

Spirit Filled Church

These notes are designed to complement the teaching in our series, Spirit Filled Church. However they can also be used as a stand alone reference point for anyone wanting to look more closely at any one of the individual gifts mentioned in Scripture. Some key points should always be remembered when considering the gifts of the Spirit:

- Every follower of Jesus has received the Holy Spirit and has been given at least one gift by that same Spirit.
 - They are *gifts*. They were given to each of us according to the will of the Spirit (1 Cor. 12:11) not because we have in some way achieved a 'special status'.
 - These gifts are not given to us for our benefit but for the building up of the church. Anyone who uses their spiritual gift to build a platform for themselves is misusing that gift.
 - It is vital that we allow the Spirit to grow His *fruit* within us (Gal. 5:22-23) as we seek to develop and use our spiritual gift.
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Spiritual Gifts

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Administration

Name of gift:

Administration (also translated as guidance or leadership)

Scripture reference:

1 Corinthians 12:28

Description of gift:

Despite what might immediately jump to our names with the word administration, this is not the spiritual gift of filing! Administration is a leadership gift within the church. The original meaning of the Greek word used here is of a helmsman who steers a ship safely into harbour. In the same way those who have the spiritual gift of administration lead the church in very practical ways, navigating challenges or difficulties that others would see as insurmountable.

How administration serves the body:

Those with the gift of administration are people who can be relied on to 'take charge', directing others in order to ensure that what has been planned actually comes to pass. These are the people best suited to leading meetings because they keep discussions on track and ensure that expected outcomes are clearly defined. This gift is usually found in high capacity people, not given to procrastination, who are not easily deterred by the size or complexity of a project. Two biblical examples of people with the gift of administration would be Joseph and Nehemiah. Both these men were supernaturally empowered by God to see what needed to be done and to organise others to get the work done.

The shadow side of administration:

People with this gift can refuse to set themselves limits and so take on too much. They need to remember that it is God who builds His church. The church is not built on their organisational abilities. The gift of administration can also lead a person to become too task oriented and forget that they need to ensure those carrying out the tasks are cared for. Projects can be all-consuming and those with this gift can begin to see the completion of a task as the end goal rather than simply a way to move the church forward in its mission to extend the kingdom of God.

Care

Name of gift:

Shepherd/Pastor/Care

Scripture reference:

Ephesians 4:11

Description of gift:

The word that Paul uses in Ephesians, that some translations have translated 'pastor', is used many times in the New Testament but it is usually translated as 'shepherd'. One of the best known examples is probably John 10:11 where Jesus describes Himself as the 'good shepherd'. So the best way to understand this gift is by thinking about the role of a shepherd in the life of a flock of sheep. A shepherd is one who leads the flock, wards off enemies, acts to prevent the sheep doing anything that will be unwise, ensures the flock is well fed. A shepherd *cares* for the total wellbeing of the flock...or at least a *good* shepherd does.

How care serves the body:

Although in the 21st century church we have turned the word 'pastor' into a job that some people do, that is not the full extent of this gift in the church. There will always be those in the congregation who 'pastor' others without ever having a job title. People with this gift will be those who take others under their wing as it were, mentoring them, helping them navigate challenges of life, guiding them as they seek to learn and understand the way of life that God has called His people to live. However to have those with this gift in the leadership of a church ensures that the whole body is being cared for, not only small groups of people.

Shadow side of care:

People with the gift to shepherd God's people can be derailed by the pride of seeing themselves as the only one who can truly help people. As with all the spiritual gifts it is important to remember that we are simply conduits for the Spirit to work through. We are not anyone's 'saviour'. Another danger for anyone with a strong pastoral heart is the inability to establish healthy boundaries leading to co-dependent relationships with the 'pastor' being unable to say no to any request made of them or the one seeking help seeing the pastor as the one they need rather than God.

Discernment (Distinguishing between Spirits)

Name of gift:

Discernment (Distinguishing between Spirits)

Scripture reference:

1 Corinthians 12:10

Description of gift:

The gift of discernment allows us to sense the nature of the spiritual power behind something or someone. In John 14:17 Jesus said that he would ask the father to send us “the Spirit of Truth”. The Holy Spirit will guide us to what is true and what is not. Everything that happens has a spiritual power behind it. It could be the Spirit of God, an evil spirit, a human spirit.....or often a mixture of some of the above. Discernment is the ability to discern the spiritual power that is behind a comment, an action, an idea...and to sensitively make others aware of the power at play.

How discernment serves the body:

Often as believers we can be partnering with a spirit of fear, mistrust or rebellion, to name a few examples...but often we are unaware that this is what is going on for us. It is such a helpful gift to the body to have people who can discern the root spirit/motivation that is at play in our lives, helping us realign ourselves with the truth of Scripture. This gift is helpful to lead us back in line with the Spirit of Truth, that will always point us towards Jesus. In Matthew 10:16, as Jesus sends his disciples out, he tells his followers to be “as wise as serpents and gentle as doves. Be on your guard against men....” We continue to have a need to spot the counterfeit tactics of the enemy who wants to twist doctrine, cause division and lead people astray! This is why the Spirit manifests discernment throughout the body of believers.

Shadow side of discernment:

Because of the nature of this gift, people who have it can often get a sense of something being off when in the presence of people or a person. As has been said above, this gift is to help redirect people back in line with the way of Jesus, but if it is not used well it can often lead to a judgement or condemnation of someone. The danger is that we can use this only as a protection gift and leave out the correction part of it. When this happens we use it to protect ourselves from “the dangerous people” and miss out the opportunity to come

alongside others in gentle redirection, seeing them grow and flourish when reconnected with the truth.

Encouragement

Name of gift:

Encouragement (also translated as exhortation)

Scripture reference:

Romans 12:8

Description of gift:

This gift enables certain people to strengthen and support others who are struggling in their walk with God. Bringing encouragement is about speaking truth to someone (or to a group) but speaking it in a way that motivates those who hear it to seek after God and to seek to become all He has called them to be.

How encouragement serves the body:

Everyone who follows Christ experiences times of doubt or struggle or difficulty and the beauty of having those with the gift of encouragement within the body is that they can divinely discern those who are in these challenging seasons and speak to them in ways that are supportive and loving. Encouragement is always about speaking truth but speaking it in a way that can be heard even when the soul is discouraged. A key biblical example of this is Barnabas who was actually called Joseph but referred to as Barnabas because of this spiritual gift in his life (Acts 4:36). Barnabas was hugely influential in the life of the Apostle Paul.

Shadow side of encouragement:

Those gifted with encouragement can be tempted to say only what a person wants to hear or to speak extensively from their own experience rather than pointing a person to the promises of God. They can also be willing to give too much time to someone who is not willing to hear and respond to the truth they are speaking.

Evangelism

Name of gift:

Evangelism

Scripture reference:

Ephesians 4:11

Description of gift:

The word evangelism comes from the Greek *euangelion* which means good news or gospel. So an evangelist is someone who tells another the good news about Jesus. Those with this gift carry a specific burden for any they meet who are not yet people of faith. This is what motivates their prayers and they will always be wanting to introduce people to Jesus. People who have the gift of evangelism are often outgoing, finding it easy to strike up conversations with people. They will want to know about the person. Their interest and care is genuine. They are not simply looking for 'targets' to aim their 'gospel bullets' at! They are not required to be able to speak to large groups of people. Often the most powerful evangelical encounters happen in a one to one conversation.

How evangelism serves the body:

As with so many other gifts, the benefits of evangelism seem obvious. Jesus' last command to His followers was 'Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation' (Mark 16:15). The church must always be involved in the mission of proclaiming the gospel and those with the gift of evangelism lead the charge on this. To be clear, they do not do this alone. Every follower of Christ ought to have a concern for people not yet of faith. Each of us should be willing to share our faith with the people in our sphere of influence but those with this gift will help to keep the focus of the church outward and help to stop us from becoming insular, only concerned about our own needs or interests. A Biblical example of a person with this gift would be Philip whose story we read in the early chapters of Acts (chpts. 6 & 8 particularly).

Shadow side of evangelism:

There are times when, in their enthusiasm and concern for those who do not know Jesus, people with the gift of evangelism can become too aggressive in their approach to the very people they are trying to reach. There is always the danger of crossing from genuine concern for an individual to the 'target' mentality mentioned above. It is also possible to become

judgemental of others in the body who do not carry the same level of concern for the lost and to see evangelism as the *only* worthwhile activity of a church.

Faith

Name of gift:

Faith

Scripture reference:

1 Corinthians 12:9

Description of gift:

This is not the faith that leads to salvation (often called saving faith) which anyone may possess but rather the supernatural gift of faith that the Spirit gives to certain of Jesus' followers. This gift enables those who have it to remain totally persuaded that God can and will accomplish His purposes regardless of the circumstances which they are experiencing. Those with this gift will have a confidence to confront challenges and to try to do things that others will tell them are impossible. Their faith is infectious and inspiring to those around them.

How faith serves the body:

As has already been said, people with the gift of faith are inspiring to those around them. Their unshakeable faith can bring confidence to everyone around them and they are the reminder to the rest of the body of the greatness of God and the reality of His sovereign power. Biblical examples of this would be Joshua & Caleb (Numbers 14:6-9) and the many listed in Hebrews 11.

Shadow side of faith:

At times those with this gift can act without listening to God. So they encourage others to join them in confronting challenges that God never asked them to confront. This can lead the one with the gift of faith or those who followed them to suffer the consequences of irresponsible behaviour. The challenge is knowing the 'risks' God calls the church into and those that people go after for reasons of their own.

Giving

Name of gift:

Giving

Scripture reference:

Romans 12:8

Description of gift:

Although all followers of Christ are called to give back to God in thankfulness for all He has given them, a practice known as tithing, the spiritual gift of giving is more than this. Those who possess this gift see their wealth, their talents and their time as being at God's disposal. They will give of what they have generously in order to see the needs of others being met or in order to see the purposes of God advanced in the world. Spiritually enabled givers steward their own finances well so as to be able to give to others. At times they may be given a supernatural ability to make money so as to have much from which to give.

How giving serves the body:

Those with the gift of giving provide practically for the needs of those in the church and they will give generously to the mission of the church enabling the church to do more than would be possible without such people in the community. The generosity of those with this gift and the faith in God that accompanies it can also inspire others and build their faith in a God Who can and will provide for His children's needs. Biblical examples of this gift include the widow (Mark 12:41-44), Barnabas (Acts 4:36-37) and the church in Macedonia (2 Cor. 8:1-5)

Shadow side of giving:

It is important that those with this gift guard their hearts well because it is easy for those who give generously to begin to see this as a transaction and to expect to get special treatment either from the leadership of the church or even from God Himself because of how they have given. It is also possible for others to take advantage of someone with this gift looking for financial help that is self-serving rather than God honouring.

Healings/Miracles

Name of gift(s):

Miracles and healings

Scripture reference:

1 Corinthians 12:9-10, 28

Description of gift:

These are listed as two separate gifts in Scripture but for the purposes of this series we are looking at them together because there are a number of similarities between them. Those with these gifts are often 'prayer warriors' understanding the power of prayer in ways that others may overlook. They are also compassionate individuals who care deeply about the suffering of others. Those with a healing gift will not simply see healing in purely physical terms but they understand that human beings are physical, mental, emotional and spiritual beings and will seek healing on any and all of these levels. Those who possess a gift of miracles are keenly aware of God's activity in the world, often seeing things others might miss.

How healings and miracles serve the body:

There are the obvious ways that these gifts serve the church in that healings and miracles are experienced which build the faith of all who experience them and bring relief and restoration to the one(s) in need of the miracle. But there are other ways the body is served: by encouraging and building a culture of bold praying and by opening others' eyes to the very real presence and activity of God in the midst of a community of faith. Biblical examples are the apostles particularly Peter and Paul but church elders are also encouraged to pray for those who are ill that they may be healed (James 5:14).

Shadow side of healings and miracles:

Both of these gifts are liable to bring attention to the one who possesses them and that can lead to arrogance, forgetting that it is God Who is at work not the one who has the gift. Just like every other spiritual gift these gifts are given for the benefit of others not to provide fame and notoriety for the possessor of the gift. It is also important to remember that even when one who has either of these gifts prays God will act according to His sovereign will. Sometimes He will heal or perform a miracle and sometimes He will not.

Helps

Name of gift:

Helps

Scripture reference:

1 Corinthians 12:28

Description of gift:

The gift of helps is more of a 'behind the scenes' gift but it is not about giving a hand in a task that needs done. 'Helping' in this circumstance is about bringing aid or relief to someone in need, bringing support and care, being an instrument of God's grace and God's power in a person's life.

How helps serves the body:

The gift of helps is usually practiced on an individual basis rather than a corporate one. In other words someone with this gift will be motivated to bring help, relief or aid to a *person* (or even a family) in need rather than it being about serving the whole church body. This may be financial aid but more usually it will be things like taking the time to listen to someone, offering to help a young couple with childcare, being willing to cook a meal for a person or to be the one who visits someone no longer able to leave their home. Biblical examples of this gift can be hard to identify because it is a gift that operates often unseen but some examples could be Dorcas (Acts 9:36-41), Timothy (Phil. 2:20) and Philemon (Philemon 7).

Shadow side of helps:

A person with this gift can become very frustrated by those who are 'less caring' than they are and expect everyone else to be willing to do what they do. There is also the danger that people with this gift will find themselves in a co-dependent relationship where they are enabling another because being needed feeds something in the helper's soul. It is also important that those with the gift of helps are willing to say no when they need to say no.

Interpretation of Tongues

Name of gift:

Interpretation of Tongues

Scripture reference:

1 Corinthians 12:10, 30

Description of gift:

Whether the tongue is a human language foreign to the speaker or a heavenly language from the speaker's spirit, the Holy Spirit empowers the person to understand what has been spoken. This is not the human skill of translation, it is the Spirit-empowered ability to interpret something that is not humanly understood by the person with the interpretation gift. Paul is very clear in 1 Corinthians 14:28 that in the absence of an interpretation the speaker of the tongue should remain silent and keep the tongue between them and God in their private worship. If the speaker is unsure of their being an interpretation they should ask the Lord to give them the interpretation themselves (1 Cor 14:13)

How Interpretation of Tongues serves the body:

Paul speaks very strongly and clearly that in any worship gathering, order and understanding of what is being said is of utmost importance. In light of this the gift of interpretation **MUST** accompany a tongue that is given.

Interpretation ultimately brings clarity and helps the tongue build and edify the body, not just the individual.

Shadow side of Interpretation of Tongues:

Sometimes an interpretation given can resemble a prophetic word from the Lord rather than a praise or exhortation from us to him. Tongues are directional from us to the Lord so the interpretation should reflect that as a worship or praise exhortation from our heart to the Lord. Worship should always be about him, not about us!

Word of Knowledge

Name of gift:

Word (Message) of Knowledge

Scripture reference:

1 Corinthians 12:8

Description of gift:

A beneficial supernatural insight into someone's life or current situation. This insight is supernatural because it could not have possibly been known otherwise. This knowledge is not gained through experience over time of knowing someone, it is specific and is revealed by the Spirit in a particular moment. Its purpose for being known is so that a Kingdom purpose can be accomplished in a person's life.

How a word of knowledge serves the body:

That God would speak in detail into a person's circumstance is evidence of his presence with them and his interest in them. This can be both strengthening in moments of desperation and directive in moments of crucial choices or decisions. God's involvement in the details of our life is a huge encouragement to the body and builds intimacy in a believer's life.

Shadow side of a word of knowledge:

This gift can be used loosely and even predictively in people's lives and without the important focus on a Kingdom purpose being accomplished in a person's life. Sometimes this gift has been used as a Christian version of fortune telling. This can/has caused huge damage in people's lives. The saying "Knowledge is Power" means that to use this gift is to have power in other people's lives.....to handle power in a Godly way requires an ongoing commitment to the Spirit's internal work of our character, expecting the Fruit of the Spirit to be displayed in our life.

Prophecy

Name of gift:

Prophecy

Scripture reference:

Romans 12:6, 1 Corinthians 12:10, 28, Ephesians 4:11

Description of gift:

The gift of prophecy is the ability to hear from God and deliver the message received to God's people for their 'upbuilding, encouragement and comfort' (1 Cor. 14:3). Modern day prophecy is not usually about predicting future events although there are times when someone with a prophetic gift will know details of a person's circumstances without being told about them. Prophecy today also does not carry the same authority as Scripture and no prophetic message today will contradict the truth we read in Scripture. Hence Paul encourages us to 'weigh what is said' (1 Cor. 14:29) when we hear something spoken prophetically.

How prophecy serves the body:

Prophecy is always designed for the building up of those who receive it. Like encouragement, a prophetic word may be challenging but the purpose of it is always to draw the recipient into closer relationship with God. In addition, God can choose to provide direction and guidance to a church through those with a prophetic gift and often someone who is speaking prophetically will speak directly to specific circumstances, be that in the life of a church or an individual. Those with this gift are often more sensitive to sin and will be bold in calling out those things that they have been alerted to by the Spirit.

Shadow side of prophecy:

A person with a prophetic gift can be so convinced their message is from God that they deliver it in a way that is arrogant or unloving. This gift can at times lead an individual to think more highly of themselves and to expect all in the church, including any senior leadership, to listen to them and follow their direction unquestioningly. The gift of prophecy is also one of those gifts that can become a person's identity, they become 'the prophet' rather than 'the disciple of Jesus who has been given the gift of prophecy'.

Teaching

Name of gift:

Teaching

Scripture reference:

Romans 12:7, 1 Corinthians 12:28, Ephesians 4:11

Description of gift:

This gift is the divinely empowered ability to understand the truths of God's Word *and* to explain them clearly and effectively to those who are listening. The desire of someone spiritually enabled to teach will be to see their listeners change to become more like Christ as they understand the Bible better.

How teaching serves the body:

God inspired people to write Scripture and He ensured its preservation throughout history in order that we might read it and grow in our knowledge and understanding of Him and the life He calls us to live. Those who teach are those who are able to take the more difficult, or even confusing, passages and make them accessible to the church in general so that the whole body grows and matures in its understanding of the Bible and the truth it contains. Paul and Peter are obvious biblical examples of individuals with the gift of teaching but Apollos, along with Priscilla and Aquila, are others (Acts 18:24-28).

Shadow side of teaching:

This gift can lead a person to see themselves as 'fountains of all knowledge' or even live in the unrealistic idea that they need to have all the answers. Those who teach can find it difficult to have their ideas challenged which can lead them to be dogmatic and actually unteachable (Apollos is a good example here as he was willing to be taught by Priscilla and Aquila-Acts 18:26). A person with a teaching gift can also spend more time in study than in relational connection and even use activities like study to allow them to shut themselves away from the very people they are trying to teach.

Speaking in Tongues

Name of gift:

Speaking in Tongues

Scripture reference:

1 Corinthians 12:10, 28, 30; 14:2, 4, 5, 6, 13, 14

Acts 2:4, 8:17-18, 10:46, 19:6

Description of gift:

Paul taught that there were different kinds of tongues. In Acts 2:4 we see the disciples speaking in unlearned languages that brought an understandable message of God's glory to unbelievers. In 1 Corinthians 14:2 we see Paul write that it can also be a spiritually empowered form of prayer in a heavenly language that no one can understand. In 1 Corinthians 14:2 it is clear that a tongue is communication from our spirit to God, differentiating it from Prophecy which is God speaking to us.

How Speaking in Tongues serves the body:

Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 14:4 that "anyone who speaks in a tongue edifies themselves", so speaking in tongues is primarily useful in times of private worship as we seek to express the depth of our heart to the Lord. Something that takes us deeper in worship and into an encounter of God is a huge benefit to the body. The corporate expression of this, during a worship gathering and when accompanied by an interpretation, can also take a congregation into a moment of shared worship that our spirit's connect with in a way that our words can't express.

The tongues that we see in Acts have been reported throughout church history right up to recent times, where the Spirit speaks through someone in an unlearned language, but that a hearer understands and validates the interpretation to be accurate in their native language. This has seen the fruit of people coming to Jesus many times, particularly in missionary experiences. God can cross barriers that we are unable to!

Shadow side of Speaking in Tongues:

Certain theological teaching has elevated this gift to be the evidence of a person being "filled with the Spirit". Paul is clear that not everyone has this gift, but he is also clear that he wished they did! We receive the Spirit at our moment of Salvation and are instructed to be continually filled with the Spirit.....tongues is not the evidence of whether this has happened

or not, it is a gift that some people receive. Often people live in shame, feeling second class or "less than" if they don't speak in tongues. This is untrue and not what we see in scripture. Tongues, because of its obvious supernatural nature, can cause disruption, confusion and distraction in a public setting when it is not carried out in a submitted, ordered and explained fashion. This is why Paul is addressing the issue in detail with the Corinthian church, because they were not being helpful as they used a private worship gift in a public setting without order and clarity through interpretation.

Word of Wisdom

Name of gift:

Word (Message) of Wisdom

Scripture reference:

1 Corinthians 12:8

Description of gift:

A word of wisdom is a solution given by the Holy Spirit to a practical difficulty in someone's life. Paul mentions a word of wisdom among the other gifts in his letter to the church in Corinth, but the New Testament doesn't mention it again. There is no further description or illustration of how this works. So we need to look across scripture to see what the Bible means when it talks about wisdom, and it is consistently about skill at living life. The book of Proverbs is a wisdom book and it is full of wisdom about family, relationship, parenting, sexual purity, work, money etc.....

Someone with this gift has the ability to see and apply the wisdom of scripture, revealed by the Holy Spirit, to practical life decisions. This wisdom always points someone closer to the Way of Jesus and can help people avoid making life choice mistakes.

How a word of wisdom serves the body:

As a church family, both collectively and individually, we all have decisions and choices to navigate in life. To be able to seek others advice and benefit from wisdom inspired by the Holy Spirit's direct revelation is a huge gift to us all. This gift can help us pursue God's plans and purposes in life while also help us avoid pitfalls and pain that our own human wisdom may lead us into.

Shadow side of a word of wisdom:

Over time people with this gift can be elevated and seen as some sort of "guru"....the person you run to when you have a problem. This can create a few problems:

Firstly, this can result in the person with the gift having an elevated opinion of their own ability, forgetting that the wisdom is actually a manifestation of the Spirit.

Secondly, as we seek wisdom and find it we can give the glory to the person and not the Lord....this can result in us going to other humans first instead of seeking the Lord's wisdom for ourselves, before confirming it with others.

Lastly, those with this gift can start to rely on past wisdom that the Spirit revealed to them instead of seeking the Lord in the new moment for fresh revelation.