

# LESSON 7

## THE GOVERNMENTAL MINISTRIES OF THE CHURCH

### INTRODUCTION

*The Ministry of the Spirit* by A.J. Gordon states:

- “The Spirit of God is the successor of the Son of God in His official ministry on earth. Until Christ’s earthly work for His church had been finished, the Spirit’s work in this world could not properly begin. (John 16:7). Our Savior’s redemptive work was not completed when He died on the cross, or when He rose from the dead, or even when He ascended from the brow of Olivet, not until He sat down in His Father’s throne, summing up all His ministry in Himself, did the full Christ stand ready to be communicated to His church. By the first Adam’s sin, God’s communion with man through the Holy Ghost was broken and their union ruptured. When the second Adam came up from His grave and was resurrected and took His place at God’s right hand, there was a restoration of this fellowship. Very beautiful are the words of our risen Lord as bearing on this point: ‘I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’ (John 20:17 NASB). The place which the divine Son had won for Himself in the Father’s heart, He had won for us also. All of acceptance and standing and privilege which was now His was ours too by redemptive right; and the Holy Ghost was (and still is being) sent down to confirm and realize to us what He had won for us. Without the work of the Spirit in us, the work of Christ for us would be of no avail.”
- “Well may we mark the holy difference between the persons of the Trinity. Each receives from another what He communicates and each magnifies another in His praises.”
- The Father glorifies the Son, the Son glorifies the Father, and the Holy Spirit brings glory to Jesus. (John 17:1, 16:14)

*Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: “Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You.” (John 17:1 NASB)*

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*He (Holy Spirit) will glorify Me (Jesus), for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you. (John 16:14 NASB)*

We must minister unto the Lord the works of Christ through the Holy Spirit if we would fulfill the purpose of our salvation.

### THE HOLY SPIRIT AS THE ADMINISTRATOR OF THE CHURCH

On the day of Pentecost, our Lord installed the Holy Spirit as the Administrator of the church of which He Himself is the head. The better we understand our Administrator's directions and do things His way, the more successful and fulfilled we are going to be in our Lord's ministry.

James Elder Cumming says, "The Holy Ghost from the day of Pentecost has occupied an entirely new position. The whole administration of the affairs of the church of Christ has since that day been delved upon Him...That day was the installation of the Holy Spirit as the administrator of the church in all things, which office He is to exercise according to the circumstances at His discretion...There is but one other great event to which scripture directs us to look, and that is the second coming of our Lord. Until then we live in the Pentecostal age and under the rule of the Holy Ghost (as ordained by our Lord)." (Acts 2:16-21)

Our task then is to learn to yield to, receive from, and work under our glorious Administrator, who seeks always to perfectly carry out the directions and mission of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The administration of the Holy Spirit is delivered through the hearts of believers. (2 Cor. 3:2,3)

- There must first be a sensitive heart within the believer for the Holy Spirit to have the liberty to speak and act as He wills.
- There must be enough knowledge of the Word to produce a sound mind and the unfeigned faith necessary to carry out that which God speaks and wants to do. (2 Tim. 2:15)

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*Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth. (2 Timothy 2:15 NIV)*

### AREAS OF MINISTRY (EPH. 2:10; 1 PET. 4:10)

There are areas of ministry the Spirit leads us into, equips us for, and carries out through us (if we will allow Him to do so!)

*For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. (Eph. 2:10 NIV)*

*Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. (1 Peter 4:10 NIV)*

The Holy Spirit leads, equips, and carries out through us

- The ministry and government of the church.
- The worship and service of the church.
- The missions of the church.

### THE GOVERNMENTAL MINISTRIES OF THE CHURCH

When the New Testament Church was first formed, certain ones from among the believers were raised up by the Holy Spirit to care for the flock.

*Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which He bought with His own blood. (Acts 20:28 NIV)*

Jesus does the calling or appointing, and it is the Holy Spirit who superintends both the appointment and the ensuing ministry. (Eph. 4:11-13)

Steps to ministering in the Spirit

- We need to hear clearly and surely from God.

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- Jesus prayed all night to hear from God before selecting His original twelve apostles.

*<sup>12</sup>One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God. <sup>13</sup>When morning came, He called His disciples to Him and chose twelve of them, whom He also designated apostles. (Luke 6:12-13 NIV)*

- Not only those who hold authority positions in the church, but also all servants of the Lord, should be sent forth at the call of the Lord. (Luke 10:2)
  - Some by general “logos Word” appointment
  - Other by specific and individual “rhema Word” appointment
- Getting this word often takes time and diligence.
- We need to agree with God and begin flowing in the appointment or calling God has chosen for us.

### DEFINITIONS OF THE GOVERNMENTAL POSITIONS

*So Christ himself gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, some to be pastors and teachers. (Eph. 4:11 NIV)*

#### APOSTLES

Meaning: “sent ones”

- Apostles are not limited to the original twelve. (1 Cor. 15:5-7; 1 Thess. 2:6-7; Acts 14:14; Rom. 16:7)
- Even today, the church should and does have apostles appointed by our Lord.

What do apostles do?

- They are appointed by the Lord or called by God to do the same work of the first apostles.

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- They build up the church on the foundation laid by the original twelve, they establish new works and they help the people move toward their destiny.
- Today, apostles serve all over the world bringing people to Christ, establishing churches, remaining to teach and train the converts and then moving on to a new area as the Holy Spirit directs them.

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### PROPHETS

Meaning: “inspired proclaimers”

- Like apostles, prophets serve the church at-large.
- Prophets, receive special insight from God as to events past, present, or future. (1 Cor. 14:1-4; Amos 3:7; Judges 4, 5; Acts 21:8-9; Acts 2:17-18)

*<sup>1</sup>Follow the way of love and eagerly desire gifts of the Spirit, especially prophecy. <sup>3</sup>... the one who prophesies speaks to people for their strengthening, encouraging and comfort. (1 Cor. 14:1, 3 NIV)*

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### EVANGELISTS

Meaning: “traveling preachers”

- They serve the church universal.
- Their job is to evangelize and bring new converts into the church at large. (John 4, the woman at the well)

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### PASTORS AND TEACHERS

Pastors, meaning “shepherds,” train and teach a selected flock of believers.

Teachers train and teach and make disciples.

- It is implied in the scriptures that called-of-the-Lord pastors and teachers may “pastor” and “teach” in any body of believers that the Holy Spirit may lead them. (Col. 4:15,

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Nympha and the church in her home; Acts 18:26, teachers Priscilla and Aquila)

### OTHER MINISTERS APPOINTED TO SERVE THE LOCAL BODY (ACTS 14:23, 20:28)

#### ELDERS

Meaning: “overseers”

- They were appointed and ordained with the agreement of the Spirit in the Body by the apostles before they departed a locality.
- They were not necessarily full-time church workers.
- They were ordinary members of the congregation with the spiritual gifts and qualifications to govern, instruct, and shepherd.
- The whole group of elders in one accord was responsible for the keeping of sound doctrine and faithful service in the New Testament churches.

#### DEACONS

Meaning: “servants”

- They were appointed by the administrators of each body as they were in agreement with the Holy Spirit.
- They were required to be raised up first individually by the Holy Spirit, meaning they had to be appropriately gifted by the Spirit, led by the Spirit, qualified by the Word, and finally approved by the Spirit in the Body, before they could be placed in office.
- The deacon’s duties were to handle the material needs of the Body and assist the elders.

#### THE OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCHES WERE GIVEN TO THE FUNCTIONING BODIES THEMSELVES

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- Every believer was expected to carry a portion of leadership responsibility.
- The older and more mature helped and instructed the younger and less mature in spiritual growth.
- Special spiritual gifts were manifested by the Holy Spirit in each local body to equip each and every one for service to another.
- Those today who step out and minister the gifts that God urges them to use in the body in which they are set are called lay ministers.

### CONCLUSION

- Let us be open to minister in the area in which we are both gifted and called by God.
- Someday we may be called to serve the church universal. In the meantime, we should all expect to serve in the lay ministries for which we are empowered.