

Shaping up the Saints

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I. Introduction.

A. Text: Ephesians 4:11-12.

B. The unity of the church is constituted by the Spirit of God taking up residence in the hearts of believing men and women.

C. This unity need only be maintained—not created.

D. Every believer in the body of Christ is given a specific gift for service.

E. There are four special functions in the church: apostles, prophets, evangelists and pastor-teachers. The ministry of prophets and apostles was fulfilled in the beginning but the ministry of evangelists and pastor-teachers persists.

II. Equipping.

A. The job of pastor-teachers is preparing the saints or getting them ready—it is to make one what one ought to be or shape them up.

B. The attitude.

1. The Scripture explicitly warns against tyrannical leadership.

2. Peter wrote pastors not to domineer over the church.

3. We are not authorities—we are instruments.

4. The ministry must be done without desiring personal glory—this is where the full force of temptation strikes a person. The only authority had is the authority of the truth.

5. Pastor-teachers are not to be motivated by greed.

a. The pastor-teacher is to be an example.

b. No teacher has the right to teach what he is not an example of already.

C. The method.

1. Jesus is proclaimed.

2. Men are warned and taught.

a. To warn means to call attention to something.

b. The interest must be captivated before teaching is poured out.

3. Preaching is the business of disturbing the comfortable and comforting the disturbed.
4. Truth feeds the flock of God. (Acts 19)

Application questions:

1. How can pride be dangerous in the ministry of teaching? How have you experienced this threat?

2. How would you respond to someone who says that method does not matter when it comes to preaching? Explain.

3. Should the modern church emphasize preaching less in a society that does not like to listen as much? Defend your answer.
