



## EXPLORE THE BIBLE.

Acts 1 – 12 Sermon Series  
Supports Session 8: Serving  
Sermon Title: “Healthy Service” (Ephesians 4:11-16)

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### Connection to Session 8

Shortly after the church was formed, a complaint was raised related to unmet expectations. The apostles responded not by working hard to meet everyone’s expectations. Instead, they empowered others to meet needs so that they could remain focused on their calling (see Acts 6:1-7). Paul outlined what it looks like when a church today engages in the same principles.

### Introduction/Opening

Let’s start the message with a question. How tasty would a cake be if the only ingredient was flour? The answer is, we would not even have a cake. Here is another question. How effective would a church be if everyone only taught preschool Sunday school, or if no one offered to help on Wednesday nights? It would be ineffective. Instead of everyone doing the same thing or no one doing something else, we all have a role that we are called to play. When we engage in the role God intended for us, great things happen. Paul outlined all of this in his message to the church at Ephesus.

### Outline

#### I. The calling of the leader (vv. 11-12)

- a. A leader is called by Christ (v. 11). When a recipe is developed, it is wise to follow the directions as presented. It is also wise to trust that the one who put the recipe together knows how much of each ingredient to add, when to add it, how long to cook it, etc. If we are willing to follow a recipe of someone we do not even know, how much more willing should we be to follow the One who is the Head of the church and knows best how to organize the church?

Paul distinctly stated that Christ gave the church apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastor teachers. These are all high callings and those who submit to this calling understand this. It is also in the best interest of the church family to understand that Jesus knows what He is doing. It does not mean everyone in these positions are perfect, but they are called by Jesus.

- b. A leader is called to equip the saints (v. 12). Once we know Who has called the leaders, we need to understand the service they have been called to fulfill. The

Bible is clear in that leaders are called to equip the saints for the work of ministry, to build up the body of Christ. We can learn at least two things from this verse. First, a biblical leader will not seek to do everything himself. If he is doing everything himself, then he is not equipping others to fulfill their calling. Second, church members are called to ministry as well. If the pastor and staff are the only ones who were called to ministry, then there would be no need to equip others for the works of ministry. Everyone who knows Jesus as Lord and Savior has a ministry. The leaders are called to equip the members for ministry and the members are called to fulfill their ministry.

## II. The results of being faithful to the calling (vv. 13-14)

- a. **Unity (v. 13).** Some of us are wired to want to know when a goal is achieved. We do not mind a challenge and we may even enjoy a challenge. But we want to know where the finish line is so that we know when the challenge is achieved.

If the challenge for a church is for everyone to fulfill their God-given calling, how do we know when we have accomplished this goal? Verse thirteen states that the goal is accomplished when all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of God's Son. The church's unity is found in Christ. Therefore, our efforts should be pointed towards Him. We serve together knowing that He will unite us in our calling. The encouraging thing is that it will take us a lifetime to reach this goal.

- b. **Growth (v. 14).** A second result is that we are not tossed about by cleverness or deceit. Those who are taught to detect counterfeit money do so by studying real money. When they have a grasp on the real thing, they can detect what is false. Growth within the church is not achieved by studying the ways of the world. We are called to study God's Word so that we are not deceived. As we learn and apply God's Word, we grow in our knowledge of Him, and we are better equipped to point out what is false in today's culture.

## III. Leaders and followers are to. . . (vv. 15-16)

- a. **Submit to Christ (v. 15).** The passage is clear in that Jesus is the head of the church. Yes, He has called some to be leaders and some to be followers. But we are all called to understand that He is the head, and we are to submit to Him. Submission can become easier when we trust the One to whom we submit. Jesus is trustworthy in that He has always done what He said He would do, and the cross tells us of His love. Therefore, our best action is to trust His goodness as we submit daily.
- b. **Fulfill our calling (v. 16).** Let's return to the cake recipe we started with this morning. How good would the cake be if we left out the sugar? Once again, it would not be too good as each ingredient is important. In similar fashion, all parts

of the body of Christ are important to the overall health of the church. If a part of the body decides not to function as intended, the overall Body will not function to its potential. All Christ followers are called to service, and we should actively fulfill this calling as Christ intends.

### **Conclusion**

We learned in our group study this morning, as well as the message, that we are all called to faithfully serve. This calling is lived out after we understand and accept Jesus's calling to submit to Him as Lord and Savior. The good news is that He knows we cannot serve enough to earn our way to heaven. Therefore, Jesus who knew no sin became sin on our behalf so that through Him we may have eternal life. Before we submit to His calling to service, we must submit to His calling to be our Lord and Savior.

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