do it alone, they need the Five-Fold Ministry. This is God’s plan to care for God’s people as a team.

**Conclusion and Summary**

Below are the main points that God wants us to know and which we as a fellowship of churches must practice to move to the next level. The natural tendency of Christians, Christian leaders and churches is to stagnate. We rise to a certain level and we don’t move forward. This is what Jesus rebukes the church in Laodicea about, Revelation 3:14-22. We cannot allow ourselves to stagnate as a leader, Christian or local church. We must seek for truth and be willing to change.

1. It is not God’s will for one man or one woman to lead the local church by his or herself.
2. It is God’s will to lead the church by a team of elders.
3. Elders have character and ability standards. We must not appoint elder too quickly.
4. Elders make the decisions for the church.
5. Deacons are helpers to the elders. They have the same character qualifications, but they do not make decisions for the church.
6. The eldership team has a senior leader who is the voice and the primary elder. He does not make decisions alone but as a team to protect the church.
7. Congregations who do not have men or women who meet the standard for eldership should become a branch of a nearby church or ask the elders of a nearby church, the Regional Director or someone from among the Five-Fold Ministry in Phnom Penh or
elsewhere to become and elder in their church until they have the strength to appoint elders themselves.

8. The Five-Fold Ministry are special group of men and women given by Jesus to the church to equip the local churches to do the work of the ministries. The Five-Fold Ministries may also be elders in a local church.

9. We should have at least 3 elders in every local church.

10. A congregation should not be considered a local church if it does not have an eldership. It should be considered a cell group, house church or branch of another church and come under the protection, blessing and authority of that church.
Charles McCaul has been married to Cynthia McCaul since 1974. They have four children. After serving as an assistant pastor at Valley Christian Center in Harrisburg, Oregon for 4 years and Eugene Christian Fellowship in Eugene, Oregon for 14 years they moved their family of 4 to Phnom Penh, Cambodia in 1995 where they assisted in laying the foundations and building up what is now the largest local church in Cambodia, New Life Fellowship, and serving on the Apostolic Team of New Life Fellowship of Churches in Cambodia. Chuck is an author of more than 25 book and booklets focusing on Christian Leadership, Local Church Issues, Personal Growth and Bible-Related Studies. Many of them have been written for the Cambodian Context and have been translated into the Cambodian Language. Charles is also director of the Cambodian Leadership Institute.

Written, audio and video lessons are available from Charles at the following sites:

Email: charles.edward.mccaul@gmail.com

Facebook: Charles McCaul

Twitter: @McCaulCharles
WordPress: charlesedwardmccaul.wordpress.com
SoundCloud: Charles McCaul Mentoring Growing Leaders
YouTube: Mentoring Growing Leaders
LinkedIn: Charles McCaul

Many written, audio and video lessons are often available in both English and Khmer Language.