

Finding a Place For Your Passion and Gifts

Introduction

One of the ways in which the Church is described in Scripture is the Body of Christ. (1 Cor. 12:13) There is one body and the oneness of the body displays it's unity. While unity of the body is essential, diversity within the same body is important as well. (1 Cor. 12:4-6)

One Body...Many parts — Think about the interdependence of the many parts of our human body. How important is it for them to all be working together? What happens if they are not working in concert with each other? (Disaster!) Sinuses must remain clear or I get really dizzy and sick to my stomach!

For the Body of Christ to be functioning properly, it requires that each part do it's job. The church (members of the body) are a representation of all the characteristics of Christ Himself. Each member has a specific function within that body. That specific function within the body is what we refer to as *ministry*. Each member has a *ministry*. How is that *ministry* enabled? By the power of the Holy Spirit, each member is able to perform their function through what the Bible calls *spiritual gifts*. Every member of the body has been given at least one *spiritual gift* with which to minister to the body, just as the Spirit of God has determined. (1 Cor. 12:7, 11)

1. What is the purpose of spiritual gifts?
 - a) to be used to God's glory. It is essential that God is glorified as these gifts are used in His Body.
 - b) to cause the other members of the Body to be strengthened and made ultimately more like Christ.
2. What's the difference between a spiritual gift and a natural ability?
 - a) All things are from God (1 Cor. 4:7). *Natural abilities* are given to believers and unbelievers alike.
 - b) When natural abilities are used for the glory of God in building up the body, they should be considered in some sense to be spiritual gifts!
 - c) On the other hand, aren't we all teachers to some degree? We teach our children things.... We might pray for things....do we all have the gift of intercessory prayer?
 - d) A spiritual gift differs from a natural ability in that a spiritual gift is a special measure of ability given by the Spirit of God, sometimes even manifested in an area of our life where we are not naturally gifted—even weak, that we then use for ministry in the Body of Christ.
3. What are some of the spiritual gifts mentioned in the Bible?

1 Cor. 12:28 - apostle, prophet, teacher, miracles, kinds of healing, helps, administration, tongues; 1 Cor. 12: 8-10 - word of wisdom, word of knowledge, faith, distinguishing between spirits, interpretation of tongues; Eph. 4:11 - evangelist, pastor-teacher; Rom. 12: 6-8 - serving, encouraging, contributing, leadership, mercy

4. How can you help someone discover their place and giftedness in the church? Let's do a real live case study using a volunteer. She has always struggled to see exactly how she fits in the church. What is her spiritual gift? Can you help her discover her place???
5. Small group discussion: How do you serve in the Body today? Are you satisfied with what you are doing? Do you know what you want to do?

Have the group go around the circle and talk about their place in the church. If one is struggling, try to help them. Share what you see as strengths in each other.