

Title: LEADERSHIP AND WORKS, EPHESIANS 4:1-16
(Chatham, NJ; 08/05/12, AM) [Pc – Exegesis]

Theme: This passage defines the third corner of a triangle making up the church's mission; the church teaches its members, among other things, to engage in works of service.

Purpose: To explain what our personal and communal roles are meant to be and to challenge us to think about how we are doing in preparing others for works of service.

Introduction:

1. Ephesus is an established church by the time Paul writes this letter.
2. This letter, Acts 19 (beginnings) and 20 (Paul's farewell), 1 Timothy (1:3), and Revelation 2:1-7 all reveal a lot about the church in this ancient city.
3. We see a church beyond its adolescent days, one that requires organization to function.
4. We can't ignore this for several reasons: first, a division of labor is a natural part of life, second, the functions mentioned have been granted from heaven directly by God, and third, growth demands a certain amount of structure.
5. When the work grew burdensome for Moses, he appointed leaders to lead the community (Ex. 18 & Numbers 11:16ff.). One event is by Jethro's advice the other by God's leading.
6. The issue for the leaders in Ephesus is two-fold: to build up the body of Christ and to equip the members for works of service.
7. If you can imagine the "mission triangle" from last week, you will realize that this is essential to the church's overall mission: equipping for service.

I. It Begins with Our Calling: walk worthily of it, 4:1

A. The virtues needed to interact as a community

1. "With all," rhetorically this underscores the significance of these qualities
2. Humility – lowliness of mind, in contrast with high-minded and haughty (Gal. 6:3, Rom. 12:3, and Phil. 2:3 teach the same thing)
3. These and 1 Peter 5:5 suggest that it is indispensable to the community
4. Gentleness – "courtesy, considerateness, and willingness to waive one's rights that come from seeking the common good without being concerned for personal reputation or gain."
5. Gal. 5:23 – a fruit of the Spirit; 2 Tim. 2:24-25, Titus 3:2, the appropriate quality needed to correct opponents and relate to outsiders.
6. Patience and bearing with one another; the second is an amplification the first
7. Walking worthily demands these

B. Maintaining unity also demands them

1. It is completely pointless to talk about oneness unless we seek to implement these qualities that promote it
2. At the same time, God's oneness and the list of other things demonstrate the need for and theological foundation for unity
3. The bond of peace holds unity together and provides the necessary framework to grow and thrive as a community; strife destroys unity

II. God at Work in the Community, 4:7 (Christ's gift)

A. Gifts are given by Christ (7-10)

1. Christ gave us the gifts listed here; they aren't arbitrary or unnecessary
2. Just because we believe in the priesthood of believers does not demand that there are no official offices (1 Timothy, written to Ephesus, discusses overseers and deacons)
3. Offices have more value than we might think; note Jeremy Lin's value to the Houston Rockets (World Magazine, 8/11/12, p. 64)

4. Once the church moved beyond the small group stage, it needed these
- B. The purposes of these “graces” (7) and “gifts” (8)
1. Equipping the saints for works of service, 12
 2. To build up the body of Christ, 12
 3. Unity and maturity, 13
 4. To avoid false teachings, 14-15
 5. Proper growth of the body in love, 15-16
 6. The formality of these offices must be understood in light of leadership as defined in many other places: not lord it over, good shepherd, and close relationships (brothers, sisters, mothers, and fathers are terms used for one another)

III. What are we to make of all this for our church?

- A. What are we doing to produce a new generation of workers & leaders? (Equip for service)
1. Really, what are we doing?
 2. How can we? We want to know
 3. Spend time together
 4. Be in each other's homes – practice hospitality
 5. Read and talk together
 6. Encourage spiritual growth in some way together
- B. “Out of the saltshaker” leadership
1. Pray for more workers, Mt. 9:36-38
 2. I think Jesus had more in mind than evangelists; he is clearly the source of the workers in Ephesians 4:11, “He gave...”
 3. Prayer followed by “Here am I, send me.”

Conclusions:

1. Let's figure out how we can equip new leaders.
2. Let's pray about getting “out of the saltshaker.”
3. Let's humble ourselves before one another.