

# FIVE-FOLD MINISTRY

This is a term that is born out of the following verse:

*And it is he who gifted some to be **apostles**, **others to be prophets**, **others to be evangelists**, and **still others to be pastors and teachers**, to equip the saints, to do the work of ministry, and to build up the body of the Messiah until all of us are united in the faith and in the full knowledge of God's Son, and until we attain mature adulthood and the full standard of development in the Messiah.*

*Ephesians 4:11-13 ISV*

In this letter, the apostle Paul mentions 5 different ministries in the church of the Lord. What did he exactly mean by that? As usual, if we take this verse isolated from the general context of the New Testament and of the letter itself, we can come to an almost unending variety of conclusions. We need to review why this was written and how it is supposed to work in the Body of Christ today.

It is crucial that we understand the meaning of this verse. Every Christian denomination uses the same words, but with a different meaning. Usually each denomination gives these words a meaning that fits their current structure and leadership hierarchy. So, if we teach this, we must understand their roles back then, and the context and purpose that Paul had in mind.

## THE RIGHT PERSPECTIVE OF MINISTRY

In modern churches the word ministry is used, in general lines, to define any sort of position of responsibility within the congregation. From practical tasks such as cleaning or maintenance, to more spiritually-related duties, like pastoring, teaching, evangelizing, and so on. Where is this word in the Bible?

In the Word of God we find the Greek word *diakonia*, which means service. This word has been translated in most translations as ministry, administration, or ministration. It is from this word that the concept of ministry in the church has been taken, mostly based on the story of Acts 6. Nevertheless, by using a term such as ministry, the deeper aspect concerning the attitude of the heart of those in ministry, has been weakened.

Consider what message it would convey if we did a calling for people to “be in ministry” in comparison to “be in servanthood.” What if we said, instead of “who wants to be the next minister,” “who wants to be the next servant?”

A brother or sister in ministry would be then someone who has certain spiritual strength and skills and assumes a responsibility to serve others around him/her, either spiritually or practically. Under this clarification, we can say that the five-fold ministry are five different roles of servanthood. The goal of those five tasks is to serve others.

Bible translators have, somehow, made this distinction a bit difficult to see due to a number of reasons. Take a look, for example, at what happened in Acts 6:

*And in those days, the disciples having multiplied, a murmuring of the Hellenists against the Hebrews occurred, because their widows were overlooked in **the daily serving**. And the Twelve called near the multitude of the disciples and said, It is not pleasing to us, leaving the Word of God, **to serve tables**. Therefore, brothers, look out among you seven men*

*being witnessed to, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this duty.  
But we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to **the ministry of the Word**.  
Acts 6:1-4 MKJV*

In the three occasions I put the text in bold letters, the word serve or service was used. The first time, “the daily serving,” it was written as “the daily *diakonia*.” The second time, “to serve tables” was written as “to *diakonos* tables.” And the last time, “the ministry of the Word” was actually written as “the *diakonia* of the Word.”

Another interesting occurrence of this word is in the well-known story of the sisters Martha and Mary. Martha was very stressed and busy getting the food ready for the Lord Jesus and his disciples, while her sister sat down at His feet to listen to His teachings. The story is told as follows:

*And as they went, it happened that He entered into a certain village. And a certain woman named Martha received Him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word. But Martha was distracted with **much serving**. And she came to Him and said, Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me **to serve** alone? Therefore tell her to help me. And Jesus answered and said to her, Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things. But one thing is needful, and Mary has chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.  
Luke 10:38-42 MKJV*

In Acts 11:29 the same word *diakonia* was used to express a financial help sent in time of need, they served their brothers in need. It was sent by the hands of Barnabas and Paul. When they were done, Luke tells us they were ready with their “ministry,” referring clearly to their service.

*And the disciples, as any were prospered, determined each of them to send for **ministry** to those brothers who lived in Judea,  
Acts 11:29 MKJV*

*And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem when they had fulfilled the **ministry**, having taken with them John, whose last name was Mark.  
Acts 12:25 MKJV*

As we can clearly see, ministry is a function of servanthood, just as serving tables, cooking food, or welcoming guests, giving financial help, or preaching and teaching the gospel. In verses 20:24 and 21:19 the same word appears referring to the work Paul had done among the gentiles, and could easily be translated as service or servanthood instead of ministry. In Romans 12 it is presented as a spiritual gift, the gift of serving, which could mean working in any of the functions above.

## THE FIVE MINISTRIES

Having clarified what the word ‘ministry’ means in the Bible, let’s go to explain those five roles of servanthood. Please keep in mind that the title of “Five-fold ministry” is a title given by people to these list, and not a biblical instruction or term. So, let’s see what these five functions are.

## THE BACKGROUND

When we read Ephesians 4:11, it becomes difficult to understand if we don’t know why Paul was writing this. So, let’s start by checking the background of the letter itself.

The letter to the Ephesians seems to have been a general letter written to many different churches, not only the Ephesians. The earlier manuscripts don’t have the word Ephesians in the introduction, and the way that Paul addresses them reveals he didn’t know them personally:

*Therefore I also, hearing of your faith in the Lord Jesus and love to all the saints, do not cease giving thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him,*

*Ephesians 1:15-17 MKJV*

This would make it very unlikely that the addressees had been the Ephesians, since Paul spent three years with them. As far as the New Testament reveals, Ephesus is the city where Paul spent the longest time working. The two letters of John were written from Ephesus, Timothy was sent to Ephesus, there's a lot of information about this city. It would not make any sense if Paul had addressed them as strangers.

This letter doesn't deal with any particular issues, as many other letters do. There's no personal greetings. And if we compare this letter with Colossians, who was written at the same time and brought by the same person, Tychicus, it becomes obvious that the latter letter was destined to that particular city, while the former was a general letter. For reference you can compare the structure of the letters, the reference to slavery, and the ending of both letters.

So this letter was to give general instructions to many churches, and a strong statement about the culture and practice of the gentile churches of those days. Many functional and practical issues were addressed in there.

## THE CONTEXT

***I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beseech you that you walk worthy of the calling with which you are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*** There is one body and one Spirit, even as you are called in 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 you all. But to every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Therefore He says, "When He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive and gave gifts to men." (Now that He ascended, what is it but that He also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is the same also as He who ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things.) **And truly He gave some to be apostles, and some to be prophets, and some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.** And this until we all come into the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a full-grown man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; so that we no longer may be infants, tossed to and fro and carried about by every wind of doctrine, in the dishonesty of men, in cunning craftiness, to the wiles of deceit. But that you, speaking the truth in love, may in all things grow up to Him who is the Head, even Christ; from whom the whole body, fitted together and compacted by that which every joint supplies, according to the effectual working in the measure of each part, producing the growth of the body to the edifying of itself in love.

*Ephesians 4:1-16 MKJV*

The core message is that the disciples should stay in unity of Spirit through a meek, patient and long-suffering behavior. The passages that follow are supporting points of that idea. They speak about the spiritual unity we have as children of the same God and part of the same Body, under the union with one Spirit, all through the sacrifice of our one and only Lord Jesus. Then verse 11 comes, saying that the Lord gave **some** (not everyone) to be apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers as a means to achieve that goal.

Those five serving roles have been given to keep the **functional and relational unity of the flock**. With that in mind, the explanation that comes after those functions makes a lot of sense: for the perfecting (equipping) of the

saints for the work of the ministry (*diakonia*), for the edifying of the body of Christ. So, these five roles are to teach the other brothers to serve others.

## LEADERSHIP

Before going onto explaining the exact scope of action of each one of these roles, we need to clarify their interaction with the leadership of the church.

There are only two of these servanthood roles that are a requirement for being a leader (elder or deacon, more information on the lesson called Leadership). Those are teacher and shepherd. Look at these verses:

*Pay attention to yourselves and to the entire flock over which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers **to be shepherds of God's church**, which he acquired with his own blood.*  
Acts 20:28 ISV

***Be shepherds of God's flock** that is among you, watching over it, not because you must but because you want to, and not greedily but eagerly, as God desires.*  
1 Peter 5:2 ISV

*Then it behooves the overseer to be without reproach, husband of one wife, temperate, sensible, well-ordered, hospitable, **apt at teaching**,*  
1 Timothy 3:2 MKJV

*holding fast the faithful Word according to the doctrine, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and to convict the gainsayers.*  
Titus 1:9 MKJV

All these texts deal with qualifications for leaders. Among many other requirements, the aptitude for teaching and the task of shepherding were a must. Nonetheless, not everyone who is a teacher or a shepherd is supposed to be a leader of the community.

Thus, to function in one (or more) of the five serving roles does not mean that that person should be or become a leader. It does imply that he or she should use this gift to help and equip the brothers and sisters he/she has contact with.

## THE FUNCTIONS

Now let's briefly see what the functions of these five roles are.

### APOSTLE

This word was widely used in the Greek world in New Testament times. It is not a word exclusively used for religious work. On the contrary, it was a very secular word that the Lord took for a certain kind of worker in His Kingdom.

In the secular sense, the literal translation would be an emissary, someone sent off to carry out a task in the name of the one who sent him. It could be a messenger, it could be a colonizer. An admiral of a fleet of colonizing ships would be called an apostle, for example. Later, this word was so used that it became the name of an official traveling document, similar to our modern passports.

Some say it was even a sort of slave or servant, different in rank to the housekeeper. He was expendable, and was sent with money or letters, and the risk of them getting murdered was quite high.

All of these descriptions match the kind of life and labor that the biblical apostles carried out. They, just like the Lord, were supposed to leave their comfort in order to plant a new colony of the Kingdom of God in places where the Name of Jesus was unknown.

Basically, they had two practical roles in the New Testament: starting new communities of believers, or giving structure and setting up the basis for communities that had begun spontaneously. There is no any Bible verse that gives a definition of this function, but it is by reading what they did and the historical meaning of the word that we clearly see this.

For example, we can see what happened in Samaria. Through Philip, the Lord did amazing things and hundreds were baptized in the name of Jesus. But Philip's skills ended there. Peter and John had to come to round up what Philip had begun, and give structure to this new community.

*And the **apostles (apostolos)** in Jerusalem hearing that Samaria had received the Word of God, they **sent (apostellos)** Peter and John to them; who when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. For as yet He had not fallen on any of them, they were baptized only in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. [...] Then, indeed, having earnestly testified and having spoken the Word of the Lord also having preached the gospel to many villages of the Samaritans, they returned to Jerusalem.*

*Acts 8:14-25 MKJV*

Another example is what happened in Antioch. Two disciples started a great movement among gentiles. Like with Philip, many things happened, but they needed direction. So the apostles in Jerusalem sent (*apostellos*) Barnabas to do that work. He had not been one of the twelve, but was now doing apostolic work after having been with the twelve for many years.

*But among them were some men from Cyprus and Cyrene, who came to Antioch and began proclaiming the Lord Jesus even to the Hellenistic Jews. The hand of the Lord was with them, and a large number of people believed and turned to the Lord. When the church in Jerusalem heard this news, they **sent (exapostello)** Barnabas all the way to Antioch. When he arrived, he rejoiced to see what the grace of God had done, and with hearty determination he kept encouraging all of them to remain faithful to the Lord. For he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith. And so a large number of people was brought to the Lord. Then Barnabas left for Tarsus to look for Saul. When he found him, he brought him to Antioch, and for a whole year they were guests of the church and taught many people. It was in Antioch that the disciples were first called Christians.*

*Acts 11:20-26 ISV*

Barnabas trained Paul in church functioning matters, and they were later sent out together as apostles to the gentiles. In the following text, Barnabas was called an apostle together with Paul:

*But the multitude of the city was divided; and some were with the Jews, but others with the apostles.*

*Acts 14:4 LITV*

There were two kind of apostolic missions, to put it in perspective. One of them would be like what the twelve did in Jerusalem, under Peter's direction. This was a mission focused on reaching their own people, and establish local workers that would serve their brothers. They would be directed to their own folk. Nonetheless, it is worth mentioning that the twelve later all left Jerusalem and brought the Gospel to other parts of the world.

The other kind would be more Paulinian, in the sense that they would go to totally unreached cultures and start from zero. Normally, though, they would always start with the Jewish communities. You can see it in Paul's ministry very clearly. Their goal would be as well to raise local leaders who would take the mission further.

In both cases, an apostle was not the boss but a servant. He would focus on raising local leaders, and then they would leave. Their goal was to be able to leave that mission field, and give it over to local workers. A beautiful example of this is found in Acts 20, when Paul says farewell to the elders of Ephesus.

The nature of this dangerous job would put their lives often in big risk. When Paul's ministry was questioned, he didn't use his miracles or knowledge to defend it, but rather his sufferings:

*For you gladly bear with fools, being wise. For you endure if anyone enslaves you, if anyone devours, if anyone takes from you, if anyone exalts himself, if anyone strikes you in the face. I speak according to dishonor, as though we have been weak. But in whatever anyone dares (I speak foolishly), I also dare. Are they Hebrews? I also! Are they Israelites? I also! Are they the seed of Abraham? I also! Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as beside myself,) I am more! I have been in labors more abundantly, in stripes above measure, in prisons more, in deaths many times. Five times from the Jews I received forty stripes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked. I have spent a night and a day in the deep. I have been in travels often; in dangers from waters; in dangers from robbers; in dangers from my race; in dangers from the heathen; in dangers in the city; in dangers in the wilderness; in dangers on the sea; in dangers among false brothers. I have been in hardship and toil; often in watchings; in hunger and thirst; often in fastings; in cold and nakedness; besides the things outside conspiring against me daily, the care of all the churches.*

2 Corinthians 11:19-28 MKJV

That is also the reason why Paul was not willing to take John Mark with them in his second journey. He had deserted the first mission, and Paul needed someone he could entrust his life to, literally.

*Barnabas wanted to take along John, who was called Mark, but Paul did not think it was right to take along the man who had deserted them in Pamphylia and who had not gone with them into the work.*

Acts 15:37-38 ISV

## PROPHET

The role of prophets was crucial for the apostolic work in New Testament churches. First, let's see what the Lord Jesus said about this:

*That is why the Wisdom of God said, 'I will send them **prophets and apostles**. They will kill some of them and persecute others,'*

Luke 11:49 ISV

And Paul described it this way:

*That is why you are no longer strangers and foreigners but fellow citizens with the saints and members of God's household, **having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets**, the Messiah Jesus himself being the cornerstone.*

Ephesians 2:19-20 ISV

*By reading this, you will be able to grasp my understanding of the secret about the Messiah, which in previous generations was not made known to human beings as it has now been revealed by the Spirit **to God's holy apostles and prophets**. This is that secret: The gentiles are heirs-in-common, members-in-common of the body, and common participants in what was promised by the Messiah Jesus through the gospel.*

Ephesians 3:4-6 ISV

*And it is he who gifted **some to be apostles, others to be prophets, others to be evangelists, and still others to be pastors and teachers,***  
*Ephesians 4:11 ISV*

*God has appointed in the **church first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers,** then those who perform miracles, those who have gifts of healing, those who help others, administrators, and those who speak various kinds of languages.*  
*1 Corinthians 12:28 ISV*

We see further that in almost every apostolic team was a prophet present. Silas, for example, companion of Paul in his second missionary journey, was a prophet:

*Then Judas and Silas, who were also prophets, said a lot to encourage and strengthen the brothers.*  
*Acts 15:32 ISV*

And Barnabas was a prophet as well, Paul himself also:

*Now Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius from Cyrene, Manaen, who grew up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul were prophets and teachers in the church at Antioch.*  
*Acts 13:1 ISV*

So, specifically, what was a prophet supposed to do? As with the other roles, there is no exact description. We do find the following functions:

**1. To speak to the church**

*But the person who prophesies speaks to people for their upbuilding, encouragement, and comfort.*  
*1 Corinthians 14:3 ISV*

**2. To reveal secrets of the heart**

*But if everyone is prophesying, when an unbeliever or an uneducated person comes in he will be convicted and examined by everything that's happening.*  
*1 Corinthians 14:24 ISV*

**3. To give predictions of future events**

*At that time some prophets from Jerusalem came down to Antioch. One of them named Agabus got up and predicted by the Spirit that there would be a severe famine all over the world. This happened during the reign of Claudius.*  
*Acts 11:27-28 ISV*

*After we had been there for a number of days, a prophet named Agabus arrived from Judea.*  
*Acts 21:10 ISV*

It's important to mention that we never see a New Testament prophet telling people what to do, but rather what God was going to do or let happen. How the church should react to a prophecy is very different than in the Old Testament. Read here:

*Beloved, **do not believe every spirit, but try the spirits** to see if they are of God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.*  
*1 John 4:1 MKJV*

*And if there are two or three prophets, let them speak, and **let the others judge**. If a revelation is revealed to another sitting by, let the first be silent. For you may all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all may be comforted. And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.*

1 Corinthians 14:29-33 MKJV

Prophecies should be always tested by the brothers and sisters together. Having the gift of prophecy does not mean that the prophet-to-be discerns which prophecies are from the Lord, as much as having the gift of evangelism doesn't mean the evangelist-to-be is preaching the right message.

## EVANGELIST

In the New Testament there is only one man that is called an evangelist: Philip. There's further not any description or example of this. We could mention also Timothy, who was called to do the work of an evangelist as part of his service. The work done by the two disciples from Cyrene and Cyprus done in Antioch could be consider as well as work of evangelists.

*And Philip went down to the city of Samaria and proclaimed Christ to them. And the people with one accord gave heed to those things which Philip spoke, hearing and seeing the many miracles which he did. For out of those having unclean spirits, many came out, crying with loud voice. And many who had been paralyzed and lame were healed. And there was great joy in that city.*

Acts 8:5-8 MKJV

*Then Philip opened his mouth and began at the same Scripture and preached the gospel of Jesus to him. And as they passed along the way, they came on some water. And the eunuch said, See, here is water, what hinders me from being baptized? Philip said, If you believe with all your heart, it is lawful. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still. And they both went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch. And he baptized him. And when they had come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more. And he went on his way rejoicing.*

Acts 8:35-39 MKJV

*And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene; who, when they had come to Antioch, spoke to the Hellenists, preaching the gospel of the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord.*

Acts 11:20-21 MKJV

This word is based on the meaning of the word "gospel", *euangelion*. *Eu* means good, *angel* means messenger. In that sense, gospel meant originally a good messenger, and later it became the message itself, good news. In old English "god spel" was a translation of that meaning, good news.

Evangelist, *euaggelistes*, is the one who proclaims or preaches the good news. Remember that in biblical language preaching is not what is done from behind a pulpit to Christians gathered for worship in a temple, but to unbelievers, where they are at.

Typical characteristics of the evangelist's work were:

1. Their scope of work was as far as the new birth of the sinner(s). Philip was done after the baptism of the Samaritans, and was taken away after the baptism of the Ethiopian eunuch.

2. They have a great gift of faith to perform impressive miracles that sow faith in the hearts of the observers. In this sense, an Paulinian apostle does need this capacity to demonstrate the power of the Holy Spirit.
3. They need apostles and/or shepherds to continue the work they have started. In both cases of Samaria and Antioch, apostles had to come to shape the work the evangelists had started.

## SHEPHERD

Shepherding is more a task than a role. Elders and apostles were called *to shepherd* the flock:

*Again He says to him, secondly, Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me? He says to Him, Yes, Lord, You know that I love You. He said to him, **Shepherd My sheep!***  
John 21:16 LITV

***Shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight, not by compulsion, but willingly; nor eagerly for base gain, but readily;***  
1 Peter 5:2 LITV

*Then take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit placed you as overseers, **to shepherd the assembly of God** which He purchased through His own blood.*  
Acts 20:28 LITV

So shepherds basically had the task of looking after the health and welfare of the sheep. The Bible is clear that the sheep are *among* the ones shepherding them, not below. In the same manner, in all these texts the fact that the flock belongs to God and not to the shepherd is always clearly stated.

Shepherding, then, is a function by which an older brother (either called elder or foregoer, as in Hebrews 13) takes care that the sheep get either milk or solid food. He brings them to places with good pastures (figuratively speaking). He also protects the flock from the wolves (false teachers or false teachings), and looks after the broken or stray ones.

This role involves practical help, counseling, encouraging, and so on. Look at what Paul says here:

*So be alert! Remember that for three years, night and day, I never stopped tearfully warning each of you.*  
Acts 20:31 ISV

*And, brothers, we beseech you to know those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and who admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. Be at peace among yourselves. Now we exhort you, brothers, warn those who are unruly, comfort the faint-hearted, support the weak, be patient toward all.*  
1 Thessalonians 5:12-14 MKJV

## TEACHER

Teaching is a function that needs to be looked at carefully. Our Greek-thinking society is used to a different form of teaching than the one done by rabbis in the Jewish culture in the times of the New Testament.

Not any other of the tasks that the Lord Jesus performed received as much attention as teaching did. He taught to the crowds, and when He spoke about feeding His flock was mostly referring to teaching. Paul spent as well most of his ministry into teaching the new disciples:

*But when some were hardened, and did not obey, speaking evil of the Way before the multitude, departing from them, he separated the disciples, conversing day by day in the*

*school of a certain Tyrannus. And this happened over two years, so as all those living in Asia heard the Word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.*

*Acts 19:9-10 LITV*

*On the first day of the week, when we had met to break bread, Paul began to address the people. Since he intended to leave the next day, he went on speaking until midnight. Now there were many lamps in the upstairs room where we were meeting. A young man named Eutychus, who was sitting in a window, began to sink off into a deep sleep as Paul kept speaking longer and longer. Overcome by sleep, he fell down from the third floor and was picked up dead.*

*Acts 20:7-9 ISV*

Teaching can be done in different ways, and it would take a whole lot to revise the different teaching strategies used in the Bible. Nonetheless, the goal of teaching is clear: to teach the younger brothers to discern truth from lies, to train them into using the Word correctly, and to discover God through His Word.

The way the Lord Jesus taught was called Remez, a Hebrew method used till today. He would use His surroundings and circumstances to explain deeper truths, and would always make people think. He would encourage His listeners, through challenging questions, to reason and arrive to truthful conclusions instead of just saying what He thought.

*But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, even those who because of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.*

*Hebrews 5:14 MKJV*

Another aspect of teaching is that the ones learning need to get a chance to put the Word to practice, as much in their character as in serving others. It is use and practice, not knowledge, what will give the disciples discernment.

As we see, teaching needs reasoning, interpretation, practice, and discernment. A good teacher is able to use the Word of God wisely so that the younger disciples can find truth in it and creates circumstances in which they can put it to practice.

## THE APPLICATION

There's not much we can do to apply these roles systematically. We need to recognize the gifts the Lord has given to different brothers and sisters, and help them to find their place in the Body of Christ. Remember that an important part of discipleship is about finding what the Lord wants the younger ones to grow into, and train their character and gifting for that purpose.

Many new disciple-makers make the mistake of trying to create copies of themselves. In the Bible, we learn that disciple-making is almost like raising children: we want them to be better than us, not worse, and we give them freedom to grow further than what we have reached.