

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

Many people are unsure of their spiritual gifts. Yet 1 Corinthians 7:7 reminds us that every Christian 'has their own gift from God; one has this gift, another has that'. Here is a practical way to begin to explore which gifts(s) God has given you.

LOOK UP

Ask God to show you what your gifts are. Be prayerful as you consider your gifts, and flexible as you explore his leading.

LOOK BACK

Think about the past. Where would you identify God's blessing on you? Where have you seen unusual fruit in ministry? What have you enjoyed doing as a Christian? What have you found energising? When have you heard other people mention you're good or 'gifted' at something?

LOOK IN

As you look into yourself, what do you feel passionate about? What really excites you? If you were guaranteed success, the resources and gifts to achieve it, what one thing would you most like to do for God?

LOOK AROUND

As you consider your church, what are its needs? What openings are there for exercising your gifts? Do any of these opportunities interest/excite you even if you don't feel qualified or skilled? If you could choose one area of involvement in your church, what would it be? Then ask if you can have a go at some of these things as a way of experimenting with whether you have a gift.

LOOK AT

Read through a list of spiritual gifts from the Bible. The one below is not exhaustive, but may act as a good starting point. Using a pencil assess yourself on each one as follows:

A=definitely my gift

B=possibly my gift

C=unsure whether this is my gift or not

D=definitely not my gift

Leave the list a few days and then see if you agree with your initial assessment. Change where necessary.

LOOK OUT

Ask other people to suggest what they think your gifts are. Choose some people who know you well, and choose some who only know you a little. Be sure they are people who want the best for you. Encourage them to be honest and truthful. Give them a copy of the list below and invite them to assess your gifts.

Talk to your mentor about your findings, and once you've gained some clarity be sure to use the gifts God has given you. They are not trophies for the mantelpiece but tools for the job. Often the best way to discover whether you have a gift or not is to experiment, to have a go.



**GROWING
LEADERS**

GIFT	MAIN EMPHASIS	DESCRIPTION	BIBLE REFERENCE	YOU	OTHER
ADMINISTRATION	To organise	The person with this gift is able to organise information, plans and projects. He or she can work efficiently in the body of Christ for a particular task.	1 Corinthians 12:28		
APOSTLE	To perceive the big picture and pioneer new things	This gift enables a person to see the overall picture of how the purposes of God can best be furthered, normally leading to pioneering an initiative or providing what is lacking in an existing one. Adept at making decisions, envisioning outcomes, investigating new initiatives.	Ephesians 4:11		
DISCERNING SPIRITS	To discern whether something is from God	This gift is used to discern whether a person ministering in God's name is really acting out of another source, human or satanic.	1 Corinthians 12:10		
EVANGELIST	To effectively communicate the good news to people who aren't Christians	Whilst all Christians are called to share in evangelism and to communicate their faith in appropriate ways at appropriate times, the person with the gift of an evangelist will frequently and naturally talk about the gospel with non-Christians and will often see them coming to faith in Jesus Christ and becoming full members of the church. The gift may be used in one-to-one settings, in evangelistic groups or in preaching, it may be used locally or itinerantly or in missionary use abroad.	Ephesians 4:11		
EXHORTATION	To encourage others	This gift leads to encouragement, comfort, confrontation, challenge and instruction through the application of scriptural truth, leading to growth in faith, hope and love.	Romans 12:8		
FAITH	To confidently trust in God for particular things	This is not the same as saving faith (which all Christians have and which is given by God) but is a special faith that a need or needs within the Christian community will be met, according to God's purposes and for the growth of his people.	1 Corinthians 12:9		

GIFT	MAIN EMPHASIS	DESCRIPTION	BIBLE REFERENCE	YOU	OTHER
GIVING	To determine physical needs and provide physical resources	Giving money or resources responsibly is part of normal Christian life but the person with the gift of giving has a special ability over and above what is required of the average Christian and will do so with 'liberality and cheerfulness'. The person with this gift may not possess the resources, but is motivated to pray and to see that the needs are met.	Romans 12:8		
HEALING	To call on God to heal supernaturally	This gift brings God's power to bear on sickness, be it emotional, physical, or mental.	1 Corinthians 12:9, 28		
HELPS	To aid others	This gift is a remarkable ability to work alongside another and help that person complete the task God has given them, through a whole variety of practical service.	1 Corinthians 12:28 Romans 12:7		
INTERPRETATION OF TONGUES	To interpret an unknown language	This gift enables a person to understand and communicate the meaning of an unknown language, often in corporate worship.	1 Corinthians 12:10		
KNOWLEDGE	To know God's way forward	This gift enables a person to discern, both through spiritual and practical means, God's insights into a particular situation that leads to a proper course of action. It may be exercised to help individuals or churches as a whole.	1 Corinthians 12:8		
MERCY	To empathise with those who suffer	The capacity both to feel sympathy with those in need (especially those suffering and miserable) and to manifest this sympathy in some practical helpful way with a cheerful spirit so as to encourage and help those in need.	Romans 12:8		
MIRACLES	To call on God to do supernatural acts	A miracle is 'an act of God intended as evidence of his power and purpose'. This gift is to be distinguished from the gifts of healing. Biblical examples are Peter's dealings with Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5 and Paul's with Elymas in Acts 13:4-12.	1 Corinthians 12:10, 28		
PASTOR	To care for the growth of believers	The pastor cares for the spiritual needs of a group and oversees their growth in Christ through modelling maturity, nurturing faith, protecting from error and teaching the faith.	Ephesians 4:11		

GIFT	MAIN EMPHASIS	DESCRIPTION	BIBLE REFERENCE	YOU	OTHER
PROPHECY	To correct	The capacity to deliver in public a truth (of a predictive nature as well as a situational word) from God in order to exhort, edify or console believers and to encourage non-believers of God's truth.	1 Corinthians 12:10 Romans 12:6		
LEADERSHIP/RULING	To set a vision for others and motivate others to fulfil it	The capacity to discern God's vision for a group of people and to exercise influence so as to lead the group towards the fulfilment of that vision.	Romans 12:8		
TEACHING	To understand and communicate the truth of God in a clear and relevant way	The gift of teaching enables members of the Christian community to learn effectively. It may be used in large groups, small groups or with individuals. It may be verbal or it may be used through written material; it may be didactic teaching or it may be more participative.	Romans 12:7		
TONGUES	To speak an unknown language	The capacity spontaneously to give a message from God in unknown words to a group of people, to enhance the worship and help build up the Christian community. It needs to be accompanied by the gift of interpretation. It can also be used in private prayer.	1 Corinthians 12:10		
WISDOM	To discern God's way forward for complex situations	The capacity to know the mind of the Spirit in a given situation and to communicate clearly the situation, facts, truth or application of facts and truth to meet the need of the situation.	1 Corinthians 12:8		

How Do We Use Our Gifts? (1 Corinthians 12)

We are called to use our gifts in a way that glorifies the giver, builds the body and extends the kingdom.

- **Remember the source** 'There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them' (1 Corinthians 12:4). We can't boast or be proud, we can only humbly and gratefully receive them as gifts.
- **Develop a right attitude** 'There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord' (1 Corinthians 12:5). Gifts are not about status but about service. Sadly churches are riddled with people seeking status, which is why we must model ourselves on the servant character of Christ.

- **Recognise your dependence on God** 'There are different kinds of working...' (1 Corinthians 12:6). Each gift is given through grace and used in God's strength. That's why Paul only ever boasts about his weakness.
- **Focus on the common good** Gifts are not about self-glorification but building the body (1 Corinthians 12:7-11).
- **Function as a body** Verses 18-20 are a watershed in the passage. Verses 14-16 identify the problem of those who downplay their gifts, verses 21-24 the problem of those who deny others' gifts. Verses 18-20 stress the interconnectedness of the body, welded together by love. We need everyone to use their gifts if we are to function well as a body.