Spiritual Gifts and Ministries

“And to some, his gift was that they should be apostles, to some, prophets, to some evangelists, to some pastors and teachers; so that the saints together make a unity in the work of service, building up the body of Christ” (Ephesians 4:12, 13, Jerusalem).

We can learn much from bees. When they are busy gathering nectar from surrounding flowers, we can do almost any kind of work with them or around them. But if there is no nectar to be gathered, kindness and tolerance are not part of their actions. They became first-class warriors!

Seems as if Christians are pretty much like bees. When they have a constant relationship with Jesus, they keep so busy working for Him that they have little time for criticism, gossip, or selfishness.

Each bee has a special job. When the hot sun shines on the hive, thousands of little wings work together to keep the wax from melting. When it becomes freezing cold, they cluster together in an oval to keep the hive warm.

When the beekeeper cuts into the honeycomb, an alarm spreads, and bees with the gift of repair arrive to fix it up. No bee stands around to accuse or condemn. Together, they fix up the mess. A scar may mar the original pattern, but it’s still very serviceable.

Each bee has a specific gift or work. Some gather nectar, others pollen, some make wax foundations, others produce cells, some exist to mate with the queen, others defend the hive. Their purpose is to work together for the best good of the hive.

In God’s church you have a task to perform to His glory. It matters not which gift is yours. The important question is, are you using your gifts for God?

Preview

The risen Christ gathered His disciples around Him. Just before He went home to His Father, He gave them their job description. “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15).

Two words need to be noted: all and every. Impossible for such a small group of believers! Jesus well knew their inability to accomplish the task by themselves. So He promised them the solution. “Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you” (Acts 1:8).

And when the power came, the results were staggering! On the very day they received the gift of the Holy Spirit, they baptized 3,000 believers (Acts 2:41).

A short time before His death, Christ told a beautiful parable of a man traveling to a far country, who gave each of His servants special gifts. Jesus was that Man, leaving for heaven. In the story He assured them that each would receive gifts they needed according to their ability—gifts of power to enable them to witness to the glory of God (see Matthew 25:14-30).
Points to Ponder

1. When Jesus ascended on high, why did He give special gifts to His followers on earth?
   (See Ephesians 4:7, 8.)

   Christ knew that the disciples could not carry out the divine mission of the church without special
   power and gifts that only the Holy Spirit could give. So the gifts were given "for the perfecting
   ["equipping," NKJV] of the ________________, for the work of the ________________, for the
   edifying ["building up"] of the ________________ of ________________." (Ephesians 4:12).

   Fortunately, men and women do not choose their own spiritual gifts. The Holy Spirit, who understands
   us much better than we do ourselves, distributes different gifts to believers according to their
   interests, abilities, and willingness to be led by the Holy Spirit. But, like the Corinthian Christians, we
   bicker like small children about which gifts are the most important. Though the gifts differ, they all
   come from "the same ________________, which worketh ________________ in ________________"
   (1 Corinthians 12:6).

   Because the gifts are given for the church, not the individual, no one can consider them their private
   property. Likewise, because the Holy Spirit gives the gifts, believers should not be proud of their
   many gifts or feel inferior if they have fewer or more humble gifts.

2. How does Paul illustrate the harmony, balance, and unity that are seen in the diversity of gifts?

   1 Corinthians 12:12: "The ________________ is ________________, and hath many ________________.

   The apostle compares the church to the body. As the body has many members, so does the church.
   Each member is different, just as is each part of the body. Each member is given a separate gift and
   function, just as is each part of the body. Just as all parts of the body must function together, so
   should all believers.

3. As the body suffers when any part is hurt or missing, so, when a member of the church suffers, how
   should the entire church act?

   1 Corinthians 12:25, 26: "The members should have the same ________________ one for
   ________________. And whether ________________ member suffer, all the ________________ suffer with it."

   All parts of the body must work together for health and harmony. The same is true with Christ's
   children. If Christ abides in the lives of Christians, they will not quarrel with one another. Love will help
   us to bear with the differences in our midst. If we are having problems with others, we may know that
   self needs to be crucified. He whom Christ makes free is free indeed. We are not complete in Christ
   unless we love one another as Christ has loved us.

4. Which spiritual gift is greater than all the other gifts?

   1 Corinthians 12:31; 13:13:

   Love is a fruit of the Spirit. List as many aspects of God's self-sacrificing love as possible (Galatians
   5:22, 23): _____________________________
Nuts & Bolts

1. The Holy Spirit gives varying gifts to different individuals. Romans 12:1-10, 1 Corinthians 12:1-31, 1 Corinthians 13, Ephesians 4:1-16 and 1 Peter 4:9-11 describe or refer to twenty-seven spiritual gifts. The Bible does not give specific details about a spiritual gift. It illustrates how these gifts function. Please read these Scriptures. Then study the gifts in the following table and mark the ones you think the Holy Spirit has given you. The degree to which you put your spiritual gifts to work for the Lord depends on your commitment to discipleship and your response to the Lord’s call. Your spiritual gifts may or may not match your natural, inherited talents.

Romans 12 1 Cor. 12 Ephesians 4 Implied
Prophecy Wisdom Apostle Celibacy (1 Cor. 7:7)
Teaching Knowledge Prophet Martyrdom (1 Cor. 13:3)
Service Faith Evangelist Hospitality (1 Peter 4:9)
Giving Healing Pastor Exorcism (Acts 8:5-8)
Leadership Miracles Teacher Intercessory prayer (Acts 12:12)
Mercy Discerning of spirits Missionary (Romans 11:13)
Exhortation Tongues
Encouragement Interpretation Voluntary poverty (1 Cor. 13:3)
Helps Administration

No doubt you have recognized that you have more than one spiritual gift. The source of your gift is God’s grace. Ask Him to keep you humble and use your gifts to His glory.

2. The more gifts God has given you, the greater is your spiritual influence. Therefore, the greater should be your dependence upon God.

1 Peter 4:10: "As every man hath received the ____________, even so ________ the same one to _____________, as good __________ as of the manifold _______ of God."

Ephesians 4:2, 3: "With all _________ and ____________, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in _________; endeavoring to keep the _____________ of the Spirit in the ___________, of peace." (Ephesians 4:2, 3)

3. To enable the church to grow in unity and to nurture the believers, God has given to many the support gifts.

From the list that follows, circle the ones God has given you to use to bless others: Helps, compassion, intercession, mercy, exhortation, giving, hospitality, service.

4. God needs those who can instruct others in the teachings of the Bible to confirm their faith in God.

Circle the teaching gifts God has given you: Teaching, knowledge, wisdom, pastoring (or shepherding).

5. A growing church needs leaders.

Circle the ones that apply to you: Leadership, apostleship, administration, faith.
6. The primary job of the church is to win souls—to witness to the world. God has given this task to every Christian. Circle those you can use to the glory of God: Evangelism, discernment, being a missionary at home or abroad, tongues, interpretation of tongues.

7. The sign or power gifts are not as common as the other gifts. Again, God chooses whom He can entrust with these gifts. Circle those that you may have: Prophecy, miracles, healing, spiritual warfare, martyrdom, voluntary poverty, celibacy.

8. The church that utilizes its spiritual gifts will grow both in number and spirituality. From Ephesians 4:12, 13, complete the following list:
   a. The ___________________________ of the saints.
   b. The work of the ___________________________.
   c. The edifying of the ___________________________ of Christ.
   d. Till we all come in the ___________________________ of faith.
   e. And of the ___________________________ of the Son of ___________________________.
   f. Unto a ___________________________ man.
   g. Unto the measure of the ___________________________ of Christ.

9. Sometimes the Spirit uses a person's natural gifts to do God's bidding. What changes a person's natural gifts to spiritual gifts? (See John 3:7.) ___________________________

10. Name ways whereby you can discover your spiritual gifts.
    a. Pray for the baptism of the Spirit. (John 3:5.)
    b. Study the Scriptures, "rightly ___________________________ the word of ___________________________." (2 Timothy 2:15).
    c. Be open to providential guidance, for "it is ___________________________, which worketh in you both to ___________________________ and to ___________________________ of His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:13).
    d. Confirmation from other church members. It is "in multitude of ___________________________ there is ___________________________." (Proverbs 24:6).

Words to Remember

Agape: Greek word for self-sacrificing, outgoing, giving, and compassionate love. Similar to the love God shows toward us.
Divisiveness: Division, discord, and dissension.
Maturity: Steady growth in all things.
Stability: Firmness, steadfastness. "Be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine" (Ephesians 4:14, 15).
Atrophy: Wasting away. Unused, spiritual gifts will decrease in their effectiveness.
The Difference Between
Diversity and uniformity: God gives a variety of gifts. If all were alike—uniform—there would be no variation, but a dull sameness. God’s plan is to use all gifts to blend together in building the church. Clergy and laity: Ministers and pastors are the clergy, church members are laity.

I Truly Believe
What is your response to the following statements? Check the appropriate boxes that reflect your decisions.

[ ] I want to be a part of God’s plan for the church.
[ ] I want both my head and heart totally sanctified to God.
[ ] By His grace, I am willing to put self aside daily and join with other members to make the body of Christ, His church, complete.

My Prayer
Dear Father,

Thank You for the Holy Spirit, who chooses what gifts I can use best to the glory of God, enabling me to be a faithful steward. Keep me humble, teachable, and appreciative of those who differ from me. Grant me the wisdom to abide in Christ and fully discover my gifts. I pray this in the precious name of Jesus. Amen.
Spiritual Gifts and Ministries

Read the following Bible texts and with the help from the lesson above, answer the following questions by circling “T” if the statement is true or “F” if the statement is false. (Hint: there are 8 true and 2 false)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KEY TEXTS</th>
<th>Mark 13:34</th>
<th>Rom. 12: 4-8</th>
<th>Eph. 4: 7, 8, 11-16</th>
<th>Acts 6:1-7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 Cor. 12:9-11, 27</td>
<td>1 Tim 3:1-13</td>
<td>1 Pet. 4:10, 11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. **T or F** The Holy Spirit gives a special ability to a member, enabling him or her to help the church fulfill its divine mission (see pg. 239).

2. **T or F** Since the Spirit distributes the gifts according as He sees fit, no gift is to be despised or belittled (see pg. 239).

3. **T or F** Spiritual gifts contribute to the fostering of unity that causes the church to grow (see pg. 241).

4. **T or F** Scripture supports the view that the clergy should minister while the laity merely warm the pews and wait to be “fed” (see pg. 242).

5. **T or F** Concerning the role of the clergy, the minister who does not have the gift of training does not belong to the pastoral ministry but to another part of God’s work (see pg. 242).

6. **T or F** Natural gifts alone are the same as spiritual gifts (see pg. 243).

7. **T or F** The purpose for which God gives each gift, no matter what it may be, is to enable its possessor to witness (see pg. 243).

8. **T or F** It is important that we believe that God has given us at least one gift to be used in His service (see pg. 244).

9. **T or F** Since God gives spiritual gifts to build up His church, we may expect the final confirmation of our gifts to arise from the judgment of the body of Christ and not from our own feelings (see pg. 244).

10. **T or F** Prayerful study of what the New Testament teaches about spiritual gifts allows the Holy Spirit to impress our mind with the specific ministry that He has for us. (see pg. 244).