

Spiritual Gifts, Part 2

By Chris Shirley

Pre-Session Assignments

One week before the session, participants will take the following assignments.

Assignment One

Ministry is not the sole responsibility of the paid staff or the deacons but is a shared experience among all believers in the church. Describe the characteristics of shared ministry in the church using the following references: Acts 6:1–7; 2 Corinthians 8–9; Ephesians 4:11–16; 1 Timothy 5:9–10; and 1 Peter 4:10–11. Prepare to share your description with your group.

Assignment Two

Review the description of the teaching gift from last week's lesson, and read the descriptions in this lesson of the wisdom and knowledge gifts. Describe how these gifts would work together to help the teacher or preacher accomplish ministry. Prepare to share your description with your group.

Assignment Three

Read 1 Peter 4:10–11. Peter divides the gifts into two categories: speaking (proclamation, teaching) and serving (meeting needs). Review the gifts in Romans 12:6–8 and 1 Corinthians 12:7–11. Then categorize these gifts as speaking gifts or serving gifts. Prepare to share your two lists with your group.

Scripture to Memorize

"To each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good." 1 Corinthians 12:7

Session Goal

Consistent with God's Word and in the power of the Holy Spirit—by the end of this session, disciples will understand the role of spiritual gifts in ministry leadership and evaluate which spiritual gift(s) the Holy Spirit has given them for ministry.

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Chris is a frequent conference speaker in family ministry, men's discipleship, adult education, and teacher training. In addition, he was written youth and adult Sunday school curriculum and Bible book studies for LifeWay Christian Resources. His article on comprehensive discipleship in the local church, "It Takes a Church to Make a Disciple," was published in the *Southwestern Journal of Theology*.

Chris and his wife, Isabel, have been married for over thirty years and have two adult children, Andrew and Haylee, and (so far) one grandchild.

It's in the Book

30 minutes

Real-Life Scenario

It is common in most churches to hear a pastor say, “We just don’t have enough people in our church who are willing to serve!” Conventional wisdom among church leaders is that most of the ministry of the church is performed by 20 percent of the people. The majority of members only show up once a week for the worship service. We have a long way to go until all members are serving according to their spiritual gifts. Are you a part of the 20 percent or the 80 percent? Are you serving or just sitting?

Read 1 Corinthians 12:7–11 out loud.

Studying the Passage

Verse 7. for the common good. Paul introduced a list of spiritual gifts by reminding the Corinthians of the practical purpose of the gifts, the common good. **each.** The church and its ministries benefit when every believer uses the gift given to him or her through the Holy Spirit. When disciples use their gifts, each one experiences growth in faith and knowledge, the bond of fellowship within the church is strengthened, the gospel is proclaimed to the world, and people come to faith in Jesus Christ (see Acts 2:46–47).

Assignment One Feedback

The person who completed **Assignment One** during the week can now report on shared ministry in the church.

On Your Own

How would finding a ministry role in your church bring you (1) closer to Christ, and (2) closer to other members of the church? Write your thoughts in the space below.

Studying the Passage

Consider how God might be forming one or more of these gifts in your life.

wisdom (insight, intelligence). Those with the gift of wisdom can apply biblical knowledge to life experience in such a way as to make spiritual truths relevant and practical in proper decision-making and daily life. Teachers should also have the gift of wisdom, but believers with the gift of wisdom will not always be teachers (1 Corinthians 12:8). The Spirit grants an extra measure of wisdom to some within the church not only to guide the congregation in making corporate decisions but also to offer biblical advice and counsel to individual members and families.

knowledge (knowing based on experience). Like the Bereans, who searched “the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so” (Acts 17:11), disciples with the gift of knowledge desire to learn as much about the Bible as possible. They have an insatiable desire to know and study the Scriptures deeply (1 Corinthians 12:8). The gifts of knowledge, wisdom, and teaching are closely related but are distinct in their functions. Believers with the gift of knowledge could lead Bible studies or discipleship groups or develop Bible study curriculum.

faith (belief, trust, confidence). The gift of faith is expressed in being firmly persuaded of God's power, promises, and ability to accomplish His will and purpose. Those with this gift see circumstances and challenges not as roadblocks or obstacles but as means for accomplishing God's will. Their high degree of confidence in God, as well as their example of a praying life, inspires and motivates the body (see 1 Corinthians 12:8–10). One of the most effective ministry tools available for a church is a team of prayer warriors with the gift of faith who are praying for spiritual protection and specific needs in the congregation.

Assignment Two Feedback

The person who completed **Assignment Two** during the week can now share a report.

Studying the Passage

Distinguishing (thorough judgment, passing sentence). Those with a discernment gift, “distinguishing of spirits,” are able to recognize godly truth from error based on their understanding of God's will as expressed through His Word. They contribute to the church by warning or cautioning leaders about false or misdirected teaching and ungodly behavior that have infiltrated the body (see 1 Corinthians 12:10). Members with the gift of discernment can warn and advise church leaders about ungodly teaching and influences within and outside the church that could be potentially harmful to the spiritual health of the church.

The other gifts listed in 1 Corinthians 12—**tongues**, healing, **prophecy**, and **miracles**—are referred to as “sign” gifts. There is a debate within the Christian community as to whether these gifts are still in force in the church today. The debate is not a question of God's power to heal or perform miracles; He can and does heal people. We can see His miracles around us every day. The question is whether He still “gifts” *certain people* in the church with the ability to heal, work miracles, prophesy, or speak in different tongues.

There is evidence that these gifts are no longer needed within the church. (1) What we know today as the New Testament canon was God's Word revealed through men with the gift of prophecy. Once this was accomplished, there was no need for further revelation. (2) The Greek word for tongues (*glossa*) describes a structured language, implying the true purpose of tongues: to present the gospel in the native tongue of those receiving the message (see Acts 2), which was necessary in the early church to take the gospel quickly beyond the borders of Israel. (3) Miracles and healing performed by the apostles confirmed their testimony of the Lord Jesus and affirmed their identity as His authoritative leaders. Although God still works miracles and heals people today, there is no strong evidence of particular believers in every church using these gifts. You can read more from Dr. Tom Schreiner about these views at <http://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/why-i-am-a-cessationist>.

The purpose of this lesson is not to answer all the questions but to encourage you to (1) be involved in ministry within the church, (2) believe that God provides the gift(s) you need to glorify Him through your ministry, and (3) rely on Scripture to guide you in every decision as you serve the Lord and His church. If you have further interest in the teachings about spiritual gifts, you need to diligently study the Scriptures, pray for God's Spirit to enlighten your understanding, and talk to your pastor and other godly leaders.

Assignment Three Feedback

The person who completed **Assignment Three** during the week can now report on the difference between speaking and serving gifts.

On Your Own

Ask one of your parents, a trusted Christian friend, a fellow discipleship group member or church leader to help you think of at least three ministries in your church you could become involved in right away. List these opportunities in the space below.

Heart and Hands

8 minutes

Read again the **Real-Life Scenario** near the beginning of the lesson. Consider whether your answers have changed during the session.

Be silent for two or three minutes. Thank Jesus for His sacrifice and for the gospel. Adore Him for His glorious reign on the throne of heaven. Then ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you:

1. A way the Scriptures you studied today will change your heart for the glory of Christ.
2. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to stop doing something for the glory of Christ.
3. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to do something for the glory of Christ.

Write what the Spirit reveals to you below and then be ready to share what you have written with the group.

Since Last Week

5 minutes

Give the group this update: "In our last session I made a commitment to . . . I want to let you know how that turned out. On that same issue I think the Holy Spirit now is leading me to . . ."

Grace-Filled Accountability

5 minutes

Disciples can agree on a way to hold one another accountable. Confessing faults with other disciples allows them to offer grace, insights, and encouragement. Even more important is confession to Christ, the source of true forgiveness and cleansing.

Planning for Evangelism, Missions, and Service

5 minutes

Groups of disciples always are making preparations for evangelism, missions, and service. Use these minutes to work on the next plan.

Prayer

7 minutes

Every disciple will pray aloud, offering praise to King Jesus, thanking Him specifically for His gracious acts, making heartfelt confession, committing to actions flowing from the Bible study, praying toward evangelism locally and globally, and interceding for others as prompted by the Holy Spirit.

At Home: Nail It Down

The church is both a ministry delivery system and a ministry training site. The Holy Spirit places every disciple in a church to learn how to minister according to the gifts they have been given and to provide ministry within the church and in the world. When you follow God's design for the church and find your place in ministry, you and your church receive the blessings of obedience (see 1 Corinthians 12:7). Those blessings include personal spiritual growth, deeper fellowship within the church, and a more powerful witness to the lost.

In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul wrote to a church concerning specific gifts of the Spirit. Verse 8 contains two gifts that complement the gift of teaching: wisdom and knowledge. Both gifts are based on knowing and using the Word of God. Wisdom is the ability to apply God's Word in any life situation, while knowledge is a passionate desire to have a deeper understanding of Scripture.

In 1 Corinthians 12:9–10, Paul presented the gifts of faith and discernment along with healing, miracles, and tongues. Faith and discernment are “spiritual support” gifts. Rather than tasks to be accomplished (teaching, leading, administration, giving, etc.), these support gifts are used to encourage and protect the church body through prayer, observation, and confrontation.

Paul ended this list with an important truth. The Holy Spirit is in complete control of distributing spiritual gifts. He decides how He will demonstrate His power, and He chooses which gift will be given to each disciple (1 Corinthians 12:11). Even though gifts appear in different forms and are demonstrated through different people, the source is the same.

The Holy Spirit *is* the gift. His ministry working through us in varied ways enables the church to display the love of Jesus Christ to one another and the world.

Follow up Question

How can you encourage your friends and others in the church to get involved in ministry and discover their spiritual gifts?

The Making Disciples curriculum is a gift from Southwestern Seminary to those who, for the glory of the Father and in the power of the Spirit, will spend a lifetime embracing the full supremacy of the Son, responding to His kingly reign in all of life, inviting Christ to live His life through them, and joining Him in making disciples among all peoples.