



GIFTS – GIFTED BY GOD

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Church Alive

We are on our journey in our series Church Alive. We're trusting that each one of us will be awakened in our God-given gifts and callings in a fresh way and begin to serve one another and make a difference in our city.

Gifted by God

Introduction

What kind of a people are we becoming?

What do we want CCA to look like? (Modelled on Jesus – loving and serving others)

1. Our mindset as we consider the fact that we are gifted by God:

Romans 12:1-6 NKJV

¹ I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

³ For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.

⁴ For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function,⁵ so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. ⁶ Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith;

Background: Using our gifts to serve

V1 Offer ourselves / present our bodies as a living sacrifice

V2 Think completely differently to the world.

- Not self-seeking: This is our worship; this is doing **God's will**
- We are not here for self; we are here to serve (God and people)

V3 Mindset: I am not better than anybody else (Attitude: not puffed up; sober, clear – I see others; Action: God has given each one a measure of faith.)

V4 We don't all have the same function; all different

- **We're not supposed to all be doing the same thing.**

V5 Gifts are given to make the body functional. (They are not personal; they are not useful in isolation.) Gifts are reciprocal – you need me and I need you.

If we believe this, unity will always be maintained! We are **one body; members of one another...**

I have an obligation towards you. (I must understand this; you can't use that fact to compel or manipulate me.)

V6 Gifts differ according to the grace that has been given

- We are gifted differently: love it; celebrate it!
- God has given gifts and grace to every one of us.

Let's consider some myths that these myth-busting truths expel:

Myths:

- I am not gifted
- My gift is not important
- I don't need you / your gift
- My gift is mine / it belongs to me / it is for me
- My gift disqualifies me - from serving elsewhere (where I can or where I really want to help) E.g. **Can't help in any mercy ministry, because I scored a bit low on the gifts test.**
- My gift excuses me – from serving elsewhere (**where I really don't want to get involved**)
- Before I can exercise my gift, I need to be appointed by the church in a ministry position.

Truths:

- God distributes gifts. Thank Him for yours!
- Worship Him as the gift -giver
- Use what He has given you; add to it; allow it to be multiplied

2. Our understanding of some different ways in which God has gifted us:

A closer look at the gifts mentioned in Romans 12 by Paul

Romans 12:6-8 NKJV

⁶ Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; ⁷ or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; ⁸ he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

Seven 'motivational gifts' or 'grace gifts'. These are part of who we are / how we tick / what motivates us to engage in life and in lives around us. **These seven gifts illustrate what he's just said:**

i. P R O P H E C Y Prophecy / perceiving / insight / proclamation:

"The Spirit-given ability to proclaim the word of God with clarity and to apply it to a particular situation with a view toward correction or edification."

This carries a connotation of interpretation in the form of revealing, manifesting, showing forth, making known, and divulging vital information.

The extraordinary ability to discern and proclaim truth.

The definition of 'perceiving' could be the ability to quickly and accurately discern good and evil and the ability to reveal truth for understanding, correction, or edification.

The focus here is not exclusively on speaking for God, but also interpretation.

NLT - Speak out; AMP - **Speak God's message to His people**

Prophecy 'in proportion to your faith'; activate your faith; use your gift!

ii. SERVING (NKJ - MINISTRY)(NLT - SERVE WELL)

This word carries with it the meaning of 'to aid' or 'to assist'. It can be interpreted as the God-given ability to identify the unmet needs involved in a task and to make use of available resources to meet those needs and help accomplish the desired goals. This is not one-on-one or person-centred but task-oriented.

This serving does not imply a position of low status for the one performing the service—rather, status is not related to this gift of service.

The "server" chooses to serve - rather than having no option but to serve. Included in this is:-

Hospitality: Romans 12:13 and 1 Peter 4:9-10

The practice of welcoming, sheltering and feeding others with no thought of personal gain; sharing what we have and who we are with whomever God sends.

Administration: 1 Corinthians 12:28

The Spiritual Gift of Administration defined: Steering the body toward the accomplishment of God-given goals and directives by planning, organizing, and supervising others. Weymouth translation uses Administration here in Romans 12 – instructing the person to 'exercise sound judgment in his duties'

Serving – use this gift in your serving – serve!

iii. TEACHING

This word means to instruct, clarify, illuminate, simplify, and to illustrate for the sake of communication and understanding. Another definition of teaching is the extraordinary ability to discern, analyse, and deliver information and truth so that others will learn.

Teaching – teach! Teach well! Use your gift!

iv. ENCOURAGING

This word has two parts to it: one is "a call," and the other is "companionship." Together they mean to be 'with' and 'for' another. Exhortation is the ability to call forth the best in others through encouragement and motivation. It implies the God-given ability to minister words of comfort, consolation, encouragement, and counsel in such a way that others feel helped and healed.

Exhortation / encouragement – exhort! NLT - Be encouraging! Use your gift!

v. GIVING

This word means to give over, to share, or to transfer; **"Giving a part of or giving a share"**.

The definition of this kind of giving is the God-given ability to understand the material needs of others and then meet those needs generously, with **'frankness, sincerity, and liberality'**. There is a simplicity in this giving – giving with no strings attached. Simplicity implies single-mindedness or integrity.

The concept embodied by this gift is the giving/sharing of what one has with others [in a manner that is neither in secret or with reluctance]. This is similar to the 2 Corinthians 9:7 **concept of a "cheerful giver." This gift in operation implies a "cheerful giver."**

Giving – do it with liberality! NLT - Give generously. Use your gift!

vi. RULING / LEADERSHIP

This word means to be put in front of, or to be placed as the head of; or to take a position of standing over one.

This gift can be defined as the God-given ability to set goals in accordance with God's purpose for the future and to communicate these goals to others in a way that they harmoniously work together for the glory of God.

Being set in a position of authority implies governing; leadership; administration; management; **piloting; although that is not all strictly in the definition of the word...** It is simply **'one who has authority'**.

Diligence is encouraged, while in the prevailing Roman culture aggression and expediency were considered to be virtues (power and no morals; purely self interest and corruption); that is not how Christ taught us. It is beautiful when lived out in the Christian way – no self-interest.

Leadership – lead with diligence! NLT Take the responsibility seriously! Use your gift!

vii. MERCY

The word for mercy is derived from a word which means "to have compassion on." The definition of mercy is the extraordinary ability to feel and to act upon genuine empathy for others who suffer distressing physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual pain.

The gift of mercy is the God-given ability to feel genuine empathy and compassion for individuals, both Christian and non-Christian, who suffer distressing physical, mental, or emotional problems and to translate that compassion into cheerfully done deeds.

Showing mercy was common in the Roman first-century church and was honoured for the **"freedom" and the "authenticity" of the act. The measure of this gift is in its "cheerfulness". Do it gladly!**

Mercy – show mercy with cheerfulness! NLT - Show kindness! AMP - Care for others! Use your gift!

3. Some discovery time regarding the way God has gifted you:

[Refer to the gifts test]

Summary:

Paul's main point in this passage is to bring absolute clarity regarding our approach to giftings received from God:

He says: Use your gift and do what you do with excellence; do it well!

Do it actively; do it wholeheartedly; do it enthusiastically; do it consistently, be committed! Do it well! Do it with excellence!

Use your gift!

Important Reminder:

Lesson to be learned:

Let's be careful that we do not pigeon-hole the use of spiritual gifts into specific ministry positions. A spiritual gift can be used in a paid or a volunteer position. A spiritual gift can be used by someone with or without a title, in a recognised ministry position or not.

Concluding remarks taken from 1 Peter:

1 Peter 4:9-11 NKJV

⁹Be hospitable to one another without grumbling. ¹⁰As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. ¹¹If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

- Use your gift to serve one another
- Pride disregards the body. **It says: I am better / I don't need you.**
- **Use your gift as a good steward of God's grace on your life.**
- Recognise the multiple dimensions of His grace given to others.
- Recognise that it is His ability at work through you.
- Make sure that God gets the glory for what is accomplished.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. **What myth are you believing that is hindering you from serving in Jesus' body, if any?**
 2. How has God gifted you in terms of the Romans 12 grace gifts? **If you're not sure, do the test to help you clarify how God has gifted you.**
 3. **If you're not using these gifts to serve others, in what ways can you use them in your current environment?**
 4. Challenge: Pray and ask God how you can serve someone with your gifts this week.
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