

The Foundation of Serving the Church: Spiritual Gifts

I. Before jumping into the basic teachings on “Church Government,” I believe it is important to first visit the concept of spiritual gifts!

A. There are predominately four (4) scripture passages that touch on spiritual gifts.

Romans 12:4-8 (NLT)

4 Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, 5 so it is with Christ’s body. We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other. 6 In his grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well. So if God has given you the ability to prophesy, speak out with as much faith as God has given you. 7 If your gift is serving others, serve them well. If you are a teacher, teach well. 8 If your gift is to encourage others, be encouraging. If it is giving, give generously. If God has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously. And if you have a gift for showing kindness to others, do it gladly.

1. Over time this list of gifts has come to be known as “motivational gifts!”
2. In other words, they describe what motivates certain people to do certain things.
3. Some are motivated to “teach and explain how things are!”
4. Some just want to “give freely and help people get through situations!”
5. Others simply want to build people up and encourage them with a hardy “you can do it!”
6. Even others are motivated to “organize efforts” to do all the above.

B. Your attitude and approach about these situations that present themselves shows the gift God has placed in you!

1. According to Paul, it takes us all!
2. By realizes we are dependent upon each other, we can walk out the scripture that says for us to “submit one to another!”

Ephesians 5:18-21 (NLT)

18 Don’t be drunk with wine, because that will ruin your life. Instead, be filled with the Holy Spirit, 19 singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, and making music to the Lord in

your hearts. 20 And give thanks for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. 21 And further, submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

II. Another passage of scripture that describes “spiritual gifts” is in I Corinthians 12. According to context this passage seems to express the development of disciples of Christ and the Christian faith in our lives!

1 Corinthians 12:1-7 (NLT)

1 Now, dear brothers and sisters, regarding your question about the special abilities the Spirit gives us. I don't want you to misunderstand this. 2 You know that when you were still pagans, you were led astray and swept along in worshiping speechless idols. 3 So I want you to know that no one speaking by the Spirit of God will curse Jesus, and no one can say Jesus is Lord, except by the Holy Spirit. 4 There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit is the source of them all. 5 There are different kinds of service, but we serve the same Lord. 6 God works in different ways, but it is the same God who does the work in all of us. 7 A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other.

A. This is the context:

1. He is about to share about “special abilities” given by The Spirit!
2. They are given so “we can help each other!”
3. Paul even reiterates this at the end of his “list of gifts!”

1 Corinthians 12:11 (NLT)

11 It is the one and only Spirit who distributes all these gifts. He alone decides which gift each person should have.

B. Paul explains that The Holy Spirit “gives of Himself” to different parts of the Body of Christ to minister to each other as The Kingdom of God is established in the earth.

C. He describes these gifts like this:

1 Corinthians 12:8-10 (NLT)

8 To one person the Spirit gives the ability to give wise advice; to another the same Spirit gives a message of special knowledge. 9 The same Spirit gives great faith to another, and to someone else the one Spirit gives the gift of healing. 10 He gives one person the power to perform miracles, and another the ability to prophesy. He gives someone else the ability to discern whether a message is from the Spirit of God or from another spirit. Still another person is given the ability to speak in unknown languages, while another is given the ability to interpret what is being said.

1. We will not go into detail here about the specific nature of these gifts since our purpose is to lay a foundation about church government and function.

2. We can delve into the specifics at another time because it is important to understand!
3. After all, Paul says:

1 Corinthians 12:1 (NLT)

1 Now, dear brothers and sisters, regarding your question about the special abilities the Spirit gives us. I don't want you to misunderstand this.

III. Another couple of passages where "spiritual gifts are referred to are:

1 Corinthians 12:27-31 (NLT)

27 All of you together are Christ's body, and each of you is a part of it. 28 Here are some of the parts God has appointed for the church: first are apostles, second are prophets, third are teachers, then those who do miracles, those who have the gift of healing, those who can help others, those who have the gift of leadership, those who speak in unknown languages. 29 Are we all apostles? Are we all prophets? Are we all teachers? Do we all have the power to do miracles? 30 Do we all have the gift of healing? Do we all have the ability to speak in unknown languages? Do we all have the ability to interpret unknown languages? Of course not! 31 So you should earnestly desire the most helpful gifts. But now let me show you a way of life that is best of all.

Ephesians 4:11-13 (NLT)

11 Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. 12 Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ. 13 This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ.

- A. I read these together because they seem to be similar in function!
 1. Let's be quick to remember that we are continuing to speak about function, gifts for ministering to others and NOT POSITION!
 2. I really believe that is where the "wheel flies off" most of the time.
 3. Humans get "hung up on titles." It becomes about identity, worth and pride!
 4. All of those things are fulfilled in Christ...not what I do!
- B. Word meanings are relevant and appropriate here! Don't get enamored with the English word! What does this function mean?

Ephesians 4:11-13 (NLV)

11 Christ gave gifts to men. He gave to some the gift to be missionaries, some to be preachers, others to be preachers who go from town to town. He gave others the gift to be church leaders and teachers. 12 These gifts help His people work well for Him. And then the church which is the body of Christ will be made strong. 13 All of us are to be as one in the faith and in knowing the Son of God. We are to be full-grown Christians standing as high and complete as Christ is Himself.

1. I repeat, the purpose here is to lay a foundation of Church structure and function and not a detail discussion of gifts!
 2. I acknowledge that different traditions prefer different language, but let's remember, the function and "gift to the Body of Christ" is the real issue and point!
- C. Let's realize above all that God wants us to be full grown Christians and be Christ-like! That's why we are gifted to bless each other!