

Edifying the Body of Christ

Key Verses: “*He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.*”
—*Ephesians 4:11,12*

Selected Scripture:
Ephesians 4:11-16

One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.” (vss. 3-6) These verses emphasize that there should be no spirit of sectarianism among those who are devoted Christians. All such will acknowledge Christ as their leader and that the eternal Father is the Creator or First Cause.

After Christ ascended on high, the Holy Spirit came upon the Early Church on the Day of Pentecost. (Acts 1:1-4, 9-14; 2:1-4) At that time, various gifts were

As this chapter commences, Paul implores believers to “live a life worthy of the calling you have received.” (Eph. 4:1, *New International Version*) This refers to one’s conversion to Christianity. The vocation of a true Christian goes beyond ordinary occupations. It involves embracing and exhibiting the values of faith, love, forgiveness, service, sacrifice, and unity in every aspect of life.

“Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism,

imparted to the Master's followers, especially the apostles, who were divinely inspired representatives of God. Those things that they taught and wrote were intended to guide consecrated believers throughout their earthly sojourn.—Eph. 4:7-10

Our Key Verses outline the offices of spiritual leadership that the Lord established for equipping the Gospel Age saints in their work of ministry as God had ordained. Paul says this ministry was for the “edifying [or building up] of the body of Christ.” Many have appreciated the privilege of responding to the invitation to become joint heirs with Christ in his coming kingdom by virtue of their consecration and spirit begetting. At the present time, such Christians come together in meetings, conventions, fellowship, and engage in personal study and prayer as they strive to faithfully carry out their covenant of sacrifice.

How blessed we are to have received the grand privilege of consecrating our lives now in this “acceptable time.” (II Cor. 6:2, *Young's Literal Translation*) It is an opportunity that defies description. Great should be our humility, which acknowledges such an exalted prospect to which we of ourselves could never aspire.

In these “latter days,” we can reflect upon the marvelous heritage in having come to a knowledge and appreciation of “present truth.” (II Pet. 1:12,13) We must remember, however, that the ultimate object of our having received such understanding is not merely to give us an intellectual knowledge of God's plan. Rather, in addition, it is to assist us in the transformation process, that through the sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit, we may develop a Christlike character and seek the “edifying of the body of Christ.”

Let us give great diligence to these matters in making our calling and election sure. If faithful, we will ultimately share in the work of reconciling mankind back to the Heavenly Father, as they are restored to the perfection that was lost in Eden.—II Pet. 1:10,11 ■