

Notes for the Ones Called-Out to Meet

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The "Equipping Gifts"

by Dan Trygg

"But to each one of us
the grace was given (past completed action)
according to the measure of the free-gift of the Christ.

Consequently, it says,
"Ascending/going up (at a point in time) unto (a) high place/heaven,
He took captivity captive/He took control of a group of captives,
He gave gifts to the humans."... Ephesians 4:7,8

1. God has given each of us special portion of grace.

- a.) The "us" refers to anyone in Christ.
- b.) This is a "done deal" -- the verb is past completed action, "the grace was given".
- c.) In the context, the phrase "the grace" refers to a spiritual gift and calling.

Paul used this same phrase in Ephesians 3:2,7,8 to refer to his own gifting and appointment to ministry. The way he speaks of it is identical to what he is telling the Christians in Ephesians 4:7, and also the way he spoke of it in Romans 12:3 and 12:6 (concerning both himself and the Roman Christians).

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"And He gave
on the one hand the apostles,
on the other hand the prophets,
on another hand the evangelists,
on another hand the shepherds and teachers..." Ephesians 4:11

2. Christ has provided certain gifts to some people in order to help us all function more effectively.

- a.) Some call this the "five-fold ministry". Actually, the structure of the Greek seems to indicate that there are really four types of people described here.
 - b.) Note that all of these gifts seem to be about proclaiming God's truth – They are “word gifts”.
 - c.) Christ is the one who gives these gifts as He sees fit (cf. 1 Cor. 12:11,18, it is “the Spirit” or “God”).
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“toward the ‘fitting-according-to’/mending/restoration/equipment/adaptation/arrangement of the holy [ones]
unto/toward work of service,
unto/toward ‘house-building’/edification/building-up of the Body of the Christ/Anointed-King,”
Ephesians 4:12

3. There is a direction or purpose for these "equipping gifts".

- a.) The Greek word translated as "equipping", is a noun, *katartismōn*. This refers to the process, or end result, of the verbal form. **The Greek verb, *katartizō*, literally means "fitting-out-according-to".** Its basic root word, *artizō* -- to make a joint (*artos*), to prepare, adapt, fit, join, complete, restore, arrange in an orderly fashion. The root word is intensified by the preposition *kata* – “according to”. **It covers a broad scope of ideas**, depending on the context. The “fitting-out” or “adaptation” involved is either according to the nature of the person, or according to the purpose intended.

- i.) **It is used to describe the process of mending, repair, and maintenance** of fishing nets -- Matt. 4:21; Mk. 1:19. In Gal. 6:1, it is used to "restore" someone who has fallen.
- ii.) **It is used to describe the training, equipping process** that a disciple undergoes in relation to his/her teacher -- e.g., Lk. 6:40 .
- iii.) **It is used to describe the adaptation, or "shaping", of parts** so that they will fit together neatly, or will be more effective in their use. For example, to prepare and adapt someone for ministry to a particular people-group or circumstance.
- iv.) **It is used to describe the process of fitting things together**, as in the construction of a joint, or putting together the pieces of a filigree pattern or a puzzle. Try this definition in this passage to see the shift in the picture created in your mind. The nuance of "according to" for *kata* is very significant in helping us see how this works. We are to help people find their place in the church community, and see how their giftedness fits with others.
- v.) **It is often translated as "be made complete" or "perfected". This does not imply sinlessness, but the fulfillment of the above ideas.** E.g., 2 Cor. 13:9,11; 1 Pet. 5:10.

The primary job of the so-called "equipping gifts" is to work with the others in the Body of Christ in ways that encompass the word pictures described above.

“unto/toward work of service,
unto/toward "house-building"/edification/building-up of the Body of the Christ/Anointed-King,” Eph. 4:12

b.) This "fitting-according-to" process is further focused by the next two phrases. The shaping, mending, equipping or arranging together is not an end in itself. Though this process may in itself produce good, healthy benefits for the people involved, it is *not* only for self, it is for service.

i.) The preparation/equipping of believers is for the purpose of a work of service (*diakonia*).

There is no "the" in the Greek, so there is no particular defined action in mind. The phrase could be rendered as: "(a) work/deed/action/occupation/undertaking or practical expression of service".

***Diakonia* is a word meaning practical service**, often "to wait upon", or "attend to someone's needs", such as a domestic servant might do. In more general terms, it meant "to provide" or "care for" someone. In secular Greek it was often used to describe the work of women. It is interesting to note, too, that although OT Judaism had a deep understanding of service, and highly valued it, especially serving God, the term ***diakonia* is never used in the Greek Septuagint translation (LXX) of the OT.**

Jesus, however, had used the word to confront the abuse of power so common in the world system (Lk. 22:24-27). The apostles saw the relation between "table waiting" and "serving up the word of God" (Acts 6:1-4), and saw them both as *diakonia* to God and to the community of believers. **The word certainly *did not* have the religious connotations that "ministry" has for us today.**

ii. The preparation of the saints is for the purpose of their participation in building up Christ's Body.

This is the work of constructing a functional corporate reality. **We are not only to serve individuals, we are to serve the group by assembling its parts.** We are all being trained to help in that process.