



Helping Apostles Be More Effective

by Brandon Kelly

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Throughout this year we're walking through a significant aspect of ministry and leadership in the Church. Often referred to as the Five-Fold Ministry, or APEST, it's the description of roles given by God to equip and build up the Church for its mission which is found in Ephesians 4. This month and next, we'll look specifically at apostles.



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You can read the initial article about apostles, *Apostles, Sent on Mission*, in *The Church Advocate* here: bit.do/AdvoAprilMay2018

In the latest issue of *The Church Advocate*, we took time to explore the first vocation of the Five-Fold Ministry – the apostle. The apostle is someone who is sent. The word *apostle* connects with the word *missionary*; *apostle* is from Greek and *missionary* is from Latin, but both have the same definition. Apostles start new things, gain new territory, and are developers of DNA for the Church. If you need to start, or restart, a ministry, then an apostle is the right person to lead the charge.

As with all of the Five-Fold Ministries, you can be an immature apostle, a mature apostle, or somewhere in between. Those who are just discovering their calling to an apostolic lifestyle will, of course, find themselves to have practices that are more on the immature side of the scale. Those apostles who have listened to the Lord, been disciplined, and grown over a lifetime will be more towards the mature side. So it's important for us to recognize the signs of immaturity, not to discredit apostles, but to help them grow into maturity that will benefit the Church and the Kingdom of God.

So whether you are an apostle or you lead apostles, here are three key signs of immaturity and how to overcome them:

1. **Chasing Every Idea.** One of the gifts apostles bring to the table is the ability to generate ideas. Whether they are solving problems, daydreaming, or connecting what they read with what they do; apostles will come up with hundreds and thousands of ideas for ministry. The issue comes when every idea gets follow-through. Apostles will begin working on ideas the moment they

come, treating each one as if it were the ultimate goal of their ministry. Instead, apostles need to create a process by which they distinguish great ideas from God ideas; discerning what God is calling them to do. A great system is to create a "Someday/Maybe" list where ideas get written down and given a little rest. Apostles can then go back and review the list to see how the Lord is continuing to speak to each idea.

2. **Going Alone.** With an immeasurable amount of stamina, apostles work tirelessly to make their visions come true. Because of this, they often choose delivery over development. They hate to waste time building a team when they can do the work themselves, more effectively, and see amazing fruit in the process. The issue comes when it's time for the apostle to move on to the next vision. Without a team to leave behind to carry on the work, everything that was accomplished by the apostle can fade away rather quickly. From the onset of every endeavor, apostles need to be training their team to expand and carry on the work. When apostles resist the idea of team, remind them that they can accomplish exponentially more through a team than they can on their own.
3. **Short Obedience.** In relationship to the variety of ideas that apostles have, they tend to move rather quickly from one thing to the next. The short times of leading initiatives can leave the ministries they start without a team, good leadership, and reproducible DNA. All of this leads to young ministries dying prematurely. To avoid this, apostles need to consider "long obedience in the same direction." That is, they need to stick with where God has put them until He calls them to the next thing. When the anticipation and restlessness of what's next culminates, apostles need to spend time in community with other Christians, discerning whether the Lord says stay or leave. If the response is to stay, they need to be obedient.

How can you help walk with the apostles in your life to see them grow into maturity? If you are an apostle, what's the particular area of challenge for you and how might you step forward to overcome it?