

LIVING



sent

WEEK EIGHT
Calling All Servants
THE MISSIONARY TASK
Component Four:
Healthy Church Formation

INTRODUCTION

As disciples and disciple-makers, we are called to community and to serve one another. With this community of believers that we are called to serve, God appoints to us all ministries and opportunities for true discipleship. Thankfully, God does not do this without equipping us for that very task. We as his people need to be prayerfully aware of how God has gifted us for ministry and what we can do to be better servants in the ministries and spiritual gifts he has called us to. Without His disciples responding to this call in faithfulness and intentionality, churches, and the community of believers they consist of, become stagnant and unable to have any meaningful sense of spiritual growth. To put it another way, God has equipped all believers for ministry because he has called all believers to ministry.

BIBLICAL MATERIAL

1 Corinthians 12 is probably what comes to mind most often when we talk about being spiritually gifted for the call of various forms of ministry. Paul gives a list of several gifts, both supernatural and not, and also uses an analogy of the human body to describe how they ought to function in the lives of his people. Among those Paul lists beginning in verse 8 are gifts such as wisdom, knowledge, faith, discernment, and tongues. Verse 11 then tells us that it is the Spirit who empowers and “apportions to each one individually as He wills.” While the supernatural gifts may have ceased with the apostles, gifts such as wisdom, faith, discernment and a host of other ways God has equipped us for ministry reveal to us he has purposed us to do his work in his church. Paul’s analogy of the body is certainly a fitting description for the purpose of God’s spiritual gifts to us. These gifts unify us and make the body of Christ function properly.

“...But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it, that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together.”

1 Corinthians 12:24b-26

Ephesians 4:11 also gives us more forms of ministry that God gifts us for such as “evangelist, the shepherds, and teachers” that were given to the church by God, thus showing us that God has intended the “building up of the body” in every place of ministry through His giftings within the church.

How do we know in which way we are spiritually gifted? Galatians 5 gives us insight into this question. As we “walk by the spirit,” Paul tells us that we will “not gratify the desires of our flesh.” Galatians also goes on to tell us that a natural outcome of following Christ will be the “fruits of the Spirit,” which share similarities or can be aspects of the gifts mentioned in 1 Corinthians. As our walk with Christ naturally changes our behavior and affections over time, so it will also naturally reveal to us in what way and in what place God has gifted us. There is not a special kind of prayer, supernatural revelation, or confirmation that we need to search for in another person. We simply walk with Christ, and The Holy Spirit does the empowering and revealing.

MISSIONARY TASK RELEVANCY

John 13 gives us one of the greatest displays of Christ’s call to all of us to be servants through the ministries and gifts he has appointed to us. As Christ said to Peter, “If I do not wash you, you have no share with me.” God’s call on us to be servants is a reflection of Christ’s serving us through both his earthly and spiritual ministry. To refuse to serve through his giftings to us is to refuse to share in the ministry of Christ to his people. How can we say that we are on mission for Christ if we do not minister as he has called us? You are called to serve as he has served us and equipped us for that very task.



This is the true essence of a healthy church, that it “shares in the ministry of Christ” by using his gifts in us to serve others in ministry. This begins on the inside of the church that the church may be able to truly serve those outside of “the body.”

LIFE APPLICATION

1. Should we concern ourselves with understanding and knowing our spiritual gifts?
2. What examples can you point to of people exercising their spiritual gifts? In what ways did it coincide with their service and/or ministry?
3. Consider Paul’s analogy of the spiritual body to the physical body. Does this analogy help you understand God’s purpose for his call and gifts among his people to ministry? If so, how? And what other analogy might also serve to properly illustrate the healthy formation of the church?
4. What did Peter not understand about Christ washing his feet? In what ways do you “tell” Christ not to serve you?
5. Why does it matter that we are called to serve through ministry and spiritual gifts? How does this calling on all of us share in the ministry and mission of Christ?