The Gift Moves

William MacDonald · Ephesians 4:12 · January 6, 2025



A revolutionary insight! The gifts in Ephesians 4 are given to equip the saints for the work of ministry. Once the saints can do the work of ministry on their own, the gift can move on. **This means that success in the Lord's work is to "work yourself out" of a job in the shortest possible time**, i.e. to become superfluous, and then look for new worlds to conquer.

This is what Paul did. For example, he went to Thessalonica, preached to the Jews on three Sabbaths, and left a functioning church. This was undoubtedly exceptional in terms of the speed with which a ministry could be established. The longest time Paul spent in one place at one time was two years, and that was in Ephesus.

It was never God's intention that His saints should be permanently dependent on just one of the gifts mentioned. The gifts are dispensable. If the saints remain full-time consumers of preaching and never allow themselves to be used in the work of the ministry, then they will never develop spiritually as they should, and the world will

never be evangelized as God intended.

William Dillon said that **a successful foreign missionary never has a foreign successor**. The same should apply to workers in their own country – when the worker's task is finished, the saints themselves should take over the work and not look for a new preacher-holder.

Too often we preachers see our ministry as a lifetime ministry. We think that others could not do the job as well. We excuse our perpetual presence in the same place by saying that attendance would decrease if we left. We complain that others don't do things properly and aren't reliable. But the fact is that they need to learn. And to learn, you have to give them the opportunity to learn. The learning process involves practicing, delegating responsibility, and evaluating progress.

If the saints get to a point where they think they can do without a particular preacher or teacher, that's no reason for him to sulk or nurse his hurt feelings. It is cause for celebration. The worker is now free to go where he is most needed.

It is always bad when the work of God is permanently built around one man, no matter how gifted he is. His great aim should be to multiply his effectiveness by equipping and building up the saints so that they are no longer dependent on him. In a world like ours, he need not worry that there may not be work elsewhere.

Source https://thebiblestudy.site/article/the-gift-moves/