

17. Spiritual Gifts and Ministries

God bestows upon all members of His church in every age spiritual gifts which each member is to employ in loving ministry for the common good of the church and of humanity. Given by the agency of the Holy Spirit, who apportions to each member as He wills, the gifts provide all abilities and ministries needed by the church to fulfil its divinely ordained functions. According to the Scriptures, these gifts include such ministries as faith, healing, prophecy, proclamation, teaching, administration, reconciliation, compassion, and self-sacrificing service and charity for the help and encouragement of people. Some members are called of God and endowed by the Spirit for functions recognized by the church in pastoral, evangelistic, apostolic, and teaching ministries particularly needed to equip the members for service, to build up the church to spiritual maturity, and to foster unity of the faith and knowledge of God. When members employ these spiritual gifts as faithful stewards of God's varied grace, the church is protected from the destructive influence of false doctrine, grows with a growth that is from God, and is built up in faith and love.

Every member of Christ's body receives special gifts and abilities from the Holy Spirit. While these gifts may be widely varied within the body, they all contribute to unity under Christ the Head.

- The Holy Spirit is the source of these gifts. 1 Corinthians 12:9-11
- The Holy Spirit inspires faith, hope, and love in all Christians. 1 Corinthians 13
- The various gifts are necessary to make the church a complete body. Romans 12:4-8
- The gifts glorify Christ by bringing greater unity and strength to His church. 1 Peter 4:10-11

The central purpose of all the gifts is the building up of the church into a body that can be of service in the world.

- The Spirit supplies all the gifts necessary for the church's work, and no gift is insignificant. 1 Corinthians 12:20-25; Acts 6:1-7
- Some gifts are considered greater than others. 1 Corinthians 12:27-31
- The gifts inspire concern for our world. 1 Timothy 2:1-3
- The gifts are to produce maturity and unity in the body of Christ. Ephesians 4:8, 11-16
- We are responsible to wisely use the gifts God distributes. Matthew 25:14-30
- The Spirit teaches truth and keeps the church from falling into error. John 16:13

Personal Application

-  Is there any congregation so small that the Holy Spirit cannot enable it to fulfil its mission?
-  How would God feel if I refused to accept and use His gifts?
-  Why are there so many different types of spiritual gifts?
-  God has promised to give me gifts of the Spirit, and I am eager to discover what He wants me to do in building up and strengthening His body here on earth.

Commitment

- I believe, Father, that You have given me spiritual gifts which You want me to use in strengthening Your church. I will seek to discover my gifts and use them to Your glory.