

Xenos Christian Fellowship
Christian Ministry 3: Moving Into a Ministry Lifestyle
Week 3 – Loving One Another: Spiritual Gifts

Introduction

Given what we learned in Week 1 about giving God’s love away to others, how can we get started in this way of life in our home groups?

Uniformity in Ministry

The ideal is being a TEAM PLAYER who is FUNDAMENTALLY SOUND, and who also makes a special contribution in gifted areas. God has designed each of us uniquely, but also calls on our regular, consistent, and committed efforts in certain areas REGARDLESS OF OUR GIFTS, BURDENS, OR PERSONALITY TRAITS.

What are the areas of ministry uniformity?

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Get involved and stay involved in these areas regardless of your ministry gifting and focus! There is great value in being a ministry “generalist.” What are some of these values?

Diversity in Ministry: Spiritual Gifts

(1 Cor. 12:4-6)** Now there are varieties of GIFTS, but the same Spirit. (5) And there are varieties of MINISTRIES, and the same Lord. (6) And there are varieties of EFFECTS, but the same God who works all things in all persons.

Diversity of GIFTS

Definition of “spiritual gifts”: God-given capabilities to serve others so that they are impacted for and/or built up spiritually in Jesus Christ.

Every Christian has at least one spiritual gift.

(1 Cor. 12:7,11) But to *each one* is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. . . (11) But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to *each one* individually just as He wills.

Note: We should view spiritual gifts as *special areas of aptitude, and not as limits on our capability to serve* (i.e. the evangelist is not the only one to evangelize).

Diversity of MINISTRIES

Definition of “ministry” (in 1 Cor. 12:4-6): The use of spiritual gifts to serve others.

We tend use the word ministry in two ways:

1. Ministry can refer to *what you do*—here, the act of exercising your gift.

2. Ministry can refer to *the sphere in which you serve*—here, the group of people among whom you exercise your gifts in service.

Diversity of EFFECTS

Definition of “effects”: The outcome of our ministries.

Why It Is Important To Discover and Exercise Your Gifts?

1.

(2 Timothy 4:6-8) For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; 8 in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.

2.

3.

4.

(2 Timothy 1:6-9) And for this reason I remind you to kindle afresh the gift of God which was given to you by the laying on of my hands. For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline. Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, or of me His prisoner; but join with me in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God, who has saved us and called us with a holy calling not according to

our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted to us in Christ Jesus from all eternity.

5.

(1 Corinthians 12:14-26) For the body is not one member, but many. 15 If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I am not a part of the body," it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. 16 And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I am not a part of the body," it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. 17 If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? 18 But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired. 19 And if they were all one member, where would the body be? 20 But now there are many members, but one body. 21 And the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you"; or again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." 22 On the contrary, it is much truer that the members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary; 23 and those members of the body, which we deem less honorable, on these we bestow more abundant honor, and our unseemly members come to have more abundant seemliness, 24 whereas our seemly members have no need of it. But God has so composed the body, giving more abundant honor to that member which lacked, 25 that there should be no division in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another. 26 And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.

Ways to Discover Your Spiritual Gifts

The New Testament does not reveal how to discover our spiritual gifts, so we should beware of relying on tests, inventories or other tools. Instead, God emphasizes certain principles that we live out in the Body of Christ. As we do this, our gifts emerge—sometimes sooner, sometimes later.

1.

2.

(Romans 12:4-11) ⁴ Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, ⁵ so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. ⁶ We have different gifts, according to the grace given us . . . ¹⁰ Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves. ¹¹ Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord.

(Ephesians 4:11,12) It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, ¹² to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up . . . ¹⁶ from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

“Our lopsided teaching on gifts has resulted in a lot of overspecialization, especially in the West . . . Some people spend most of their time exercising their primary gifts . . . But the impact of this person may be less than hoped for. To impact people we need more than technical excellence. We need depth-producing frustration that comes out of an incarnational lifestyle lived among the people we serve. *We should use our gifts out of a lifestyle of caring for people.* We should do a little of a lot of things and also try to give time to work on our areas of giftedness.”¹

3.

*“Christian workers must specialize out of a generalist background. That is, while they do many different types of ministries, they also take time to exercise their special gifts.”*²

4.

¹ Ajith Fernando, *The Call To Joy & Pain* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2007), p. 130.

² Ajith Fernando, *Jesus Driven Ministry* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2002), p. 223.

Flowing from the first four active steps, the next four steps are reflective:

5.

6.

7.

8.

Summary & Conclusion

Embrace a serving lifestyle, trusting in God's love (WEEK 1). Become sound in ministry "fundamentals" in the context of your home group. Seek increasing clarity on your spiritual gifts, and faithfully use those gifts as an important part of your stewardship in the church. This will result in a meaningful and fulfilling way of life that glorifies God!

Memory Verses

(1 Cor. 12:4-6) Now there are varieties of GIFTS, but the same Spirit. (5) And there are varieties of MINISTRIES, and the same Lord. (6) And there are varieties of EFFECTS, but the same God who works all things in all persons.**

Assignment

Read Rom. 12-15. Identify and record all "one another" or "each other" phrases in these chapters. For each phrase, give an example of when you did this for someone else or when someone else did this for you.