

## Right Thinking in Using Spiritual Gifts

### Introduction

- We should willingly serve the Lord – mind/body (Rom. 12:1-5)
- The HS produces unity in diversity to edify body (1Co. 12:1-7)
- Ministry of sp. gifts in love edifies the body (1Co. 13:1-7)
- NT emphasizes the use & motives, not description of sp. gifts

### I. Thinking About The Body of Christ

#### A. We are collectively the body of Christ (12:27a)

*Each local congregation is the body of Christ with everything necessary to function as a church – “Now you are the body of Christ”. It was present in Corinth & is present in StL area (TCC) to physically **represent** Jesus on earth...*

#### B. We are individually members of the body of Christ (12:27b)

*Each individual believer (regardless of age, gender, race or status in life) is a member of the body of Christ. Each believer has a **personal responsibility** to function in the church the way Jesus intended. *No single church member (body part) has any **significance** apart from the rest of the body (eye, ear or foot on a table = rebel teacher, preacher or usher). No single church member can **survive** apart from the rest of the body (eye, ear or foot ...). [v. 12-26]**

#### C. God selected & placed members in the body (12:18,24,28a)

*The makeup of the body (membership) has been carefully designed by God Himself – sovereignty. No one is a member by chance, luck or simply human will. God is at work in our mind, thoughts & meditations to affect our decisions (Phil. 2:13). Jesus claims us as His church (Mt. 16:18).*

#### D. God organized the body orderly & with purpose (12:28)

*The functions, ministries & special abilities of each member in the body are also carefully designed by God. Every ministry & spiritual gifts has a specific purpose & orderly design – “**first**”, “**second**”, “**third**”, “**then**”...*

### II. Thinking About Spiritual Gifts

#### A. The higher gifts (12:28a-c, 31a) = 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>

*The first 3 gifts or functions are listed in historical order & in order of their role in edifying the church:*

- *Apostles – specific reqmts. (1Co. 1:1; 9:1; 2Co. 12:12). They proclaimed, taught & recorded direct revelation from God = NT (Ac. 2:42; 2Tim. 3:16; 2Pe. 1:20-21)*
  - *Prophets – men that verbally revealed the will & purpose of God in specific situations (Ac. 11:27-28). **Eph. 2:20***
  - *Teachers – men called & gifted by God to teach the apostles’ doctrine (Ac. 13:1; Eph. 4:11-12).*
- #### B. The lesser gifts (12:28d-) = “**then**”
- *Miracles, gifts of healing – address physical & spiritual illness & other needs*
  - *Helping – special ability from God to understand & assist people in need (only place used in NT)*
  - *Administrating – to steer or guide; leadership in church (only place in NT)*
  - *Various kinds of tongues – spontaneous & unlearned languages from the HS [exalted at Corinth, humbled here]*

### III. Thinking About Exercising Spiritual Gifts

#### A. No spiritual gift dominates the church (12:29-30)

*The answer to these rhetorical questions is “NO”. This means that no church member is a spiritual superstar & no particular gift makes a member spiritual – tongues! There is diversity & interdependence in the body of Christ.*

#### B. Earnestly desire the higher gifts (12:31a)

*“earnestly desire” – ζηλώω = to strive after & exert oneself. “the greater gifts” are the ones best edify & build up the church not the individual (14:4,5,12). Humility in ministry – seek the good or benefit of others (Phil. 2:3-4).*

**ILL:** *Motherhood is becoming less desirable in our culture; considered the lower road. The higher road is a professional career outside the home. Yet none of us would be here if mothers had not considered us more important than themselves; our natural families more important than themselves...*

**APPL:** *The same is true in the body of Christ. We must always consider the good or benefit of the church & not simply personal benefit; consider the progress of the gospel & not simply our personal sacrifice or even loss. Humility in ministry is really the high road in ministry...*

## CONCLUSION

So then my brothers/sisters can you have confidence that God has selected & placed members here at TCC? Are you confident that we have the spiritually gifted people to be a fully functional church? Are you confident that you are a member of the body of Christ here & we need you as much as you need us? I hope that you will consider these truths & realities and commit yourself to strive after ways that build up other church members; earnestly look for ways to love & edify the Christian that lives in your home, sits behind you here or across from you... Jesus loves His church; he suffered & died for His church; there's no better plan than His church. Let's love & serve Jesus as we love & serve one another!

If you are not a Christian, there is only one way to become a member of the body of Christ. **You must believe that Jesus is your savior; He suffered & died for you. The gospel...**

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