

## **A BRIEF GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL GIFTS – WHAT, WHO, WHY, HOW?**

### **WHAT ARE THEY?**

supernatural abilities given by God to Christians for service in the body of Christ (Eph 4:12; 1 Pet 4:10)

<b>Offices within the Church</b>	<b>Ministry Categories</b>	<b>Tools for Ministry</b>
<b>1 Cor 12:28</b>	<b>Romans 12:6-8</b>	<b>1 Cor 12:8-10</b>
Apostles	Prophecy	Wisdom
Prophets	Service	Knowledge
Teachers	Teaching	Faith
Miracles	Encouraging	Healing
Healing	Giving	Miracles
Helping	Leadership	Prophecy
Administration	Mercy	Discernment
Tongues		Tongues
<b>Ephesians 4:11</b>		Interpretation
Apostles		<b>1 Peter 4:8-11</b>
Prophets		Hospitality
Evangelists		Speaking
Pastors *		Serving
Teachers *		

*[Some identify others elsewhere in scripture*

*Craftsmanship Exodus 31:1-11*

*Singleness 1 Cor 7:7*

*Simplicity 1 Cor 13:5*

*Song 1 Cor 14:26]*

### **WHAT THEY ARE NOT**

- salvation
- character (fruit)
- (simply) talents (birth)
- (simply) skills (developed)
- emotional experiences
- general duties of all believers (e.g. witness)

### **VARIETY WITHIN UNITY**

- 'There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God' (1 Cor 12:4-6)
- 'one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God' (Eph 4:4-6)

## WHO RECEIVES THEM?

**Simple – every Christian**

- 1 Cor 12:7 'Now to *each one* the manifestation of the Spirit is given *for the common good*'
- 1 Cor 12:11 after listing some gifts, Paul says 'the same Spirit ... gives them to *each one* ... as he determines'
- Eph 4:7 'to *each one* of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it'
- 1 Pet 4:10 '*Each one* should use whatever gift he has received to serve others'

It follows that, if you are a Christian

- you have a gift
- all the passages imply that you received it at conversion
- you are encouraged to 'Earnestly desire the greater gifts' (1 Cor 12:31)

## WHY ARE THEY GIVEN?

- for the common good (1 Cor 12:7)
- to serve others (1 Pet 4:10)
- to glorify God (1 Pet 4:11)
- to build up the **body** (Eph 4:12)
- to mature the **body** (Eph 4:13,14)
- so that the **body** grows (Eph 4:16)

the **body** is Paul's chief analogy for the exercise of spiritual gifts (Rom 12:4-6 & 1 Cor 12:4-30): -

- each one is important
- each has own function
- each is necessary
- none is self-sufficient
- no room for division
- no room for jealousy
- no room for competing
- not all have same gifts
- nor the same function
- we all need each other
- **you need the body**
- **the body needs you**

## HOW DO WE USE THEM?

- Don't be ignorant about spiritual gifts (1 Cor 12:1)
- Don't be proud but think of yourself soberly (Rom 12:3)
- Exercise them according to the grace given to you (Rom 12:6-8)
- Exercise them in maturity – grow up! (Eph 4:15)
- Exercise them in love for others (Rom 12:9; 1 Cor 13; Eph 4:2; 1 Pet 4:8)
- Exercise them in unity with other believers (Eph 4:3-6)
- Exercise them in a fitting & orderly way (1 Cor 14:40)
- Above all, exercise them in loving service of one another (1 Cor 12:7; Eph 4:12; 1 Pet 4:10)

Gifts are **tools not jewels** – if you are not using your gift to serve someone else, you are misusing or abusing your gift.

## QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER THOUGHT

*Key passages – Romans 12; 1 Corinthians 12; Ephesians 4; 1 Peter 4*

- 1 Share your experience – positive and negative – of spiritual gifts within the life of churches of which you have been a part. Some will have had little – or even negative – teaching on the subject. Remember that we base our belief and practice on the Word of God and not the word of man.
- 2 Why are spiritual gifts given to the church?
- 3 Do you each know what your spiritual gift(s) is (are)? If not, download the spiritual gifts discovery exercise from [www.htcd.org](http://www.htcd.org). You might like to do this as a group at some stage.
- 4 Why is St Paul's 'body' analogy so significant? What are the potential dangers of using gifts without regard to our brothers and sisters in the church family?
- 5 Am I tempted to look down on any of my brothers or sisters? Do I consider any of them dispensable, or unworthy of honour?
- 6 Am I tempted to give up on church all together – possibly for another type of Christian gathering which seems to offer all that I need without any of the bothersome cost of relating to other Christians in ongoing fellowship?
- 7 Have I ever been tempted to flash my spiritual gift(s) like some piece of religious bling? Why is this dangerous? What is the correct approach to the use of spiritual gifts?

Do save time to pray for one another to be filled / filled anew with the Holy Spirit, and for those who are unsure of what gift the Holy Spirit has for them.

*Paul Langham, June 2009*

## BASIC SPIRITUAL GIFTS DISCOVERY EXERCISE (sheet 1)

Read the following points and mark yourself out of 5 for each. If you give yourself 5 it will be one of your very strong points. If you give yourself 0 or 1 it will be one of your very weak points.

No	Statement	Score (0 – 5)
1	I am good at listening	
2	I enjoy explaining things to others from the Bible	
3	I love preaching or talking about my faith to a congregation or group	
4	I am often used to help others to a faith in God	
5	I enjoy administrative work	
6	I feel a deep, caring love for those who are ill and call to help them get well	
7	I am handy at most things and adaptable	
8	I am deeply concerned about the world and social affairs	
9	I am usually looked to for a lead	
10	I make helpful relationships with others easily	
11	Others are helped when I teach them things	
12	I love the study and work in preparing a talk/sermon	
13	God has given me a great love for others and a desire to share my faith with them	
14	I can organise well, clearly and efficiently	
15	Others find my presence soothing and healing	
16	I like helping other people	
17	I am active in service in the community	
18	In a group I am often elected chairman or leader	
19	I can encourage others and help bear burdens	
20	I love studying and finding the facts	
21	My talks/sermons have been clearly helpful to others	
22	I find my life is full of opportunities to witness to my faith in God	
23	I love doing office work and do it thoroughly	
24	I have sometimes laid hands on the sick and they have been helped	
25	I am a practical type	
26	I am very aware of the needs of society today and feel called to do something about it	
27	When leading something I put a lot of preparation into it	
28	I care deeply about other people	
29	I have patience in helping others understand Christian things	
30	I feel a clear call to preach	
31	I love to talk to others about my faith in God	
32	I am painstaking about details in organisation	
33	I spend time praying with and for sick people	
34	I spend much time helping others in practical ways	
35	I feel God is at work in the world today and I must work along with Him there	
36	I am good at delegating work to others in a team setting	

## BASIC SPIRITUAL GIFTS DISCOVERY EXERCISE (sheet 2)

Now complete the following columns by placing at the side of each question the number of points that you gave yourself. Add up the totals of each line and place the total by the letter.

<b>1</b> _____	<b>10</b> _____	<b>19</b> _____	<b>28</b> _____	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>A</b> _____
<b>2</b> _____	<b>11</b> _____	<b>20</b> _____	<b>29</b> _____	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>B</b> _____
<b>3</b> _____	<b>12</b> _____	<b>21</b> _____	<b>30</b> _____	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>C</b> _____
<b>4</b> _____	<b>13</b> _____	<b>22</b> _____	<b>31</b> _____	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>D</b> _____
<b>5</b> _____	<b>14</b> _____	<b>23</b> _____	<b>32</b> _____	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>E</b> _____
<b>6</b> _____	<b>15</b> _____	<b>24</b> _____	<b>33</b> _____	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>F</b> _____
<b>7</b> _____	<b>16</b> _____	<b>25</b> _____	<b>34</b> _____	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>G</b> _____
<b>8</b> _____	<b>17</b> _____	<b>26</b> _____	<b>35</b> _____	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>H</b> _____
<b>9</b> _____	<b>18</b> _____	<b>27</b> _____	<b>36</b> _____	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>I</b> _____

#### SCORES

<b>A</b>	_____	<b>Pastoral</b>
<b>B</b>	_____	<b>Teaching</b>
<b>C</b>	_____	<b>Preaching</b>
<b>D</b>	_____	<b>Evangelism</b>
<b>E</b>	_____	<b>Administration</b>
<b>F</b>	_____	<b>Healing</b>
<b>G</b>	_____	<b>Practical help</b>
<b>H</b>	_____	<b>Service to Society</b>
<b>I</b>	_____	<b>Leadership</b>

Please note that this really is a very basic guide, only intended to help those who have only just begun to consider this subject.

Other spiritual gifts discovery exercises can be found at [www.buildingchurch.net](http://www.buildingchurch.net) (click on 'Gifted 2 serve') or [www.cover2cover.org](http://www.cover2cover.org) (click on 'Discovering your basic gift – free download').

## **SPIRITUAL GIFTS – LISTED BY CATEGORY**

### **1 CORINTHIANS 12:28 – OFFICES WITHIN THE CHURCH**

1. Apostles
2. Prophets
3. Teachers
4. (workers of miracles)
5. (those having gifts of healing)
6. (those able to help others)
7. (those with gifts of administration)
8. (those with the gift of tongues)

### **EPHESIANS 4:11 – OFFICES WITHIN THE CHURCH**

1. Apostles
2. Prophets
3. Evangelists
4. Pastors
5. Teachers  
(or Pastors & Teachers – a combined office)

### **ROMANS 12:6–8 – BROAD CATEGORIES (YOU AS A MINISTER?)**

1. Prophecy
2. Service
3. Teaching
4. Encouraging (exhortation)
5. Giving
6. Leadership
7. Mercy

### **1 CORINTHIANS 12:8–10 – TOOLS FOR MINISTRY**

1. Wisdom
2. Knowledge
3. Faith
4. Healing
5. Miracles
6. Prophecy
7. Discernment
8. Tongues
9. Interpretation

### **1 PETER 4:8–11 – TOOLS FOR MINISTRY**

1. Hospitality
2. Speaking
3. Serving

## SPIRITUAL GIFTS – ALPHABETICAL LIST

<b>NAME</b>	<b>DEFINITION</b>	<b>EXAMPLE</b>
Administration 1 Cor 12.28	ability to organize Christian activities	the Seven Acts 6.1-7
Apostleship 1 Cor 12.28	ability to establish churches in unevangelized regions	Paul 1 Cor 3.5,6,10
craftsmanship * Ex 31.1-11	ability to use art or craft in God's service	Bezalel Ex 31.1-5
Discernment 1 Cor 12.10	ability to identify the spiritual origin of phenomena	Paul Acts 16.16-18
Evangelism Eph 4.11	ability to communicate the gospel to non-Christians	Philip Acts 8. 5-40
Exhortation Rom 12.8	ability to spiritually challenge or encourage others	Barnabas Acts 4.36
Faith 1 Cor 12.9	ability to trust God for the apparently improbable	Abraham Heb 11.8-12
Giving Rom 12.8	ability to use possessions for God or other people	Macedonians 2 Cor 8.1-5
Healing 1 Cor 12.9	ability to convey God's restoring power to the sick	Peter Acts 3.1-10
Helping 1 Cor 12.28	ability to assist other Christians in their ministries	Tertius Rom 16.22
Hospitality 1 Pet 4.9,10	ability to serve God by opening one's home	Martha Luke 10.38
Interpretation 1 Cor 12.10	ability to explain prayers spoken in unknown languages	Corinthians 1 Cor 14.26
Knowledge 1 Cor 12.8	ability to inwardly perceive truths about people or events	Elisha 2 Ki 6.8-12
leadership Rom 12.8	ability to guide Christians towards spiritual goals	Peter Acts 1.15-26
Mercy Rom 12.8	ability to extend Christ's compassion to the suffering	Antiochians Acts 11.27-30
Miracles 1 Cor 12.10	ability to bring God's extraordinary power into situations	Elijah 1 Ki 18.36-9
Pastoring Eph 4.11	ability to care for fellow Christians' spiritual welfare	Ephesians Acts 20.28
Prophecy Rom 12.6	ability to convey words from God to his people	Agabus Acts 11.27-8
Service Rom 12.7	ability to perform practical tasks for God and the Church	Dorcas Acts 9.36-9
simplicity * 1 Cor 13.5	ability to live without possessions for the sake of God	Believers Acts 4.32-5
singleness * 1 Cor 7.7	ability to remain unmarried for the sake of God	Paul 1 Cor 7.8
song * 1 Cor 14.26	ability to serve God and his people through song	David Mark 12.36
Teaching Rom 12.7	ability to communicate spiritual truth to others	Apollos Acts 18.24-8
Tongues 1 Cor 12.10	ability to speak to God in unlearned language	Cornelius Acts 10.44-6
Wisdom 1 Cor 12.8	ability to speak or act with spiritual insight	Solomon 1 Ki 3.16-28

\* some would not include these in their list, as they are not mentioned in the passages in which Paul specifically teaches on spiritual gifts (Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12 & Ephesians 4). Some would rule that anything in the Old Testament is not a 'spiritual gift' in the New Testament sense, on the basis of Eph. 4.8, which suggests that spiritual gifts were dispensed by the risen Christ following his ascension. Others find it helpful to categorise the lists of gifts given by Paul, as in the next table.