

## Making use of the gifts of the Holy Spirit in the congregation

*1 Corinthians 12: 4-7 – There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work. Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.*

Every believer who has given his or her life to Jesus, has received the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit changes us, so that we start producing spiritual fruits; love, joy, kindness, goodness, forbearance, self-control, faithfulness, etcetera. This shapes our character and is absolutely essential.

The Holy Spirit also gives us spiritual gifts. These are supernatural abilities to serve the congregation.

Examples of gifts are: teaching, serving, prophecy, leading, showing mercy, giving, encouragement, wisdom, knowledge, faith.

You can find lists with gifts in: Romans 12:6-8, 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, Ephesians 4:11-12. These are not necessarily all the gifts there are, but they give an impression.

Every believer has at least 1 gift. How can you discover which gift(s) you possibly have?

1. Pray about it, ask God to show you what it is
2. Be prepared to use your gifts. By doing things, you can discover what your gifts are and you can further develop them
3. Learn about it; in the Bible, in the church, by interaction with other believers, by reading good books
4. Check out a few gift tests and see what speaks to you
5. Don't tie yourself down right away, but experiment and assess your effectiveness down-to-earth
6. Ask others for their judgment about you. Which gifts do they see in you?
7. Ask yourself what you find really important in the congregation, or what bothers you, or what comes easy to you, while it seems not so easy to others, or what you miss in the congregation. This can also give an idea of your gifts
8. Most believers are troubled by "gifts projection". That means that they think that everybody should carry out their gift. Take for

example someone with a gift of prayer; that person often doesn't understand why there's little prayer in the congregation. Do you recognise this with a certain gift? Then there is a big chance that you have that gift.

To make a start with experimenting a little bit with gifts, we now take the time to individually fill in the questionnaire: "Building stones of the church" and/or "Discover the church".

When everyone has filled this in, we shall discuss the answers with each other:

1. Who wants to name a gift that appealed to him or her? Can you explain why? Are there people here, that know this person and can confirm or add something about his (or her) gift(s)?
2. Have you already noticed something of a possible gift in actual practice?
3. What, do you think, is the difference between our normal Christian behaviour (for example: every Christian prays) and a spiritual gift (a gift of prayer)?
4. Besides spiritual gifts, every human being also has earthly talents. What do you think is the difference? Can spiritual gifts and earthly talents replenish each other? Is it good to make use of your earthly talents in the congregation as well?

Practical assignment:

Have a look at yourself and the other members of the congregation this month, and think about spiritual gifts. What are the strong points you see in your fellow believers? And in yourself? Which tasks are people doing? How well are they doing it? Do you notice something of God's presence when others perform tasks? Or when you perform tasks?

Further study:

When you want to go deeper in to the subject of spiritual gifts, you can use the work- and study book "The 3 Colors of Ministry" by Christian A. Schwarz. Your course leader can be your mentor, with whom you can talk about your development.

You can also discuss this in the group, where your course leader is your coach.