

The Five-Fold Symphony: How the Gifts Work Together | Release the A.P.E. <http://releasetheap.es/1hcG0il>

Critical Burden

Each of the five-fold callings demonstrate a unique burden that is essential for the health of the wider body:

APOSTLE — The fundamental burden of the apostolic gift is for expansion across borders. Apostles start new things in new places and leave a trail of communities in their wake.

PROPHET — More than anything else, the core burden of the prophet is for God himself. Their concern is for allegiance to God in both their own lives and the life of their community.

EVANGELIST — The heart of the evangelist burns hot for lost people who are far from God. They live to see those who are far off be reconciled to God through Christ.

SHEPHERD — Shepherds care deeply about people, and specifically the community of faith. They value transformative relationships and love to create spaces of hospitality for others.

TEACHER — At their core, teachers have a burden for others to gain a depth of understanding of the mysteries of God. They love to train others and watch them “get it”.

Just as one would expect, each of these burdens are profoundly good and absolutely necessary for the maturation of the body. Where would we be as Christ’s followers without teachers who help us put roots DOWN in understanding? Without evangelists who lead us OUT to the lost? Without prophets who redirect our attention UP in repentance? Without apostles who call us FORWARD across borders? Without shepherds who invite us IN and knit our communities together? Thanks be to God for the good gifts he has bestowed upon his body!

Key Partners

At the same time, “every gift casts a shadow”, and the five-fold of Ephesians 4 are no different. To be sure, each of these callings needs all of the other four for health (it is most certainly an “all-channel” network), but in my experience, every one of these vocations betray a particular gap that can be addressed by another partner from the five-fold gifts.

APOSTLE — In their zeal to see ministry expand, a core temptation for apostles is to succumb to “empire building” and as such it is critically important that they create space to listen to the [prophets](#) in their midst who challenge them to not lose sight of God and his Kingdom as primary.

PROPHET — The first (and often only!) concern of prophets is God’s person and presence—they are often unconcerned with the perceptions and opinions of others. As such, prophets must rely on shepherds who can help them connect the mystical with the tangible needs of the community.

EVANGELIST — Evangelists live to see people start to follow Jesus, but can often tire of the long, sustained work of sanctification and disciple-making. As a result, evangelists can be served by connecting with teachers who’s concern is for understanding that leads to maturity.

SHEPHERD — Shepherds excel at creating warm, welcoming spaces for the community to connect, but this can sometimes come at the expense of a concern for those outside the family of faith. In that light, it is critically important for shepherds to connect with [evangelists](#) who’s fire for the lost will help them move beyond the borders of the community.

TEACHER — Perhaps the core temptation for teachers is to be content with perpetual learning that never translates to action. In this sense, the activist drive of the [apostle](#) can help to ensure that the teacher’s discipleship is based not just in information, but obedience.