

Jobs in Church - part 2

1 Cor 12: 1-11

John 14: 15 - 21

Jesus promises the holy spirit - he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever — the Spirit of truth.

So what's it for? Well lots of things, but Jesus asks us to be Christians - and he will help us - you won't manage it on your own.

What will the Holy Spirit bring us?

Lots of things - but also gifts. Which Gifts.

List in Corinthians -

Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.

To each member of the congregation - to all of us - a part of the spirit to help us be the body.

To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom,

to another a message of knowledge

faith

gifts of healing

miraculous powers,

prophecy,

Discernment

speaking in tongues,

interpretation of tongues.

Some people are scared of spiritual gifts. People are scared of what they don't know, what they can't control. Scared of the supernatural. Even though, we're a church, this is basically what we do - supernatural. Remember Jesus? But listen- the Holy Spirit is a gentleman. The holy spirit is not into carnival tricks, or crowd hysteria. Humans use those things when they don't trust god or they want to use the things of god for their own ends.

The true work of the holy spirit, is gentle, kind, and will never go beyond what you can cope with.

And a word about tongues - you may pray in tongues, you may have this gift.

You may be frightened silly and think of people babbling and making strange noises and think its all in their head.

Well, remember the gifts are always under the control of the person - so you can always ask them to stop! But tongues is a wonderful gift, a great help to people praying, and in fact Paul says a lot about when they should and shouldn't be used in public.

But here's the thing - the word tongues, is the greek - glossolai - which means - languages. So actually its the gift of languages.

So why am I talking about Gifts of the holy spirit when we're thinking about jobs in church?

Because we are thinking about where has god called me to be in this church? Why has called me to be here?

What's his purpose - is it to serve teas and coffees, or pray with others, or mow the churchyard...

One way is to look at the all the jobs and go - that's need doing.

One way is to get jumped on - we need you to do this

One way is to think what gifts god may may have given you to help with teh work - or what gifts do I need, what do I lack to do the job.

So what are the Spiritual Gifts that the Holy Spirit brings?

Theres' several lists - Roman 12, 1 Cor 12, Eph 4, where gifts of the holy spirit are listed.

apostles, prophecy, evangelism, teaching, knowledge, preaching, miracles, healing, serving, leading, administration, tongues, generosity, faith, mercy

Some gifts mentioned in all the lists - prophecy, or teaching

Some mentioned in several lists - healing, tongues

Some mentioned in only one - preaching and faith.

The fact that the lists don't agree, and have more or less gifts leads most theologians and Christians to think that these aren't the only dozen or so gifts the holy spirit dispenses.

I would think there are hundreds or thousands of spiritual gifts -

I know straight away - looking at the list - some gifts you want more than others. I would pray for a church full of generous people - that would be great! I don't think you'd ask for the gift of mercy, because that would mean you have to forgive people all the time!

There's not much explanation around these gifts - just the one greek word! Does the Gift of healing refer to doctors as well as pray as people that pray for healing? If someone is healed when you pray does that mean you have the gift of healing, or the gift of miracles? Or is miracles something different.

How come people go on about prophecy or tongues - as if they're great gifts, when no one mentions administration - surely a gift that keeps on giving?!

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Prophecy is misunderstood to mean fortune telling - or predicting the future. In the bible prophecy means being god's mouthpiece - brining messages from God. So telling the king he shouldn't mistreat the poor, telling the religious leaders they are selfish and not obeying god, or telling the people to repent before something bad happens. Prophecy was not a popular profession - most ended up in jail or killed. Prophets are not welcomed in church these days, because their truth can cause a lot of upset.

But how do you know they're telling the truth. Lovely bit in the old testament where one of the kings of Judah is asking the prophets if he should go to war, and they're all like - yeah yeah - and then the true prophet says - they're lying! God said don't do it. And there's this battle between teh two.

Maybe that's why one of the gifts that's mentioned is the gift of discernment of gifts - to know which gift is which and maybe which gift is true and which is false.

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They're gifts - God gives us - we don't earn them, they're not a reward.

They are not better than each other - there's not a hierarchy - well some people would like to do that - oh preaching is a much better gift than administration - but ask the person who the administrator pays!

They can be in different degree - you can have more or less of a gift.

They can have variety - not all preaching looks the same.

You can have more than 1

They are generally for life - once given you will always have it.

They are not age dependent - child or nonagenarian - everyone's eligible

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What makes them spiritual - as opposed to human?

Is someone just a good talker, or do they have a spiritual gift?

God gives all sorts of gifts and talents - acting, writing, singing, woodwork, flower arranging, sewing - its endless, you can say that we've all got loads of gifts - and we can choose to use them or now.

But I'd say that spiritual gifts are different -

Most of those other things seem to grow and develop as we do, adn you pick them up and gradually learn, master the craft, adn when you get older you might not be able to do them as well.

The spiritual ones seems more like - you've been given it.

Like you couldn't do it before, and now you can
Like you can't do it in your human strength -
When Peter preaches - literally someone comes to faith, they hear God.
Peter and John say to lame man - get up and walk - and he does!
That's a spiritual gift.

(Or tongues - its not a modern languages degree!)

Its also spiritual becuase its do with faith, and god and our spirit.

The gift of serving isn't just about clearing tables, its about clearing tables in such a way that points people to god.

And if you don't think that's possible then you've not seen the gift.

But I hope you have seen that some people can play and sing, and that's lovely, maybe amazing, it might be a gift - but a spiritual gift - someone plays and sings and leads worship - and its not about the singer, but people can feel god's presence. (Matt Redman story) - thats a spiritual gift.

So why am I telling you about this, with reference to jobs in church!

What's this got to do with us, Simon?

Becuase I believe that God wants to give everyone here a spiritual gift, if you haven't got one or two already. These are gifts from God's holy spirit - to give to this church, to help us be the church. To help us pray, to love our neighbours, to give us wisdom.

Each one of us have a gift - look in your handbag, your coat pocket, your heart.
Have you found yours yet, or unwrapped it?

And if you think wow i've got this spiritual gift but I haven't seen it asked for on the notices.

Then come and talk to me about it!

IF you're not sure if you have one or what it is?

Ask God to show you

Or Ask someone else, ask me, what they think your gift might be?

If you think you haven't got one and want one?

Ask God

Tell him you'll use it.

Remember asking things from God - Jesus said keep asking, keep asking, and keep looking

So to finish...

The church in Corinth, which Paul had to write such lively long letters to - got a bit obsessed with spiritual gifts, and indeed,

its after he's written about all the gifts that Paul says

- now I will show you best way, the most excelled way to be a christian - and he says love is patient, love is kind, and all that.

So whether or not you know your spiritual gifts, or want them or don't want them - the best way is about love.

Beuase alongside the spiritual gifts of preaching or healing or tongues
Are the things that you and me and all of us do,

the universal responsibilities of every Christian, every person in church -

Praying,

giving our money,

trusting Christ,

forgiving others,

sharing our reasons for hope (our stories, our testimony),

serving one another,

being joyful,

encouraging one another.

In the third part of the series, I'll talk about calling, and hearing God's voice.