

# Ministry Networking

Ministry Structure 405-11

Networking of ministry-gifts has one focus—global harvest of souls.

**But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth (Acts 1:8 NKJV).**

- 'You shall receive power' has the responsibility of 'you shall be witnesses'. Winning the world is the prime focus of the empowering of the Holy Spirit which manifests in 'diversities of gifts' (see 1 Corinthians 12:4) since the Pentecost. The networking of gifts in a local church should therefore converge in one focus of seeing nations coming to the kingdom of God.

## 1. *Networking dynamics*

Networking of spiritual ministries draws the continuous habitation of God.

**Having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit (Ephesians 2:20-22 NKJV).**

- 'The whole building' pictures the Church. Believers are like the various types of building materials 'being fitted together'. The 'various types of building materials' speaks of the different kinds of spiritual gifts. The gifts of 'apostles and prophets' are mentioned as examples. If believers operate their spiritual gifts independent of one another, the move of God will be like a big warehouse full of good quality building materials. Without 'being fitted together', there is no 'holy temple in the Lord' nor a 'dwelling place of God'.
- By integrating their spiritual gifts together, a group of believers can 'grow into a temple in the Lord' to host the kingly presence of God. 'Grows', indicates that the process of integrating spiritual gifts in a church takes time and effort. 'Being built together', requires leadership and corporate effort. With God's presence manifesting perpetually, the people will always be benefited and able to minister to the needs of others.

Networking of spiritual ministries draws the increase that is from God.

**Holding fast to the Head, from whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase that is from God (Colossians 2:19b NKJV).**

- 'Joints and ligaments' speak of members who are given 'diversities of gifts' (see 1 Corinthians 12:4) in the 'body' which pictures the Church, with Christ as the 'Head'. When members of 'diversities of gifts' are nourished and knit together, by 'holding fast to the Head' (by consulting the Lord and following His leading), a local church will 'grow with the increase that is from God'.

**I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase (1 Corinthians 3:6 NKJV).**

- It is God who gives both spiritual growth and numerical growth when Christians operate their spiritual gifts together to reach the unsaved.
- I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing (John 15:5 NKJV).**
- Christ used the analogy of the vine and branches to explain connecting to Him is a vital link for growth.

## 2. *Networking principles*

Respect your own spiritual gifts and put them into effective operation.

**For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. ... For in fact the body is not one member but many. If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body? If the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where would be the smelling? But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased. And if they were all one member, where would the body be? But now indeed, there are many members, yet one body (1 Corinthians 12:12, 14-20 NKJV).**

- Every member is an essential part of the 'body' which speaks of the Church.

- A member with gifts that are not attracting attention should not feel inferior. No one should feel inferior about his own gifts because God has specially designed and allocated certain spiritual gifts for each believer to complement others.  
And those members of the body which we think to be less honorable, on these we bestow greater honor; and our unrepresentable parts have greater modesty, but our representable parts have no need. But God composed the body, having given greater honor to that part which lacks it (1 Corinthians 12:23-24 NKJV).
- Gifts are given to us for networking, not meant for competitions. The importance of spiritual gifts is not judged by the attention people give. In fact, God bestows greater honor on spiritual gifts that draw little attention from people.

Respect the spiritual gifts of other members and network with them.

And the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you"; nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." No, much rather, those members which seem to be weaker are necessary. And those members of the body which we think to be less honorable, on these we bestow greater honor; and our unrepresentable parts have greater modesty, but our representable parts have no need. But God composed the body, having given greater honor to that part which lacks it (1 Corinthians 12:21-24 NKJV).

- The illustration also cautions you not to look down on people whose gifts do not seem to draw as much attention as yours. To network with others you must first esteem their spiritual gifts. When you can recognise people's spiritual gifts you will help them to establish theirs to become useful ministries in a church.

Give equal concern for all gifts, for all spiritual gifts are essential components of the Church.

For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptised into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. For in fact the body is not one member but many (1 Corinthians 12:12-14 NKJV).

- 'All the members of that one body, being many, are one body' means every Christian and every gift is to be respected as essential to the Church.  
That there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another. And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually (1 Corinthians 12:25-27 NKJV).
- 'Schism in the body' means dividing or cutting off an organ from the body. The 'schism in the body' contextually refers to both the refusal to use one's own gift (see verses 15-16) and the denial of spiritual gifts of other members (see verses 21-22). Both handicap a local church!
- 'If one member suffers, all the members suffer with it' means the malfunctioning of one's gift actually causes an overall ineffectiveness in a church.
- 'The members should have the same care for one another' means equal respect must be given to all gifts.

### 3. *Three spheres of operation*

The three categories of spiritual gifts produce three different spheres of results.

- Members of a church will become **ministering-Christians** by practising the nine manifestation-gifts of the Holy Spirit (see 1 Corinthians 12:7-11). A church will resemble the Early Church when every believer is competent in operating the manifestation-gifts of the Holy Spirit.
- A church will have **integrated-ministries** when the members have developed their ministry-gifts into spiritual ministries networking with one another. A church with ongoing spiritual-ministries can impact its community and marketplaces.
- A local church will have a **global-mission** when it is able to send out competent fivefold ministers to advance the kingdom of God. That church has become an apostolic church.