

# THE CHURCH: A GIFTED FAMILY

Ephesians 4:1-16

Key Truth:

Each of us is spiritually gifted and needs to be serving in order for Grace Church to be the loving, redemptive presence of Jesus in the world.

In today's Superbowl, how effective will New England's defense be if, say, only seven of its players take the field?

On the other hand, what if the Falcons believed quarterback Matt Ryan was the only one gifted with the offensive skills to score?

Either scenario guarantees a loss.

You don't win a Superbowl unless every player is fulfilling his role and playing his heart out.

What would never be done by a team in the NFL is commonly experienced in Christ's church.

How many spiritually gifted believers never take the field and serve?

How many churches tacitly believe the senior pastor and pastoral staff are the ones spiritually gifted to do ministry?

Listen to this job description for a senior pastor:

## **Qualifications and Responsibilities**

*The Senior Pastor will be a man called of God and set apart to the gospel ministry, evangelical in theology, in accordance with the "Baptist Faith and Message" (2000 edition), and committed to living and serving in a manner consistent with the standards set forth in Scripture for such a leader. The Senior Pastor must be a man who exemplifies a godly character, is compassionate in recognizing and meeting the needs of others, and demonstrates a high level of competence.*

*The Senior Pastor will be called by the Holy Spirit and confirmed by a body of believers through ordination. (Acts 20:28; Titus 1:5; 1 Timothy 3:1)*

*The Senior Pastor will equip, educate, and edify the church as mandated in Ephesians 4:11-13.*

*The Senior Pastor will conform himself to the ministry expectations set forth in 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13.*

*The Senior Pastor will lead and serve in accord with the expectations set forth in 1 Peter 5:1-3.*

*The Senior Pastor will exercise biblical authority and carry out a Christian witness as set forth in Hebrews 13:17 and as directed in 2 Timothy 4:1-5.*

*The Senior Pastor will be qualified to minister in the church as required in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9.*

*The Senior Pastor is responsible to the church to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ, to teach the biblical revelation, to engage in pastoral care ministries, and to provide oversight of all areas of church life and the ministerial staff.*

*The Senior Pastor will be called to lead the church to understand, embrace, and accomplish its mission to make disciples both locally and globally through Cross Point's vision of engaging Christ followers in worship, community, and ministry.*

*The responsibilities of the Senior Pastor may be outlined in terms of his primary biblical roles as follows:*

*Elder/Overseer: the principal leader and vision caster of the church (cf. Acts 20:28; Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-4).*

*Evangelist: models the practice of personal evangelism and ensures that the church is challenged and equipped to be obedient to the Great Commission (cf. II Timothy 4:5; Matthew 28:19).*

*Shepherd: models the heart of the Chief Shepherd and ensures that the church is well led, cared for, and protected (cf. Acts 20:28; I Peter 5:1-4).*

*Preacher/Teacher: the principal communicator of God's Word in public worship and ensures that the Church is growing to maturity in Christ (cf. Acts 6:4; Ephesians 4:11; II Timothy 4:1-4; Titus 1:9).*

*Equipper: partners with other leaders to empower and equip maturing members for significant service and ministry by discovering, developing, and deploying their spiritual gifts (cf. Ephesians 4:12; II Timothy 2:2).*

*The Senior Pastor will participate in the planning of worship services and events and equip staff and lay leaders to successfully coordinate those services and events.*

*The Senior Pastor will oversee and lead outreach and pastoral care efforts, including biblical counseling, performing weddings and conducting funeral services.*

*The Senior Pastor will oversee staff development and ensure that ministerial staff has the resources necessary to fulfill their duties and responsibilities.*

*The Senior Pastor will cooperate with the associational, state, and denominational leaders in matters of mutual interest and concern and support the work of Southern Baptist missions and the cooperative program.*

*The Senior Pastor serves as the primary leader of Cross Point and together with the Leadership Team and Ministerial Staff is responsible for our success. The Senior Pastor will work with the ministerial staff to set forth both vision and direction for Cross Point. The Senior Pastor will work with the Leadership Team and Ministerial Staff to ensure our relevance to the community, the accomplishment of our mission and vision, and accountability to our diverse membership.*

*A seminary degree is required with a minimum of five years experience in a pastoral ministry. This individual demonstrates critical competencies in three broad categories: commitment to results, leading change, and motivating.*

*Commitment to results: The Senior Pastor is a systems thinker who is mission focused and goal driven. This individual identifies relevant information and helps transform this information into individual and organizational knowledge and learning. The Senior Pastor is action oriented and innovative. He translates broad goals into achievable steps. He anticipates and solves problems and takes advantage of opportunities, is a self-starter and team player.*

*Leading change: The Senior Pastor must possess the skills and implements the functions of a leader. This man must share our values, mission and vision. With integrity, he develops people and builds teams to accomplish goals. This individual deals effectively with demanding situations and designs and implements strategies in response to them.*

*Motivating: The Senior Pastor manages continuity, change and transition. This individual knows how to influence and enable others. He addresses the impact of attitude and action on Cross Point and its participants.*

### **Physical Demands/Working Conditions:**

*This is an intense and demanding position based on full responsibility for Cross Point's operations. The Senior Pastor handles detailed, complex concepts and problems, balances multiple tasks simultaneously, and makes appropriately considered decisions. He plans and implements programs. The Pastor is to establish strong and appropriate relationships with the Leadership Team, Ministerial Staff, Deacon, Finance Team, volunteers, donors, members, and the community. He plans and meets deadlines. The pastor maintains a flexible work schedule to meet the demands of executive management. His hours may be long and irregular. The Senior Pastor conveys a professional and positive image and attitude regarding Cross Point. He demonstrates commitment to continued professional growth and development.*

*I was trained in this tradition with this understanding of the Senior Pastor. Straight out of seminary I would have accepted this job description at face value.*

Now, after 25 years in pastoral ministry I look at this description and laugh. No man can fulfill what is described. No man has the range of spiritual gifts nor the skills nor the experience to accomplish what is contained in this job description. No wonder there is such a high rate of burnout among pastors. No wonder there is such a high rate of failure and bitterness among pastors. No wonder there is such weakness and immaturity in our churches today.

Jesus never intended one person to be responsible for so much of the ministry. Jesus never intended our churches to be built around one man's personality or his abilities. The only way all the things contained in this job description can be accomplished is if the brothers and sisters in that church family are serving according to their spiritual gifts.

We are a family of spiritually gifted brothers and sisters who, as we serve according to our gifts, build up Grace Church to be Jesus' loving presence in the world.

Turn with me in your Bibles to Ephesians 4:1-16. Notice the description of the church and the parts we all play in the life of the church.

Ephesians 4:1-16 (ESV)

<sup>1</sup> I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, <sup>2</sup> with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, <sup>3</sup> eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. <sup>4</sup> There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— <sup>5</sup> one Lord, one faith, one baptism, <sup>6</sup> one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. <sup>7</sup> But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. <sup>8</sup> Therefore it says,

"When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men."

<sup>9</sup> (In saying, "He ascended," what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower regions, the earth? <sup>10</sup> He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.) <sup>11</sup> And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, <sup>12</sup> to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, <sup>13</sup> until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, <sup>14</sup> so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. <sup>15</sup> Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, <sup>16</sup> from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

I believe so deeply in what this passage teaches. I know from experience that each of you are gifted by the Holy Spirit and when you discover your gift and are serving according to your gift you will be at a whole new level in your spiritual life. I also know that Grace Church needs you to be serving according to your spiritual gift in order for us to be all that Christ calls us to be. I also know that I do not have all the gifts; that I serve a specific, limited role here in the family and that I need you all to be ministering according to your gifts in order for us to be healthy and maturing as a church family.

To this end, Phil and I will be partnering in this series, *The Church: A Gifted Family*. We will be anchored in 1 Corinthians 12-14; we encourage you to read that out several times over the course of this series. Also, the Elders will be counseling together about the implications of Ephesians 4 and 1 Corinthians 12-14 as to how we can better equip and support you to accomplish the ministry to which Jesus is calling you. So please be praying for the Elders on this matter.

Who knows who's going to win the Superbowl today? But we know beyond a shadow of a doubt that every player will be on the field playing his heart out on every play to win a ring.

My hope is that you will be encouraged through this series to discover your spiritual gifts and to take your place on the ministry team here at Grace not for a ring, but for the joy of serving Christ and changing lives.