



Body of Christ: We each have a part to play (Gifts)

Alan Cottenden, Christ Church Bedford, 9 Feb 2025



The body of Christ

Paul likens the Church to a human body in which the various parts are:

- **Interdependent**... each both giving to - and receiving from - the rest of the body. (1 Corinthians 12:12)
- Not **independent**... each doing their own thing without reference to the rest of the body. (1 Corinthians 12:21)
- Not **dependent**... receiving but not giving.
(Contrast individualism and consumerism.)



It's all about God...

- The body of Christ (the church) is God's idea (Romans 12: 4-8), his chosen tool to grow his kingdom in the world.
- He gives us gifts to do the job. (1 Cor. 12:4)
- And provides us with the power to use them. (1 Peter 4:11)
- For his purposes (1 Cor 12:5-7) and to his glory. (1 Pet 4:11)
- Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. (1 Peter 4:10)



A servant heart and mind

- Motivation: "We love because God first loved us." (1 John 4:19). An attitude of gratitude.
- "Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not people..." (Ephesians 6:7)
- "In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus... he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant... (Philippians 2:5&7a)
- Stewards of God's gifts with servant hearts and minds ask, "What do you have for me to do here, Lord? How can I help?"



Servanthood 101

- Serve **one another** humbly in love (Gal 5:13)
- Spur **one another** on towards love and good deeds (Hebrews 10:24)
- Encourage **one another** & build **each other** up (1 Thes 5:11)
- Live in harmony with **one another** (Romans 12:16)
- Be kind and compassionate to **one another**, forgiving **each other**... be patient, bearing with **one another**. (Ephesians 4:2)
- So in everything, **do to others what you would have them do to you**. (Matthew 7:12a)



Against this backdrop...

- “Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.” (1 Corinthians 12:7)
- “Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.” (1 Peter 4:10)
- God doesn’t make gift-less people.
- Use what you have.
- It’s for service.



Gifts in Romans 12:4-8 and 1 Corinthians 12:7-11

Neither list is
exhaustive,
nor are other
gift lists in
scripture.

- Prophesying (R,C)
- Serving (R)
- Teaching (R)
- Encouraging (R)
- Giving (R)
- Leading (R)
- Showing mercy (R)
- Wisdom (C)
- Knowledge (C)
- Faith (C)
- Healing (C)
- Miraculous powers (C)
- Distinguishing between spirits (C)
- Speaking in tongues (C)
- Interpreting tongues (C)



Gifts in Romans 12:4-8 and 1 Corinthians 12:7-11

Scripture
teaches
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that these
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- Serving (R)
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- Wisdom (C)
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- Speaking in tongues (C)
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Getting started & keeping going

- Gifts are to equip us to serve; not rewards to earn or badges to collect!
- Be an active “one-anotherer”.
- Cultivate a servant heart and sensitivity to the Holy Spirit.
- Risk a toe in unfamiliar water! Enjoy the adventure!
- Gifts are not born fully-formed: they have to be developed.
- Exercise the gift you (think you may) have. Draw on others.
- Work at spotting and appreciating other’s gifts. Home groups.
- Keep going!