

## Gifts of the Spirit

### Basic principles

- Derived from grace – charis-mata – expressions of God’s love and mercy, and point to his deeper grace
- Given by Christ – they are all Jesus’ gifts. Eph 4:7ff – some have tried to separate the gifts in Eph 4 as distinct from the rest (and given specifically by Christ) – they are the leadership gifts, but this is a false division. 1 Cor 12 makes clear that these other gifts are rooted in confession of Jesus as Lord (v3), in our baptism into Christ (v13) and ultimately expressions of body of Christ (v12)
- Therefore all come from the same Spirit (1 Cor 12:4-6,13)

### Three purposes

**to serve and grow church** v7 (need spiritual gifts and not just natural)

**so that everyone plays their part** v14 – community and everyone valuable (v15ff)

**to accelerate discipleship** – integral part of following Jesus but exercising gifts often grows people personally in exercising them and also recipients – I’ve seen years of struggle dealt with in a few minutes, or a word of encouragement set people on a new course that changes their life

### What are the gifts?

3 passages – 1 Cor 12, Romans 12, Ephesians 4 (‘leadership gifts’) – not exhaustive, but enough!

- Full list on page 3 of this handout
- Accompanying bible passages on page 4

### Some comments:

**Assumes they are being practised** and will continue to be practised (didn’t die out or get restricted to a certain group of people)

**Don’t create a false division between natural and supernatural** – some of these natural ones can be ‘supercharged’ by work of Spirit, and likewise the ‘supernatural’ ones can feel remarkably normal

**Don’t confuse gifts with culture.** Avoid parodies of how to use them – not about emotion or creating a particular atmosphere

**Distinguish between ‘people gifts’ and ‘things’** – APEST tend to be longer term callings, but we can all exercise the others at various times.

**It’s about letting God work** – fear of losing control – but notice what Paul says in 1 Cor 14 ‘the spirits of prophets are subject to the control of prophets’. It’s not sort of brainwash or letting something take over our minds – we are fully involved with God as he is at work.

That said, it does require a bit of faith – if we pray for God to reveal things we have to trust what comes into our minds

**They work best together** – example of ‘eye’ – word / share / leader / person / pray-er / healing and testimony – at least 4 gifts (knowledge, wisdom/discernment, faith, healing), and several people all involved. Gifts accelerate discipleship and build the kingdom.

**Test everything!** Use your mind, evaluate with others

**Only judge it by the fruit** – but we won’t know that for a while!

And finally, and most importantly – **have a go!** You can read books on theory of music but at some point you’ve got to pick up a musical instrument and blow, or hit keys etc. You can study sport in the classroom but at some point you can’t play football until you’ve stood on a pitch with 22 others and kicked a ball around.

What’s the worst that could happen? God is gentle, but he is also able to make sure that He works according to His will to bear fruit.

## A LIST OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS MENTIONED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

### From Romans 12

1. **Prophecy** – to receive and communicate an inspired word from God – usually for a particular person/people for a particular time/season. Can be visual as well as verbal, and never contradicts Scripture, though it may not always reference Scripture directly.
2. **Service** – to be understood as practical selflessness in all its forms (see mercy as a separate gift below)
3. **Teaching** – the ability to explain Scripture and faith in a way that helps others to grow
4. **Encouragement** – ability to draw alongside people to support, strengthen or comfort; the capacity to have a particular word of blessing at a particular time
5. **Generosity** – an unusual capacity to give to others
6. **Leadership** – the ability to recognise and communicate God's purposes and vision, and to accomplish them through the motivation and direction of a group of people
7. **Mercy** – responding compassionately to the needs of others

### From 1 Corinthians 12 (in addition to the above)

8. **Wisdom** – unusual capacity for insight or understanding, the ability to get to the heart of a problem and see a way through it
9. **Knowledge** – usually known as a 'word of knowledge' which distinguishes it from wisdom or prophecy. A specific piece of information or insight given by God to speak to a particular person
10. **Faith** – to do great or unusual things
11. **Healing** – to be instrument by which God brings supernatural healing
12. **Miracles** – to be an instrument by which God does something not achievable within the 'laws of nature'
13. **Discerning of spirits** – insight into the spiritual roots of things, which includes knowing when God is speaking or at work, and when He is not
14. **Tongues** – speaking in a language unlearned – originally another human language, more commonly nowadays a 'heavenly' language
15. **Interpretation of tongues** – the capacity to interpret an unlearned language
16. **Apostles** – pioneers, those sent by God to start things, usually in 'new territory'
17. **Helps** – general term for particular acts of service – related to 'service' in Romans 12, but distinguished by the sense of particular help at a particular time
18. **Administration** – literally 'directions' (the word refers to the rudder on a ship – not noticed but vital!) – related to leadership, but reflects the practical organising element rather than vision and communication

### From Ephesians 4

*The leadership gifts which 'prepare God's people for works of service' – also distinguished as being 'offices' i.e. describing people rather than things, and therefore usually reflect longer-term 'life callings'*

*Apostles*

*Prophets*

19. **Evangelist** – the ability to impart the good news of Christ to not-yet-believers in such a way that they are able to respond in faith. The 'reapers' (as opposed to the sowers and keepers)
20. **Pastor** – literally 'shepherd' – the ability to nurture and care for God's people

*Teacher*

### From other New Testament passages

21. Celibacy (1 Cor 7:7)
22. Voluntary poverty/ (1 Cor 13:3)
23. Martyrdom (1 Cor 13:3)
24. Hospitality (1 Peter 4:9-11)
25. Missionary (Eph 3:1-9) – closely related to apostle/evangelist

## Key bible passages in full

### Romans 12:1-8

**12** Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God – this is your true and proper worship. <sup>2</sup> Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will.

<sup>3</sup> For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you. <sup>4</sup> For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, <sup>5</sup> so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. <sup>6</sup> We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is **prophesying**, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; <sup>7</sup> if it is **servicing**, then serve; if it is **teaching**, then teach; <sup>8</sup> if it is to **encourage**, then give encouragement; if it is **giving**, then give generously; if it is to **lead**, do it diligently; if it is to show **mercy**, do it cheerfully.

### 1 Corinthians 12:1-13

**12** Now about the gifts of the Spirit, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed. <sup>2</sup> You know that when you were pagans, somehow or other you were influenced and led astray to dumb idols. <sup>3</sup> Therefore I want you to know that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, 'Jesus be cursed,' and no one can say, 'Jesus is Lord,' except by the Holy Spirit.

<sup>4</sup> There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. <sup>5</sup> There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. <sup>6</sup> There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work.

<sup>7</sup> Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. <sup>8</sup> To one there is given through the Spirit a message of **wisdom**, to another a message of **knowledge** by means of the same Spirit, <sup>9</sup> to another **faith** by the same Spirit, to another gifts of **healing** by that one Spirit, <sup>10</sup> to another **miraculous powers**, to another prophecy, to another **distinguishing between spirits**, to another speaking in different kinds of **tongues**, and to still another the **interpretation of tongues**. <sup>11</sup> All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.

<sup>12</sup> Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. <sup>13</sup> For we were all baptised by one Spirit so as to form one body – whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free – and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. <sup>14</sup> And so the body is not made up of one part but of many.

<sup>27</sup> Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. <sup>28</sup> And God has placed in the church first of all **apostles**, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, of **helping**, of **guidance**, and of different kinds of tongues. <sup>29</sup> Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? <sup>30</sup> Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? <sup>31</sup> Now eagerly desire the greater gifts.

### Ephesians 4

<sup>7</sup> But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it... <sup>11</sup> So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the **evangelists**, the **pastors** and teachers, <sup>12</sup> to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up <sup>13</sup> until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

<sup>14</sup> Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. <sup>15</sup> Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. <sup>16</sup> From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.