

## **“SPIRITUAL GIFTS: SERVING GIFTS.”**

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**First Christian Reformed Church**

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**Scripture Text: I Peter 4:7-11; Romans 12:6-8**

### **Introduction.**

Using Peter’s summary outline, last week we looked at nine speaking gifts and this week we consider nine serving gifts. Again this week, I have pulled from several resources for the definitions, characteristics and cautions I’m about to share so there is nothing completely original here (C. Peter Wagner, *Your Spiritual Gifts*; Erik Rees, *SHAPE*; Paul Ford, *Unleash Your Church*; David Hocking, *Spiritual Gifts*; Al Vander Griend, *Discover Your Gifts*).

All these definitions, characteristics and cautions will be on the church web page tomorrow afternoon, or just ask me for a copy and I can e-mail one or print one out for you.

Keep a running tab as we go through these, yes, maybe, no, and at the end see if any stand out.

These nine gifts “serve” the church or enable God’s work by providing structure, organization, and support in both spiritual and practical areas. Many of them are about putting others first or meeting the needs of others so they are free to exercise their spiritual gifts.

There is some similarity and overlap, but I will try to distinguish between them. Also remember that many of these gifts are commanded of all of God’s children. The difference for some is they have a special enabling or anointing and do their gift above and beyond what is normally expected, or more freely or more frequently or more effectively than the rest of us.

### **The Serving Gifts, enabling God’s work.**

#### ***Helping/Serving (helps, service)***

**Romans 12:7** if service, in our serving

**I Corinthians 12:28** then gifts of ... helping

**I Corinthians 12:15** they have devoted themselves to the service of the saints.

The Spirit-given special ability given to some to serve and strengthen the body of Christ by identifying unmet needs in the Body of Christ and beyond, and to use whatever resources necessary to practically meet those needs; and by offering others assistance in exercising their spiritual gifts. People with this gift...

## Helping/Serving Characteristics:

- Enjoy and seek out ways to serve behind the scenes and without public recognition.
- Rejoice in the success or fruitfulness of others.
- See what needs to be done often before others do, are detail-oriented and offer practical solutions.
- Look for ways to be of assistance to others and find great joy in freeing others from responsibilities so that they can exercise and share their spiritual gifts.

## Helping/Serving Cautions:

- Have difficulty saying “no” when asked to help, even when you have things you need to do.
- Easy for you to become overextended physically and/or emotionally.
- Easy to feel abused or taken for granted if not affirmed in your support role.
- Take too much ownership in helping others or don’t let others help.
- Devalue your contribution to the Lord’s work, and don’t see your service as being a spiritual gift.

These people are absolutely essential to the life of the church. They are the ultimate team players of Christ's church. They see the value of serving in support of those up front.

## *Hospitality*

**I Peter 4:8-9** Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins. 9 Show hospitality to one another without grumbling.

**Romans 12:13** seek to show hospitality.

**Romans 16:23** Gaius, whose hospitality I and the whole church here enjoy, sends you his greetings.

The Spirit-given special ability given to some to serve and strengthen the body of Christ by providing others with a warm and welcoming environment for fellowship and graciously making guests and strangers feel at home. People with this gift...

## Hospitality Characteristics:

- Are known for making those around you feel valued, cared for, loved and welcomed.
- Look for those individuals who may go unnoticed in a crowd and make them at ease.
- See your home as God's property, given to them expressly to make others feel welcome.
- Promote fellowship among others wherever you are.

## Hospitality Cautions:

- May not see your gift as “real” or “spiritual.”
- Can cause stress in family relationships where your gift is not shared or understood by other family members.
- May allow others to take advantage of your hospitality, so some boundaries may be needed in exercising this gift.

### *Giving (generosity)*

**Romans 12:8** the one who contributes, in generosity;

**Romans 12:13** Contribute to the needs of the saints.

**2 Corinthians 8:3-4** For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own accord, 4 begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints.

The Spirit-given special ability given to some to serve and strengthen the body of Christ by freely, joyfully and sacrificially supporting and funding various kingdom initiatives through significant personal and material contributions above and beyond the tithe expected of all believers. People with this gift...

### Giving Characteristics:

- Plan and purposely give over and above the 10 percent tithe, in order to see God's kingdom advanced.
- Find great joy in giving and take a strong personal interest in causes or people needing help.
- Generally prefer that your donations remain anonymous or low-profile.
- Strategically seek out ways to increase your resources, in order to contribute more for God's kingdom work.
- See your resources as tools for God's use and recognize God's ultimate ownership of everything.

### Giving Cautions:

- Pride in your generosity; or try to gain influence or position through your gifts.
- Your own family may be neglected if you give too much away.
- You can become critical of how others spend money or expect others to give like you do.
- You may be misled into giving to causes which do not further the cause of Christ.

### *Mercy*

**Romans 12:8** the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.

**Luke 6:36** be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.

The Spirit-given special ability given to some to serve and strengthen the body of Christ by ministering to those who suffer physically, emotionally, spiritually, or relationally, with love, care, compassion, empathy and kindness that translates into cheerful acts of service that alleviate the suffering. People with this gift...

Mercy Characteristics:

- Are a “love-in-action” kind of person who is drawn to opportunities to practically meet the needs of others.
- Are one who is patient with those who are sick or in need; even outsiders and outcasts.
- Tend to place the needs of others ahead of your own.
- Grieve with those who grieve.
- Are most fulfilled when visiting people in need -- in hospitals, nursing homes, prisons, orphanages, villages, or wherever God directs you.

Mercy Cautions:

- You may be too protective of the person you are caring for, or without realizing it, may identify too strongly with someone who is hurting.
- You may base decisions more on emotion rather than reason.
- You may be critical of people who appear less sensitive to others.
- You may have difficulty saying no to a need even when you should.

## *Faith*

**I Corinthians 12:9** to another faith by the same Spirit.

**I Corinthians 13:2** faith to move mountains.

The Spirit-given special ability given to some to serve and strengthen the body of Christ by stepping out in faith in order to see God's purposes accomplished, having extraordinary confidence, trusting God to handle any and all obstacles along the way. People with this gift...

Faith Characteristics:

- Welcome risk for God, even in the midst of enormous difficulties.
- Are energized by variables.
- Are challenged by ideas most see as impossible and trust God to work in supernatural ways.
- Have great God-confidence in your ventures for the kingdom.
- Willing to move out of faith even when others are not.
- Are often characterized by a passionate prayer life.

Faith Cautions:

- You may exercise faith without love.
- You may be impatient when others are more timid or careful.
- Because of blind faith, you may set up yourself or others for failure.
- It's possible you may be stubborn and unyielding instead of willing to listen to counsel.

### ***Administration***

**I Corinthians 12:28-30** then gifts of ... administrating

**Titus 1:5** This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you.

**Acts 6:1-7** Deacons

The Spirit-given special ability given to some to serve and strengthen the body of Christ by effectively organizing resources and people, enabling them to work together in order to efficiently reach ministry goals and long range plans. People with this gift...

Administration Characteristics:

- Are effective organizers of people and projects.
- Are known for having specific plans to achieve clearly defined goals.
- Naturally delegate tasks, making it possible to accomplish more for God's kingdom.
- Seek decision-making opportunities.
- Understand what needs to be done for dreams to become a reality.

Administration Cautions:

- May view people through the filter of "task completer" rather than as a person.
- May be unresponsive to suggestions and changes in plans you have made.
- May not communicate explanations or specifics of the process to team members.
- Rely more on plans instead of the Spirit and prayer.

The gift of administration is like a navigator on a ship, they plot the course, or like a musical composer, they put together all the parts of the music for the orchestra to play. These are the people who carry out the vision of the church by putting the details into a plan of action.

***Leadership (ruling, governing)***

**Romans 12:8** the one who leads, with zeal.

The Spirit-given special ability given to some to serve and strengthen the body of Christ by providing overall vision and direction, stimulating spiritual growth, applying strategies, and achieving success where God's purposes are concerned. People with this gift...

#### Leadership Characteristics:

- Exhibit a tendency toward huge visions for God and the ability to inspire others to work toward accomplishing those visions for his glory, and to bless others.
- Are naturally drawn into leadership roles and naturally grasp the “big picture.” You are able to see the final results of major undertakings well in advance.
- Find it easy to motivate people – both individually and in teams – to work together in achieving goals for God's kingdom.
- Are able to let go of responsibility and delegate it to others who are qualified.

#### Leadership Cautions:

- You may become insensitive to individuals carrying out the details of the vision because of focus on the big picture, or get too far ahead of the people being led.
- You can be dominate or demanding, making the project more important than the people.
- It's possible to become prideful. You may forget you don't have all the details of the vision.

#### *Shepherding/Pastor*

**Ephesians 4:11** And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers.

**John 21:17** Jesus said to him, “Feed my sheep.”

**I Peter 5:2-3** Shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; 3 not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock.

The Spirit-given special ability given to some to serve and strengthen the body of Christ by taking long-term spiritual responsibility for a group of believers, watching over, caring for, feeding and equipping, admonishing and discipling them toward spiritual maturity and to live Christ-centered lives. People with this gift...

#### Shepherding Characteristics:

- Are good at developing personal, trust-based relationships.
- Enjoy serving others and look for opportunities to do this.
- Willingly give time to meet others needs or help them with spiritual issues.
- Provide spiritual protection and nourishment to God's people over an extended time, taking interest in their spiritual welfare and watching over their souls.

- Believe that people take precedence over projects, more people focused than task focused.

#### Shepherding Cautions:

- You may have difficulty saying “no” to others or take on too much responsibility, often at the expense of your own family or close friends.
- You can become indecisive because of the strong desire to be sensitive to others; or be so sensitive that you don’t confront people who need admonition.
- It’s possible to be too protective of people and create a situation where people become dependent on you.

You can be a shepherd among God’s people without being an ordained pastor. Elders do this, small group leaders do this. Even husbands and fathers can function with this gift toward their family.

Some ordained pastors don’t have the gift of leadership, they are not big picture types but caring shepherd types. And there are leaders of churches who don’t have shepherding/pastoring type gifts. Each needs the other type around them to help them minister and lead effectively.

Finally having the spiritual gift of pastor doesn’t automatically qualify you to be an ordained pastor in a church. I Timothy 3 and Titus 1 list qualifications that focus on character and spiritual responsibility.

#### *Creativity/Craftsman*

**Exodus 28:3** You shall speak to all the skillful, whom I have filled with a spirit of skill, that they make Aaron's garments to consecrate him for my priesthood.

**Exodus 31:3-5** I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with ability and intelligence, with knowledge and all craftsmanship, 4 to devise artistic designs, to work in gold, silver, and bronze, 5 in cutting stones for setting, and in carving wood, to work in every craft.

**I Chronicles 25:6** They were all under the direction of their father in the music in the house of the Lord with cymbals, harps, and lyres for the service of the house of God.

The Spirit-given special ability given to some to serve and strengthen the body of Christ by creating artistic expressions that communicate God’s truth and produce a spiritual response through music, drama, visual arts and/or writing skills. People with this gift...

#### Creativity Characteristics:

- Have a particular creative or artistic talent that benefits the body of Christ.
- Are able to use the arts to communicate God’s truth and are able to do things or make things that increase the effectiveness of other’s ministries.

- Use variety and creativity to captivate people and cause them to consider Christ's message
- Challenge people's perspective of God through various forms of the arts
- Demonstrate fresh ways to express the Lord's ministry and message and stimulate appreciation for God and His world.

#### Creativity Cautions:

- Just see your gift as a natural talent and not use it for Christ and His kingdom.
- Use your gift for your own glory and pride.
- Look down on other peoples gifts.

#### **Conclusion.**

Has the Spirit gifted you in any of these ways? Are any of these gifts in you in seed form waiting to be watered and nurtured through small ways of starting to serve for the sake of members of the body? Are there ways God wants you to be a blessing to others because of the gifts the Spirit has given you? It's alright to take baby steps. What's not alright is to keep your gift buried out of fear or feelings of inadequacy or comparing yourself to others. What's not OK is to tear down the body of Christ when the Holy Spirit has given us gifts to build up the body of Christ.

Respond in faith to what the Spirit is doing and step out in faith to what He wants you to do. Pray, ask for help, be humble and be bold in the Spirit.

**I Peter 4:10-11** 10 As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: 11 whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.