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## *GOD'S DIFFERING GIFTS / STEWARDSHIP OF TIME AND TALENT*

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## I. God's Differing Gifts

1 Cor. 12:4-11 Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.

The Church is the Body of Christ and the characteristic of a healthy body is that every part in it performs its own function for the good of the whole; but unity does not mean uniformity, and therefore within the Church there are differing gifts and differing functions. Each is a gift of the same Spirit and designed for the good of the whole.

All special gifts come from God and they must be used in God's service. The fault of the Church today is that it interprets special gifts far too narrowly. It has too often acted on the assumption that special gifts which it can use consist of things like speaking, praying, teaching, writing – the more or less intellectual gifts. It would be well if the Church would realize that the gifts of the man who can work with his hands, are just as special gifts from God. The mason, carpenter, electrician, painter, engineer, plumber all has their special gifts, which are from God and can be used for him.

Paul list some special gifts so we learn about the work of the early Church.

**Word of Wisdom** and **word of Knowledge** sound very like each other. Wisdom – “the knowledge of things human and divine and of their causes.” The highest kind of wisdom comes from communion with God. Knowledge – is the knowledge which knows what to do in any given situation. It is the practical application to human life and affairs. The two things are necessary – the wisdom which knows by communion with God the deep things of God, and the knowledge which, in the daily life of the world and the Church, can put that wisdom into practice.

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**Faith:** The faith which really produces results; not the intellectual conviction but the passionate belief in a thing which makes a man spend all that he is and has on it. It is the faith which steels the will of a man into action; faith which turns the vision into deeds

O God, when the heart is warmest,  
And the head is clearest,  
Give me to act;  
To turn the purposes Thou formest  
Into fact!

**Gifts of Healings:** Healing miracles were commonplace in the early Church. If a Jew was ill he went to the Rabbi rather than to the doctor; and he would most likely be healed. People went to temples, usually spending whole nights, and often they were healed.

The gifts of healing did exist in the early Church. There is an instruction that if a man is ill he must come to the elders and they will anoint him with oil (Jas. 5:14). The Church never really lost this gift of healing; and in recent times it has been somewhat rediscovered. For too long the Church split man into a soul and a body. It is good that in our time we have once again learned to treat man as a whole.

**Working of Miracles:** In the early church often all illnesses, and especially mental illnesses, were attributed to the work of demons; and one function of the Church was to exorcise these demons. Exorcism is still very much a reality in the mission field; and at all times it is the function of the Church to minister to a mind diseased and disturbed.

**Prophecy:** Sometimes translated as preaching. The prophet is a man who lives so close to God that he knows his mind, heart, and will, and can make them known to men. His function is twofold. (a) He brings rebuke and warning, telling men that their way of action is not in accordance with the will of God. (b) He brings advice and guidance, seeking to direct men into the ways God wishes them to go.

**The ability to distinguish between different kinds of spirits:** It is necessary to distinguish between what comes from God and what comes from the devil. When a thing is outside our ordinary orbit, it is supremely difficult to tell if it is from God or not. The principle to observe is that we must always try to understand before we condemn.

## ***GOD'S DIFFERING GIFTS***

***The gift of tongues and interpretation of tongues:*** The matter of tongues caused a great deal of perplexity in the Church at Corinth. A highly coveted gift due to the direct influence of the Spirit of God. Sometimes the person so moved could interpret his own outpourings, but usually it required someone else who had the gift of interpretation. Paul was aware that the gift of tongues had its dangers; and still have.

The picture we get is of a Church vividly alive where astonishing things happened. There was nothing dull and ordinary about the early Church. Paul knew that all this vivid, powerful activity was the work of the Spirit who gave to each man his gift to use for all.

## **II. What is Stewardship of Time and Talent?**

Stewardship is the wise and responsible use of special gifts God entrusts to us. The believer's talents are not to be laid up for self, but laid out in service (Matt. 25:14-46 Parable of the Talents).

**Time** – it is a priceless period of opportunity which we can use to fulfill our life's potential.

**Talent** – each of us is given different abilities that we can use to benefit one another. It is up to us to recognize and develop these talents. “As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.” (1 Peter 4:10)

## **III. Why is Stewardship Important?**

- Because our lives have real meaning only when we use our gifts in accordance with God's will.
- Our fulfillment lies in responding obediently to God's purpose for us, and making full use of the gifts our Lord has given us.
- As Christian stewards we can
  - develop our full potential as human beings.
  - show our gratitude for God's many gifts.
  - grow spiritually and become more like Christ.
- We learn more about God, ourself and our fellow Christians through sincere and active services.

## IV. Opportunities for Using Your Time and Talents

There are many ways you can use your time and talents. Put God at the center of your life, and use the blessings given to you to fulfill the divine plan for you and for the world (Matt. 6:33).

- Helping people realize their full potential.
- Witnessing – Spreading the gospel of Christ so that people can hear the good news of salvation.
- Grateful Worship is the first response to God's love and care.
- Develop your life:
  - pray at home
  - be active in church affairs
  - develop fellowship
  - join prayer groups
  - attend prayer and praise services

All congregations need active stewards: people who give not just their money but themselves.

## V. Stewardship Beyond the Church.

- As a steward, you are called upon to serve not only in the church, but in the local community.
- You can serve by helping in your community for example, you can work with the young, the sick, the elderly, the handicapped, etc.

**Think about the abilities you have been given. Give thanks and gain fulfillment by using your time and talent to serve God.**

## **QUESTIONS – GOD'S DIFFERING GIFTS / STEWARDSHIP OF TIME AND TALENT**

### **FILL IN THE BLANKS**

1. What are differing gifts and talents designed for? \_\_\_\_\_

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2. List 3 of God's special gifts? \_\_\_\_\_

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3. What is the twofold function of the prophet? \_\_\_\_\_

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4. What do we have stewardship of? \_\_\_\_\_

5. Is stewardship important? Why? \_\_\_\_\_

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6. What kind of stewards does the church need? \_\_\_\_\_

7. Where should all our special gifts be used? \_\_\_\_\_

8. Think about your special talents. How can you serve the church?

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