

The Supply of the Spirit (Spiritual Gifts)

Romans 12:6–8 **Having then gifts** differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; ⁷Or prophecy ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; ⁸Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.

Overview

The Holy Spirit provides every child of God with some combination of spiritual gifts. These gifts are special abilities given to us at salvation for the express purpose of serving God through the local church.

- I. **Spiritual Gifts Explained:** Discover and develop your spiritual gifts. Serve God for His glory. When you accepted Christ, the Holy Spirit gave you an ability to serve God in a unique way. He enabled you to meet a need in the body of your local church family.

1 Peter 4:10 As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

Even if you don't know what it is or don't feel particularly gifted in a specific area, the Bible teaches that you do have a special gift that you can use to serve God. Think about what God says:

1 Corinthians 12:18–24 But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. ¹⁹And if they were all one member, where were the body? ²⁰But now are they many members, yet but one body. ²¹And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. ²²Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: ²³And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. ²⁴For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked:

God's Word teaches that He wants to place you into a local church family. You are a member as a part of the body. Participate in His work with your church. He teaches that you are important to the health and strength of the rest of the body. What should you do with your spiritual gift? Notice how Paul instructed Timothy.

*2 Timothy 1:6 Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up **the gift of God**, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands.*

God wants you to be a good steward of His gift to you— to use the gift.

every Christian
has gift(s)

1 Peter 4:10 **As every man hath received the gift**, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

The Gospel changes lives. That's the way the local church is supposed to work. Local church life should be a fully-engaged life. The early Christians made their spiritual growth and ministry a steadfast priority in life. Spiritual growth, spiritual service, and spiritual fellowship are primary.

Acts 2:42 *And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.*

These Christians grew by being part of a local church life and service. The same is true for you. As you discover your God-given gift and become active in serving with it, your spiritual growth will accelerate rapidly.

II. **Spiritual Gifts Described** Present-day spiritual gifts are summarized in Romans 12.

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Let's briefly examine each of the spiritual gifts listed in these verses.

A. Prophecy: Before the Bible was complete, prophecy was two-fold: foretelling and forthtelling.

2 kinds
of prophecy

1. Foretelling is what people often associate with prophecy—predicting future events based on God's revelation to the prophet.
2. Forthtelling is the main role of prophecy—preaching God's Word to others. Even in the Old Testaments, the prophets' main ministry was that of preaching the truth. In some cases, they foretold future events as they preached. *Today, we have the complete revelation of God to man recorded in the Bible.* And **the spiritual gift of prophecy is a call from God to preach His Word**. Obviously, pastors and evangelists should have this calling and gift. These Christians are passionate to declare the Word of God.

B. Ministry: This spiritual gift is **also known as the gift of helps**. It is a desire to serve and help God's people in a variety of ways—often volunteering service in unglamorous and unappreciated jobs. Christians with this gift love serving and helping to make a vision reality.

deacons
help
pastor(s)

The first deacons in Acts 6 exercised the gift of ministry when they helped care for the needs of widows so the apostles might give themselves to "prayer, and to the ministry of the word" (Acts 6:4). The result of their behind-the-scenes ministry was significant:

Acts 6:7 And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.

Never underestimate the importance of the spiritual gift of ministry. If you have a passion to serve behind the scenes, be faithful and diligent, knowing your service is vital. And as you see others serving, remember that they are exercising their spiritual gifts—serving under the grace of God.

- help others to understand
- C. Teaching: This is the ability and desire to teach God's truth and help people understand how His Word applies to their lives. These Christians love to dig into God's Word and make it understandable to the hearers. You will often find those with this spiritual gift teaching Sunday school classes or in another teaching ministry of the church. **This spiritual gift requires diligent study and sound interpretation of Scripture.** It is a vital need for every local church!
- to motivate others
- D. Exhortation This is the ability and desire to encourage others in the Christian life. These Christians love **to lift up others with positive words and deeds.** The exhorter is especially concerned with the heart— not just with outward performance. Exhorters are like the church "fireplace poker." They want to motivate others to love and serve God with whole-hearted passion.
- time
- talent
- treasure
- E. Giving: This is the ability and desire **to give to God's work and God's people.** It is accompanied by the provision to give. These Christians are generous by nature and love to give to God's work. Romans 12:8 teaches that giving should be done "with simplicity," meaning it should be free from pretense, not expecting any sort of reward. Those with the gift of giving have great delight in unobtrusively giving to meet the needs of others and further the work of God.
- team leaders
- F. Ruling: Also called administration, this is the ability to lead and administrate part of God's work. It reveals itself through natural abilities to organize, think strategically, implement a plan, or coordinate teams of people. These Christians love **to bring things to order and make things happen in God's work.** They have a God-given ability to manage and administrate, and they find great joy in seeing order and progress.
- to give comfort
- G. Mercy: This is the God-given ability **to feel the pain of others and help them during trials.** Those with the gift of mercy are naturally good at sympathizing and empathizing with those carrying heavy burdens. They know what to say (and when to be silent) and have a good "bedside manner." These Christians love to visit hospitals and minister to those who are suffering. Those who show mercy are some of the most adept at fulfilling the command:

Romans 12:15 Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.

III. Spiritual Gifts Practiced

- A. Discover your spiritual gifts.
Identify your spiritual gifts. Find the areas in the church in which God has gifted you for ministry. We will have greater effectiveness in the areas of our spiritual gifts. For instance, people without the spiritual gift of mercy can visit a member of their Sunday school who is

in the hospital; and people without the spiritual gift of giving are still commanded to give. Yet, Christians with those particular spiritual gifts will find those areas come the most naturally for them, and they may have greater fruitfulness as they serve in those capacities.

B. Develop your spiritual gifts.

It can be scary thinking about serving God. Don't despise your gift. Exercise your gifts, even if it leads you out of your comfort zone. He intends for you to use the gifts He has given to you. Do everything you can to develop your gift. Use them and refine them. Read, study, and practice. The raw abilities that God has given you will mature and multiply with time and use.

Think about this: Do you find yourself resenting the spiritual gifts of others?

C. Deploy (use) your spiritual gifts.

Get involved. Let God plug you in to your local church. Get behind your pastor, join arms with your church family, and start using your gifts to glorify Christ and bless the local church body. You are God's gift to your church, and someone in the body needs your influence. The blessing of using your gifts for others is indescribable! You're going to love using your spiritual gift in local church ministry.

In what practical way can you develop your spiritual gift over the next six months?

Conclusion

When everyone in a church uses their spiritual gifts for the glory of God, the church is able to function as God intended.

1 Timothy 4:14 Neglect not the gift that is in thee....

In what way are you using your spiritual gift in or for your local church?

*1 Peter 4:10 **As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.***

using
spiritual
gifts
lead to
greater
maturity

exercise
is good
for the
body