

How to Discover Your Spiritual Gifts—Part 1

In the study of spiritual gifts we need to first understand a Biblical principle.

God fills us first with abilities and strength so that we may then give back to God and to others.

1 Peter 2:9, “But you are A CHOSEN RACE, a royal PRIESTHOOD, a HOLY NATION, a PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;”

You are... that you may...!

- You are a chosen race
- You are a royal priesthood
- You are a holy nation
- You are a people for God's own possession

God has already made you all of these things in completeness. Why? So that “you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.”

We see two principles here.

- 1) God will always equip us fully to do whatever He asks us to do.
- 2) God blesses us so that we might bless others including God Himself.

Ephesians 4:1-3, “I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, entreat you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing forbearance to one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”

Here Paul is laying out some pretty heavy-duty commandments for us to obey. But what does he say immediately before this?

Ephesians 3:20, “Now to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen. “

The result of Paul gushing about the glory and abundance of God leads him to entreat us to then give to others.

And we can go through the Scriptures again and again and we will see the same pattern; God asks us to do something hard.

But before He tells us to do it, He first tells us how He has with overflowing abundance already equipped us to do what He asks.

God never leaves us in doubt as to our ability to do what is right.

As so here are two foundational principles of serving

- 1) God first gives to us by His grace and in His abundance.
- 2) He gives to us so that we can give to others and back to God

Matthew 10:8c, “freely you received, freely give.”

Let’s look at spiritual gifts

1 Corinthians 12:1, “Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware.”

Some translations read, “I do not want you to be ignorant.”

George Barna is a religious pollster and he found in a recent survey that 21% of all Christians did not believe that God had given them a spiritual gift. That was a huge increase from the 4% who answered the same way in 1995.

So the church is going in the wrong direction. It is becoming more ignorant of spiritual gifts.

He said, “If more believers understood the nature and potential of [God’s] special empowerment, the global impact of the Christian body would be multiplied substantially.” If churches focused teaching on spiritual gifts, they could “ignite a movement of service and influence unlike anything we have experienced during our lifetime.”

He also said, “Educating those ignorant of God’s promise to provide them with special endowments for service could transform the self-perceptions and the personal ministry of millions of believers.”

The word most often translated “spiritual gifts” is the Greek word “charismata,” which comes from a root word meaning “grace.” And grace is always an undeserved, free gift from God.

Why does God give us these spiritual gifts?

1 Corinthians 12:11-27

11 But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills.

[So we see here that it is the Holy Spirit who distributes out the gifts according to His will.]

12 For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ.

[So even though each one of us is a singular person, together we form one living organism and that is the body of Christ.]

13 For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

14 For the body is not one member, but many.

15 If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I am not a part of the body," it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body.

16 And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I am not a part of the body," it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body.

17 If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole were hearing, where would the sense of smell be?

18 But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired.

19 And if they were all one member, where would the body be?

20 But now there are many members, but one body.

21 And the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you"; or again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you."

22 On the contrary, it is much truer that the members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary;

23 and those members of the body, which we deem less honorable, on these we bestow more abundant honor, and our unseemly members come to have more abundant seemliness,

24 whereas our seemly members have no need of it. But God has so composed the body, giving more abundant honor to that member which lacked,

25 that there should be no division in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another.

26 And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.

27 Now you are Christ's body, and individually members of it."

So we have in this Scripture the concept of a human body.

Our bodies have several distinguishing features

- 1) It is a complex organism that could only be created by someone far greater than us
- 2) It consists of many different parts, all of which work together
- 3) No part of our body can decide to take off for a while on its own without suffering dire consequences (those consequences usually being a rapid withering and death)
- 4) Each part has a special task or function that adds to the maximum efficiency of the body
- 5) Some parts of the body are visible and some are unseen, but all are very necessary
- 6) The whole body is controlled by the head

And God draws the analogy of the human body to the church.

- 1) In the same way the church is a complex, living organism created by Jesus Christ.

Understand that the church is not merely an organization. It is not simply a bunch of people who all share the same religious tenets getting together and having meetings like the Elks Lodge or the Chess Club. The church is a living organism. That is why it is referred to as the body of Christ and is called a mystery.

- 2) The body of Christ consists of many different people
- 3) No Christian will survive spiritually on his own

- 4) Each person in the body of Christ has a special task or function that adds to the maximum efficiency of the church
- 5) Some people in the church are more visible than others but all are very necessary
- 6) The entire worldwide church is controlled by the head who is Jesus Christ

So God gives us spiritual gifts so that each and every one of us

- No matter what our finances are
- No matter if we're weak or disabled
- No matter if we are shy and fearful
- No matter if we can't sing or are illiterate or have absolutely no natural talents
- No matter if we are the most common, ordinary person alive

Each and every one of us has

- Something crucial to add to the body of Christ
- Something with which we can bless others
- Something that will glorify God

What is a spiritual gift?

It is an ability, a talent, or a skill that is given to a person for the first time ever by the Holy Spirit so that the person might be a vital, useful, and necessary member of the Body of Christ. This means that only Christians can have these spiritual gifts.

Does everyone have at least one gift?

1 Peter 4:10, "As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."

So yes, everyone has at least one gift. And notice that, once again, the reason for these gifts is to serve others.

Can a person have more than one gift?

I believe so. There are such indications in Scripture.

When does a person get one or more of these gifts?

I believe that the moment that a person gets saved he receives the Holy Spirit and that he will receive at least one spiritual gift at that time.

Therefore, from the very first second that you become a Christian you have something to add to the body of Christ.

There are no levels in the body of Christ. We don't all start out as toes and work our way up to the head. We don't go from lay person to elder to staff member to pastor to bishop. We don't

work our way up to black belt Christians. We all have something that makes us crucial to the body of Christ right from the beginning.

I also believe that God can add to our gifts after as we grow as Christians as He so chooses. [1 **Corinthians 12:31**, “But earnestly desire the greater gifts.” Here Paul is speaking to Christians and he is telling them to desire greater gifts.]

Can we ever lose a spiritual gift?

I believe that we can't.

Romans 11:29, “for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.”

Because of disobedience our gifts may become stagnant, but they will always be there.

What is the difference between a spiritual gift and a natural talent?

It says in **Psalm 139:14**, “I will give thanks to Thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.” God gives to everyone natural talents and abilities. These are skills that are apart from being a Christian. So a non-Christian may be a wonderful musician or a great speaker or a great thinker.

But when someone becomes a Christian they receive the Holy Spirit of God who gives them an ability or talent that they didn't have before.

So a natural talent is something that God gives to us from our natural birth.

A spiritual gift is something that God gives to us only after our spiritual birth.

So just because someone is good at something that doesn't mean that it is spiritual gift.

Someone who was a great speaker before he was a Christian and who is a great speaker after he is a Christian doesn't mean that he has the gift of teaching. That could simply be a natural talent that God gave to him.

How are spiritual gifts different from the fruit of the Spirit?

Galatians 5:22-23, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.”

Whereas the fruit of the Spirit is something that God wants every Christian to have in full measure, not every Christian, even those who are most mature, will exhibit all of the gifts of the Spirit.

Whereas the gifts of the Spirit are abilities and talents; the fruit of the Spirit is character.

Whereas the gifts are given to us through grace, the fruit comes through obedience and trust.

Can we become better at our spiritual gifts as time goes on?

Yes, just as we become holier and more obedient as we grow as Christians so God can use our gifts to a greater and greater degree.

So a spiritual gift is

- 1) Given freely from God through His Holy Spirit
- 2) Something that every Christian has at least one of from the moment that they got saved
- 3) Cannot be lost
- 4) Makes every Christian necessary to the body of Christ
- 5) Enables every Christian to be a blessing to others
- 6) Means that every Christian can bring glory to God

Because we all have spiritual gifts we should all be serving. None of us should be spectators. Bud Wilkenson, former football coach at the University of Oklahoma said, “A football game is happening where 50,000 spectators, desperately needing exercise, sit in the stands and watch 22 men on the field who desperately need rest.”

Don't you just sit back and watch the pastors and elders and ministry leaders do all of the work.

What are the spiritual gifts?

There are four passages in Scripture that list spiritual gifts.

Some may argue that these lists are just examples and so aren't all of the gifts that God can give to people.

That may be true but then I hesitate to say that because then anyone can claim to have some funky ability and claim that it is from God. If we depart from these lists then the ability to Biblically evaluate some manifestation as being from God becomes more difficult. Therefore, I prefer claiming that these passages do indeed list all of the gifts.

Romans 12:6-8

6 And since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let each exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith;

7 if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching;

8 or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

So in this passage we see 7 gifts listed

- 1) Prophesying
- 2) Serving
- 3) Teaching
- 4) Exhortation
- 5) Giving
- 6) Leadership
- 7) Mercy

1 Corinthians 12:8-10, 28-30

8 For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, and to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit;

9 to another faith by the same Spirit, and to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit,

10 and to another the effecting of miracles, and to another prophecy, and to another the distinguishing of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, and to another the interpretation of tongues.

28 And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues.

29 All are not apostles, are they? All are not prophets, are they? All are not teachers, are they? All are not workers of miracles, are they?

30 All do not have gifts of healings, do they? All do not speak with tongues, do they? All do not interpret, do they?

So in this passage we see 13 more spiritual gifts; two of which are repeats

- 1) Word of wisdom
- 2) Word of knowledge
- 3) Faith
- 4) Healing
- 5) Effecting of miracles
- 6) (Prophecy)
- 7) Distinguishing of spirits
- 8) Tongues
- 9) Interpretation of tongues
- 10) Apostles

- 11) (Teaching)
- 12) Helps
- 13) Administration

Ephesians 4:11

And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers

Here we see 5 more gifts; three of which are repeats

- 1) (Apostles)
- 2) (Prophecy)
- 3) Evangelism
- 4) Pastor
- 5) (Teaching)

1 Peter 3:9-11

9 Be hospitable to one another without complaint.

10 As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

11 Whoever speaks, let him speak, as it were, the utterances of God; whoever serves, let him do so as by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Here are three more gifts, two of which were mentioned before

- 1) Hospitality
- 2) (Speaking or Prophecy)
- 3) (Serving)

That gives a total of 21 gifts.

Others sometimes add a few gifts that are mentioned else where in the Bible but not in any of these lists.

- 1) Celibacy (1 Corinthians 7:7-8)
- 2) Martyrdom (1 Corinthians 13:1-3)
- 3) Missionary (Ephesians 3:6-8)
- 4) Voluntary poverty (1 Corinthians 12:1-3)
- 5) Exorcism (Mark 3:14-15)
- 6) Intercession (1 Thessalonians 3:10-13)
- 7) Craftsmanship (Exodus 28:3-4)

However, though they are referred to as gifts, I don't lump them in with the gifts of the Spirit.

Let's briefly look at each of the gifts separately.

And while we're going through this list, listen carefully to each one and see if or how it applies to your own life.

Prophesying

Definition:

The ability to receive and communicate an immediate message of God to His people through a divinely anointed utterance.

Characterized by:

- A desire to speak direct messages from God that edify, exhort, or comfort others
- Have a strong sense of what God wants to say to people in response to a particular situation
- Sometimes feel that you know exactly what God wants to do in ministry at a specific point in time
- Not afraid to announce God's judgment on sin
- Can speak clearly, boldly, and with conviction what you believe God wants people to know

“For-Telling”—one who speaks “for” another; an inspired spokesperson “for” God.

“Forth-Telling”—one who has an inspired message from God to deliver “forth” to others.

“Fore-Telling”—one who is given a revelation from God that enables him to “fore-tell” a coming event.

Serving

Definition:

The ability to identify the unmet needs involved in a task related to God's work, and to make use of available resources to meet those needs and help accomplish the desired goals.

Characterized by:

- Enjoy being called upon to do special jobs around the church
- Content to do the work rather than to direct others
- Oftentimes are right there offering to help out
- Willing to work at a task no matter how simple or trivial it may seem
- Have a sense of satisfaction in seeing a task through to completion
- Very dependable and responsible

William McRae wrote, “A person with this gift will loathe the limelight but be the backbone of an effective church. Many unseen tasks that cause the ministry of the Word to be performed smoothly are effectively done by these persons. They prepare Sunday school materials for the teachers, care for the maintenance of the building and property, work in the tape ministry, do secretarial work, arrange transportation, set up chairs, assume responsibility for a radio program, provide nursery facilities, etc. How invaluable are the men and women who do this kind of work joyfully and faithfully. It is a magnificent gift.”

Teaching

Definition:

The special ability that God gives to communicate information, relevant to the health and ministry of the Body of Christ and its members in such a way that others will learn and be edified.

Characterized by:

- A strong desire to study the Bible and learn its doctrines and examples
- The ability to communicate truth so that people understand it better
- Sharing things that change people's knowledge, attitudes, values, or conduct
- The ability to make difficult teachings and passages clear and relevant

Exhortation

Definition:

A gift that enables someone to minister words of comfort, consolation, encouragement, counsel, and reproof to other people in such a way that they are helped, healed, or convicted to turn from sin.

Characterized by:

- People often come to you with their personal problems for counsel
- You are often challenged to help others reach their potential in Christ
- Generally available to talk to others
- Find yourself encouraging the downtrodden and also convicting those on the path of sin

Giving

Definition:

The ability of someone to be willing to cheerfully contribute their material resources to the work of God with liberality and without any desire for self-benefit.

Characterized by:

- Seeking to manage your money in order to give liberally to the Lord's work
- When you are moved by an appeal to give to God's work, you usually find the money or resources needed to respond
- You can say, "I am so confident that God will meet my needs that I give to Him sacrificially and consistently."
- You are willing to maintain a lower standard of living in order to benefit God's work
- You consider all that you own as resources for God's use and you freely and joyfully give of these resources because you love God
- When you give you have no desire to draw attention to yourself and will oftentimes give anonymously

Leadership

Definition:

The ability to set goals in accordance with God's purpose for the future and to communicate those goals to others in such a way that they voluntarily and harmoniously work together to accomplish those goals.

Characterized by:

- Able to motivate people with such care and diligence that they are willing to help accomplish set goals
- People respect and follow your direction
- In a group where there is no leader you generally assume leadership
- You are good at discerning people's skills, talents, gifts and abilities and how to effectively utilize them
- Enjoy working with people

Mercy

Definition:

The ability to feel genuine empathy and compassion for individuals, both Christian and non-Christian, who suffer distressing physical, mental or emotional problems. And then to apply that compassion into deeds that will alleviate and comfort their suffering.

Characterized by:

- Have a tender heart toward the needy and will often do what you can to help those who are in distress
- Enjoy visiting the sick and shut-in and in going to hospitals and nursing homes
- Look out for those who are neglected and alienated
- Empathize with those who are embarrassed and humiliated and seek to comfort them
- Like to spend time with those who are lonely and hurting to cheer them up
- Work joyfully with those people who are ignored by the majority of those around them

Word of wisdom

Definition:

The ability to apply Biblical knowledge in such a way as to make spiritual truths quite relevant and practical in proper decision making and daily life situations.

Characterized by:

- Able to see how the Bible relates to daily life and how to apply Biblical principles to different situations
- Have insight and ability to solve problems
- Able to offer practical solutions to difficult problems
- Often sought out for your opinions

- Oftentimes sense God's presence and direction when important decisions need to be made

Word of knowledge

Definition:

The ability to discover, accumulate, analyze, and clarify information and ideas that are pertinent to the growth and well-being of the Body of Christ.

Characterized by:

- Known as a scholar of the Bible
- Enjoy searching for answers to difficult questions in the Bible
- Able to take information from several sources and come up with an answer or a thesis about a subject
- Frequently discover new insights into Scripture through personal study
- Enjoy doing word studies, examining the historical background of a text and getting at the facts of a passage in order to benefit yourself and others

Faith

Definition:

The ability of being firmly persuaded of God's power and promises to accomplish His will and purpose and to display such a confidence in God and His word that circumstances and obstacles do not shake that conviction. This person has a deeper insight into God's will and plans.

Characterized by:

- Able to trust God for great things
- Have a confident expectation that God will accomplish what He says
- Willing to step out in faith where others are more calculating and fearful
- Have a great number of your prayers answered
- Have unusual confidence in God's plans in a specific situation where others are uncertain
- Able to depend on God's resources and guidance much more so than others

Healing

Definition:

The ability to heal people of their sicknesses and deformities and to restore health apart from natural means.

Characterized by:

- In the name of the Lord, you have been able to cure illnesses instantly
- Physical healing has occurred as a result of your praying for others
- God impressing on your heart to pray for those who are ill
- Able to heal even people who lack faith

This gift does not give a person power over disease so not everyone will be healed. God may have a greater plan for that illness other than for it to be healed.

This gift does not make medical doctors and nurses obsolete.

Bridges and Phypers in their book *Spiritual Gifts* said, “The close connection often found in Scripture between faith and miraculous healing must be recognized. This connection, it must be admitted, has often created practical problems when divine healing has been sought. Some Christians have sadly made a very crude connection between faith and God’s ability to heal, making the latter depend on the degree of the former. Thus they have caused unnecessary heartache and suffering in those who have sought healing for themselves or others, and have not found it, by attributing the failure to the seekers’ lack of faith. Yet this is a quite false and unscriptural line of reasoning. It is the power of God and the presence of faith which bring healing and not the pressure of faith on the reluctance of God. Jesus spoke of faith small as a grain of mustard (Matthew 17:20; Luke 17:6) as being all that is necessary for the accomplishment of God’s purposes, and when the prayer of faith does not receive the expected answer, this must not be attributed to the believer’s lack of faith but left with the loving purpose of God.”

Effecting of miracles

Definition:

The ability to demonstrate supernatural powers, acts, and deeds that are unexplainable except by the divine intervention of God. These acts are observable, immediate, and beyond the realm of human experimentation or explanation.

Characterized by:

- Having performed supernatural signs and wonders
- Able to transform circumstances through the name of the Lord
- Have brought people to Christ through these supernatural acts
- Glory is directed only to God and not to yourself
- You have accomplished things beyond human means

The Effecting of Miracles is not
Healing since that is listed as a separate gift
And it is not being good at card tricks

Distinguishing of spirits

Definition:

The ability that enables one to accurately assess and judge inner motives, hidden errors, or corrupting doctrines. This person can distinguish between teaching and behavior that is from God, from the flesh or from the devil.

Characterized by:

- Able to detect a spiritual phony

- Known for good spiritual judgement
- Seek to prevent false teaching and confusion from overtaking the church
- Very quick to pick up on error
- Can readily tell if something is from God or from other sources

Tongues

Definition:

The Greek word means “to speak in a tongue.” It is the ability to speak in a language not previously learned so 1) unbelievers can hear God’s message in their own language, 2) believers can be edified and encouraged and 3) God can be praised beyond our understanding.

Characterized by:

- Through the prompting of the Holy Spirit, able to speak in a language unknown to you whether that be the tongues of men or of angels as mentioned in 1 Corinthians 13:1
- Tongues enables our spirits to communicate directly with God above and beyond the power of our minds to understand
- Tongues liberates the Spirit of God within us
- Tongues enables the spirit to take its place of ascendancy over soul and body

Interpretation of tongues

Definition:

The ability to make known in the vernacular (common language) the message of one who speaks in tongues. Realize that it is an interpretation and not a translation.

Characterized by:

- Oftentimes hearing someone speaking in a tongue and, though the Holy Spirit, able to interpret what was said.
- Can interpret a language that you have never studied or know

1 Corinthians 14:13, “Therefore let one who speaks in a tongue pray that he may interpret.” Sometimes the person who has spoken in the tongue is the one who interprets so the gift of tongues and the gift of interpretation may go together although it is not necessary.

Apostles

There are three meanings of the word “apostle.”

- a. First, there is the office of apostle, which I believe ceased to exist with the passing of the original apostles
- b. Second, there is the gift of apostleship, which is what we are going to look at.
- c. Third, the word “apostle” in the Greek simply means “one who is sent.” So in this sense we are all apostles since God has sent all of us to do His work. That is not a gift, it is a general duty.

Definition:

The special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ that enables them to assume and exercise helpful leadership over a number of churches in spiritual matters.

Characterized by:

- Eagerness to start new churches in places where there are none
- Respected as an authority in spiritual matters
- Able to oversee and administrate a large group of churches

Helps

Definition:

The Greek word for helps means, “to take a burden upon oneself.” It is to invest the talents that a person has into the life and ministry of other members of the Body of Christ, thus enabling that person helped to increase the effectiveness of his own ministry.

Characterized by:

- Desire to assist pastors, staff and ministry leaders so as to free them up for their main duties
- Help others become more effective in their own ministries
- You can say, “When I do things behind the scenes and others are helped, I am joyful.” And, “I really do not care who gets the credit.”
- Enjoy doing the menial and non-glamorous but necessary tasks
- Others know that they can call upon you to assist them

The difference between the gift of mercy and the gift of helps is that

The gift of mercy is directed toward people in distress.

The gift of helps is directed toward Christian works.

The gift of mercy is to alleviate suffering.

The gift of helps is to free workers from temporal service so that they can concentrate on other matters.

The difference between the gift of serving and the gift of helps is that

The gift of helps is directed toward helping others in their ministries.

The gift of serving is directed toward getting things done.

Administration

Definition:

The Greek word for administration means, “piloting or steering.” It was the helmsman whose chief task was to keep his ship on course. He steered the ship from dangerous rocks, mapped out the course that the ship would take, and knew the limits and capabilities of the crew. It is the ability to clearly understand the immediate and long-range goals of a particular project and to plan, organize, and supervise others to reach that goal.

Characterized by:

- Very good at organizing and coordinating activities
- Able to delegate responsibilities to other people so as to best accomplish set goals
- Good at planning strategies that most effectively pursue a vision
- Oftentimes find yourself in a place of leadership
- Willing to bear the responsibility for the success or failure of a particular task within the church
- Able to lead a committee or group in making correct decisions

The difference between the gift of leadership and the gift of administration is that

The gift of leadership involves directing and guiding people primary.

Whereas the gift of administration involves more the idea of the effective running of an entire project.

The gift of leadership is able to properly evaluate the talents and skills of people so that they might more effectively fit in to a project and then motivate them to do so cheerfully.

The gift of administration is more concerned with how the overall goals of the project will be accomplished.

Oftentimes, these two gifts may be combined in one person.

Evangelism

Definition:

This enables someone to present the Gospel with simplicity, clarity, and effectiveness. This person has a deep concern about those who are lost and is comfortable and able to share the Gospel in any situation and at any time.

Characterized by:

- A strong desire to share your faith with unbelievers
- Able to give a clear presentation of the Gospel
- Can keep people interested in hearing the Gospel
- Frequently instrumental in leading others to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ

Pastor

Definition:

In the Bible the words pastor, shepherd, elder, overseer, and bishop are often used interchangeably. It is the ability to spiritually care for, protect, guide, and feed a group of believers entrusted to one's care.

Characterized by:

- Concerned for the spiritual welfare of others
- Willing to take responsibility for the spiritual growth and well being of those under your sphere of ministry
- Willing to give your own time to be available for the needs of others

- Willing to relate to a group of people over a long period of time, sharing personal responsibility in their successes and failures
- Desire to restore people back to the church
- Concerned about guarding, like a shepherd, a group of Christians from those who are enemies of Christianity

Hospitality

Definition:

The Greek word means “love of strangers.” It is a great desire to warmly welcome people, even strangers, into one’s home or church as a means of serving those in need of food or lodging.

Characterized by:

- Seeking out strangers and making them feel welcome in the church
- Often opening your home to newcomers and visitors in the church
- Enjoy meeting new people
- Able to make strangers feel immediately comfortable in your presence
- Enjoy letting out-of-state visitors stay at your home

Leader Guidelines for Discussion:

- 1) Start by going around the circle and having everyone say his or her name.
 - 2) *Tell people not to dominate the time. There are other people here with thoughts and opinions.
 - 3) Your role is to guide the conversation; not dominate it.
 - a) Open with one of the questions below. It doesn't matter which one it is.
 - b) Keep the discussion going, but don't panic at the slightest silence.
 - c) You can ask other relevant questions than what is listed below.
 - d) You don't have to cover every question.
 - 4) Don't allow one person to dominate. Interrupt him or her if you must. You are the leader; people should respect you.
 - 5) If someone is out of control (however you define that) come get one of the leaders.
 - 6) Don't call on anyone or put anyone on the spot.
 - 7) If it is absolutely dragging then talk as much as you need to.
- Discuss for around 20 minutes.

- 1) How is the Body of Christ (the church) analogous to the human body?
- 2) In 1 Corinthians 12 it mentions unseemly members of the body. What might that correspond to in the church? Why does God give these more honor?
- 3) If spiritual gifts make everyone necessary then give an example of what might happen if someone leaves the church regarding the loss of their gift to the church?
- 4) If someone leaves the church will God necessarily bring someone in with that same gift in order to fill in the gap?
- 5) What is a spiritual gift?
- 6) Why does God give spiritual gifts?
- 7) How many spiritual gifts does each person have?
- 8) How do spiritual gifts differ from natural talents?
- 9) How can knowing your spiritual gift change how you serve in the church?
- 10) Is it important to know your spiritual gift?
- 11) If you have a spiritual gift and you refuse to use it then what will be the effects in your life and in the church?