

## Five-Fold Ministry Definitions

Take from *Primal Fire* by Neil Cole

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**Summary Thesis:** “It is our supposition that the gifts of apostle, prophet, evangelist, shepherd (pastor) and teacher (APEST) were given to the church to bring about the full expression of Christ’s beauty and glory in the world. It is only when all of these gifts are released to function naturally in the body and they mature to the point of equipping others that the church will fully reflect Jesus-in all His beauty-to the world.” -Primal Fire

### Apostle- Contagious Empowerment; Start and Go Team

- **Basic Definition:** Sent with a specific God-given assignment to lay a foundation for the expansion of the church and they are mature enough to equip others to do the same
- **Basic Effect on Others:** I can do this
- **Primary Characteristics:**
  - **Sent Ones-** our word ‘missionary’ comes from a Latin translation of the Greek ‘apostolos;’ not bound to a specific locality over time; may have home base, but are on road often; sent to specific people groups; pioneering gift that blazes new trails for others to follow; designed by God with the ability to identify, empower, and release leaders
  - **Foundational-** appears first on any list of roles not because it is more important/higher, but because a solid foundation must be laid before anything can be built; calling may be as specific as a neighborhood or as broad as the world; don’t want to build on another’s foundation; wired to be entrepreneurial, drawn to places where no one else has gone before and motivated to start something that has never existed in that place; more likely to start something from scratch than join existing staff
  - **Architect of multiplying methods-** can create methods that are simple yet profound and set them loose to reproduce; bring together elements necessary for growth and fashion them together in simple ways that accelerate the effects of those elements;
  - Evangelists and teachers are inclined to try to reach masses of people with a ‘more is better’ approach, apostolic leaders have a ‘less is more’ approach; satisfied with smaller groupings; more concerned about the ‘right’ people be in the room; empower people to do work of Kingdom; people sense a destiny within themselves tied to God’s purpose and DNA and feel empowered to walk into it; not motivating people to fit into a program or volunteer for a cause, the apostolic gift empowers and releases people to discover their own place in the Kingdom and accomplish it wherever that may be; they love to see disciples carry the work on to others
  - **Custodian of the DNA-** a guardian/steward of the Gospel
  - **Planter of the Gospel-** starting something doesn’t mean someone is an apostle, it is planting the Gospel that is key (Mark 4.1-20)
  - **Parent-** father/son dynamic
  - **Scum of the Earth-** often pushed into margins; not easily knocked off course by others
  - **Authority is Relational and Results-Oriented-** recognizes that love is always a choice and therefore empowers people to choose love; understands distributed, relational authority is more effective/powerful than positional authority
- **Shadow Cast by Immaturity:**
  - Tempted to go it alone- competent in many areas so can do too much
  - View others in black/white terms- you are a leader or a wasted cause
  - On the go a lot- hard on family and partners in ministry
  - Can leave too quickly
  - Can be seen as agitators in the church
  - Can be more concerned with results than the motive behind the results
  - Put too much trust in their own methodology versus trusting Jesus
  - Don’t play well with others

- Can play the martyr and assume others are out to get them
- Not very good at managing new works once they are started
- Can leave behind a leadership vacuum

### **Prophet- Contagious Insight; Start and Go Team**

- **Basic Definition:** speak to the church on God's behalf, bringing words of edification, exhortation, and consolation and are mature enough to help others to do the same
- **Basic Effect on Others:** I can hear from God
- **Primary Characteristics:**
  - **Truth Teller-** zeal for people to hear/respond to the message; tend to be passionate and spiritual people; sometimes connected to creative arts; tend to see things/people in terms of black/white, right/wrong; hard to let go of something after they've heard from God; rejection of message = spiritual offense; tell truth without fear of consequences, not prone to needing validation; message is often to correct a problem
  - **Guardian of Justice-** value justice/righteousness highly; most concerned with faithfulness of God's people to their covenant relationship with God
  - **Provide Spiritual Intelligence in Unseen Warfare-** special sensitivity to spiritual battle and are therefore motivated to get people praying; tend to see spiritual reality more clearly than most; usually introverts who value times of solitude, need time alone with God to find strength
  - **Sees What is to Come-** at times given insight into future
  - **Authority is rooted in the Message**
- **Shadow Cast by Immaturity:**
  - Can be lonely, unpopular, misunderstood
  - Bent towards isolation
  - Can function as 'lone-wolves' moving from church to church
  - Can believe everything they hear is to be proclaimed
  - Can confuse warnings (outcome depends on response of people) and future predictions (outcome is already set)
  - Assuming a message for them is a message for everyone else
  - Can focus too much on miraculous to confirm word
  - Can be impatient with people they perceive as slow to respond
  - Often abandon any form/method that can be seen as humanly engineered
  - Battle discouragement- can be very up/down
  - Can be seen as critical- say 'I told you so'
  - Become addicted to role of obstinate irritant
  - Fall prey to Jonah syndrome- grow so weary of evil they want God to punish vs people to repent

### **Evangelist: Contagious Compassion; Stay and Grow Team**

- **Basic Definition:** passionately seek out opportunities to share Gospel with others and lead them toward acceptance of Jesus and are mature enough to equip others to do the same; driven by love of God and love of people
- **Basic Effect on Others:** My heart breaks for the lost
- **Primary Characteristics:**
  - **First Impression of Body to World-** often winsome and loving of people; usually extroverts; wired to recruit others to world of building the church; people feel loved after being with an evangelist; many of U.S. largest churches are led by evangelists- Hybels, Warren; often remarkable people who make an impression

- **Church's Conscience for the Gospel**- reach lost and influence found; awaken church to love lost and equip them to reach them
- **Provides Spiritual Intuition**- know when someone is close to Christ and what it takes to help them take next steps
- **Builder of the Church**- build church by addition (adding new converts or even adding new churches); recruiting engine of church
- **Authority is relational**
- **Shadow Cast by Immaturity:**
  - Can favor popular thoughts over deep thoughts
  - If in lead position without other gifts can result in 'feeder church' where people leave when they are ready to grow
  - Can oversell
  - Pragmatists- do what works and can get overly carried away and reliant on methods, see this especially in training others- focus more on the method than the message
  - Can limit evangelism in the body- because evangelist is so gifted at bringing people to Jesus it can create environment where everyone wants to bring their unsaved loved ones into his/her orbit thus reducing work of evangelism in broader church
  - Can result in cult of personality- see this in many mega-churches and multi-site churches

### Shepherd- Contagious Unity; Stay and Grow Team

- **Basic Definition:** Pastor; have overwhelming concern for continuing care of a specific community and are mature enough to equip others to do the same
- **Basic Effect on Others:** I love these people
- **Primary Characteristics:**
  - **Sacrifices for Sheep**- protect/care for flock; strengthen weak; search for lost sheep; help sheep to mature; often first to notice if someone is missing and will either pursue or send someone to pursue; highly relational; typically beloved by all; works well with other gifts
  - **Tends the Sheep**- lead sheep to green pastures/quiet waters; equip sheep to feed themselves
  - **Builds Community and Team**- values intimacy; relational connectedness; team builder who draw out strengths of others and is capable of getting everyone to recognize those strengths; able to discern needs of a group and respond in ways that strengthen and bring health to the body; create environments where relationships can form/flourish and disciples can grow/mature
  - **Authority is Relational**- lead by example; trusted by flock
  - **More is Better**- on average can care for 70-100, exceptional can care for 120-150; for a church to grow shepherds must equip/release more shepherds
- **Shadow Cast by Immaturity:**
  - Can be skeptical of apostolic, prophetic, evangelistic roles- can undervalue more outwardly focused gifts
  - Can overlook opportunities to advance Gospel beyond congregation
  - Can fall into peacekeeping vs peacemaking
  - Can tolerate people who need to be confronted
  - Not task-oriented so duties can pile up as they tend to people
  - Often very busy
  - Tend to be optimistic which can cause them to hold onto things for too long
  - Can enable a level of dysfunction by always believing best about people

### Teacher- Contagious Learning; Stay and Grow Team

- **Basic Definition:** spurs the progressive growth of understanding and application of truth, and is mature enough to equip others to do the same
- **Basic Effect on Others:** I hunger for God's Word
- **Primary Characteristics:**

- **At Home in God's Word**- can be black/white; consumed by truth; motivated by dual task of exposing falsehood and declaring truth
- **Exposes False Doctrine**- guardians of doctrine
- **Learner**- insatiable curiosity and fascination with God's revealed truth; doesn't have to be prompted to study; loves to read; always looking for new material to teach, not content to teach same stuff over and over (repetition doesn't bother apostles most of whom have a teaching gift)
- **Facilitates Learning in Others**- mentors on a personal level vs only being a public communicator; desire to create culture where knowing/living truth are distinguishing characteristics;
- **Authority is in Word**- do what they do as act of authenticity not for applause or clout
- **Success for Teacher**- equipping people to 'feed' themselves vs feeding them every week; meat (truth we need to chew on) vs milk (truth that is predigested by teacher); 4 Pieces- get message right, communicate message in understandable way, see that content is applied in lives of students, equip/release students to teach selves/others
- **Shadow Cast by Immaturity:**
  - Can lead to church becoming place of information vs transformation if teacher not committed to equipping others to teach themselves
  - Can separate truth from life if not focused on application
  - Can create strong dependence on leader
  - Can fall into trap of reading Bible for the next message vs to hear God for themselves
  - Can be polarizing if become too consumed by doctrinal minutiae