

discipleship essentials

Essentials for Spiritual Leadership
Leader's Guide

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

LESSON 6: SPIRITUAL GIFTS IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

INTRODUCTION

This lesson is part of a Discipleship Essentials module titled Spiritual Gifts. The module examines a broad range of spiritual gifts mentioned in Scripture, and how believers can use these gifts in serving God and His people. Participants will be given guidance in how to identify the spiritual gifts they and others around them possess. They will be encouraged to put their gifts into practice, in fulfillment of God's purposes, by serving each other and worshiping in spirit and in truth.

INTENDED AUDIENCE

The intended audience for these lessons is Christians who are maturing in their faith and desiring to serve God sincerely. The lessons will also benefit church leaders who wish to encourage people in their Christian service, and identify spiritual gifts in those they are discipling.

The Leader's Guide is intended to help you as a leader in your preparation. These lesson outlines may be used in conjunction with other Discipleship Essentials materials found online at www.discipleshipessentials.org.

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SPIRITUAL GIFTS

LESSON 6: SPIRITUAL GIFTS IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

PURPOSE

The purpose of this lesson is to explore how the spiritual gifts interact with one another within the local Church.

LEADER'S NOTE

It is a beautiful thing that spiritual gifts are given to individuals, and those individuals are given as gifts to the local Church. Spiritual gifts are meant to be used in community to bless one another, and for the growth and health of the Church. If your participants spent time praying before meeting together, each one would be blessed. And can you imagine the extent of God's blessing if everyone in your local Church desired, prayed for, and nurtured their spiritual gifts? If your participants are still unsure of what their particular gifts are, help them to discern this. The accompanying worksheet may be of some help. It can be given to participants in advance of this lesson or as an assignment.

INTRODUCTION

Select two or three of the following questions to ask the group.

- ❖ Think back on the spiritual gifts we have studied. Can you think of two or three that complement each other, or one that is needed for the other to be successful in accomplishing some task?
- ❖ What are some of the things that keep people from working together in unity? How can we in the Church guard against these things?
- ❖ The Almighty God can do anything He desires, and yet He often chooses to work through ordinary people. Why does He do this?

STUDY

Instruct the participants on the following points

TEACH

- ❖ **Spiritual Gifts in the Local Church:** While we may feel very ordinary and unexceptional, each of us has been given gifts to bless one another. This is the beauty of the body of Christ. God grants us the joy and privilege of sharing our gifts with each other! At any moment, the words that come from our mouths can be used to heal, encourage, give direction, delight, or speak truth to people in need! Our actions can be blessings that grant life-changing understanding of who God



is and how He loves us. To not use our gifts, and not be open to what God wants us to give others, is to miss the riches of Christian fellowship.

- **The Common Good:** When each of us knows our God-given gifts, we become aware of our responsibility to the body of Christ. These gifts contribute to a vital interdependency of all members of the Church. We need one another to accomplish the work before us. Each of these gifts are entrusted to individuals who, though far from perfect, are given the responsibility to guard, nurture, and effectively put them to good use. For this reason we must all be in unity with other believers whenever possible (read 1 Corinthians 12).
 - The end goal of all the gifts is the common good of the Church (vs. 7).
 - We are members of the body of Christ which is made up of many members (vs. 14, 27).
 - If a spiritual gift is not used, the Church is like a human body missing a function (vs. 17).
 - We all need one another (vs. 21).
 - We are not to dismiss any gift as 'less honorable', but rather to honour and protect one another (vs. 22-26).

- **Orderly Conduct:** When these gifts are used properly, it is like a healthy body with all its functions in order. The members of a church must work together in unity for a common purpose in order to achieve God's will. Two feet must work together with the legs, knees, and other parts of the body in order to walk. So it is with those using their gifts. This is possible though the Holy Spirit who empowers every gift! 1 Corinthians 14 tells us:
 - When people speak in tongues in a public gathering, only two or three should speak at one service, and only one at a time (vs. 27).
 - A person may only speak in tongues in public when there is an interpreter (vs. 28).
 - Prophecies should be carefully monitored by mature believers so they do not supersede the authority of the Word of God (vs. 29-33).
 - We can understand from this that whenever gifts are used, they should not cause confusion, but be used peacefully and in harmony with one another (vs. 33, 40).

- **Unity:** Working together in unity is echoed in many places in God's Word. It is clearly God's desire that we work *with* one another rather than against one another. This is an area where individuals and groups of Christians can be spiritually attacked, and we must be vigilant not to let disunity seep in. Discuss the following verses:
 - Psalm 133:1
 - Ephesians 4:1-15
 - 1 Peter 3:8

**ASK:**

From these passages, why must we use our gifts in an orderly fashion? What are the consequences if we don't? (Especially consider those visiting, or outsiders learning about the Church.) What structures are in place in your local Church to allow for orderly conduct?

TEACH:

- ❖ **Eagerly Desiring the Gifts:** When we are given the Holy Spirit at salvation, we receive at least one gift to use. The Bible points to some people being given more than one gift and, in fact, encourages us to desire more gifts for the good of the Church.
 - **Each One Has a Gift:** 1 Corinthians 12:7 states that “to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good”. The verses below explain that the Holy Spirit gives different gifts to different people, including supernatural ability or speech. Therefore, no one who has the Spirit of God is left without a gift to use!
 - **No One Has All the Gifts:** We must remember that while each one has a gift (and some may have more), no one has all the gifts. If that were so, we would not need to rely on one another to encourage unity within the Church. By God's design, we are only given part of what is necessary for the whole work of the Church to be done! (See 1 Corinthians 12:17-20.) Even if we have been given a remarkable gift with great power, we still need the other members of the Body.
 - **Praying for Additional Gifts:** There is some evidence in the Bible that we can pray for gifts that are lacking, and God may choose to give them if we're asking for the good of the Church and in response to needs. We might be moved when we see an obvious need, and pray for wisdom. God has promised in James 1:5 to give us wisdom, but He may choose to send someone to us with the gift of wisdom. We are often told to pray for what we need – resources, discernment, etc. However, we must always remember that it is God, not us, who chooses to bestow spiritual gifts. The gifts we are given will become more effective as we mature in our faith. As we use what we are given, God may choose to give us more.
 - o 1 Corinthians 12:31
 - o James 1:5
 - o 1 Corinthians 14:13, 28
 - o Luke 19:12-27
- ❖ **Honouring Gifts in Others:** There is evidence in the Bible that we can pray for God to bless another believer with a gift. This is depicted in several verses that describe 'laying on of hands' (placing your hands on another person as you pray for them).
 - This rite is often seen when a special gift or office is given to someone in the Bible, or a special blessing is conferred. It is a public act or symbolic gesture of community in which a spiritual gift is recognized and honoured in another person, and they are set apart for a special ministry. It also can take place when some believers desire God to bless, use, or heal someone. It holds no power in itself. God alone gives gifts. Some examples in Scripture are:



- o Acts 6:1-6
- o Mark 6:5
- o Acts 13:2-3
- o 1 Timothy 4:14
- o James 5:14
- o Acts 8:17

❖ **Putting the Gifts into Practice:** Each one of us who belongs to a Church community will find many ways to serve. When we are serving in an area of our giftedness, the work becomes fulfilling, joyful, and almost effortless! This doesn't excuse us from the ordinary work all Christians are called to, but if we are not serving in an area of our giftedness, we are lacking a blessing and withholding a blessing from the world!

- Worship services, missionary activity, ministries and programs should be structured so that as many people as possible can serve in their area of giftedness. The goal is unity and mutual support where no one is left without a place to serve.
- From time to time we may all serve in areas which are not specifically our area of gifting, just because the work needs to be done.
- We must continually guard against:
 - o thinking that our gifts are superior and make us special in some way.
 - o using our gift for selfish purposes rather than with love.
 - o denying that any of the gifts have a place in the service of God.
 - o not relying on one another.
 - o not choosing to find opportunities to use our gift.

TASK:

Divide participants into small groups. Give each group the task of envisioning an area where Christians must work together (worship service on Sunday, theological school, ministry centre, missionary team, etc.), and write down a scenario where as many people as possible could use their gifts. Have them present these to the entire group.



DISCUSSION

- ❖ What is something you learned from this module on spiritual gifts that will change how you serve God in the future?
- ❖ Do you see any of the gifts as more desirable than others? What happens when we place greater importance and value on some gifts than others?
- ❖ How can you encourage your Church to be accepting of all the spiritual gifts, and give people opportunity to use them? What would it look like if they did?
- ❖ What is one thing you will do this week to nurture, or 'fan into flame', the gifts given to you?

PRAYER

Close the lesson in prayer. Praise God for His work in the lives of your participants over the course of this module, helping them to see and use their gifts for His glory. Pray that they will remember what they have learned, and use it to bless, encourage, and teach others. Pray that all the participants would "have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind" (1 Peter 3:8).

HOMEWORK

If you have participants who are still not clear on their spiritual gifts, have them take the attached worksheet and prayerfully consider what God is saying to them. It assumes the participants have copies of the gift charts in the previous lessons; you could provide copies for them if you have not already done so. They will have to consult with people who know them, and may need someone to help them interpret the results.



WHAT ARE MY SPIRITUAL GIFTS?

Answering the following questions may help you determine your spiritual gifts if you are not already sure of what they are. Remember that gifts will allow us to be fulfilled and fruitful, and will be confirmed by others. When this chart is completed, prayerfully consider the answers and go over them with a spiritual mentor or pastor. Ask God to reveal to you your spiritual gifts, and then find ways to develop and use them.

| | |
|--|--|
| 1. In what areas am I already serving in my local Church? | |
| 2. What functions of the Church am I most passionate about? | |
| 3. What are my motivations for serving – what do I want to do? | |
| 4. What brings me a great amount of joy? | |
| 5. I feel close to God when I am ... | |
| 6. I feel burdened to pray for... | |
| 7. What gifts do the above answers suggest? | |

| | |
|--|---|
| 8. Our personality and temperament sometimes point to our gifts. For each pair, circle your answer: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ I prefer to: work independently work with others ➤ I enjoy: working with my hands thinking or speaking ➤ I would rather: support my leader lead others ➤ I like to: work behind the scenes be front and center ➤ I am drawn to: those within the Church outsiders | What spiritual gifts do your selections suggest to you? |
|--|---|

9. For the next section, ask people who know you well or who have served with you, to identify where God has gifted you. List their name and the gift or gifts they identify in you. Confirmation from others is very important in identifying spiritual gifts!

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Name: _____ Gifts: _____ _____ _____ | Name: _____ Gifts: _____ _____ _____ | Name: _____ Gifts: _____ _____ _____ |
|---|---|---|

10. Read through the description of each spiritual gift. What gifts are things you do and say?

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| 11. From the above information, what are your spiritual gifts? | 12. How can you use these gifts? |
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