

Way of Discipleship Small Groups

Leading: Knowing my gifts and talents



Touching base (5 minutes)

Open in prayer as is helpful for your group.

If this is your first session take time to introduce yourselves and set any ground rules you want to for your time together.

If you met previously take the opportunity either as a group or in pairs to check in with each other about how your response from last time has gone.



Opening question(s) (5 minutes)

What gifts do you think God has given you which you can use as a leader?



Understanding the information and optional gifts and talents exercise (25 or 1 hour)

Share these thoughts in your own words or read them together:

Self-awareness is the ability to see ourselves clearly, to understand who we are, how others see us and how we fit in God's world. Research shows that self-awareness leads to greater fulfilment, stronger relationships, more creativity, increased confidence and better communication. Self-aware people are less likely to lie or cheat, perform better at work and lead others effectively.



At least four resources can help us grow in this. Seeing ourselves through the mirror of God's word. We grow in self-awareness through relationships – accountability and feedback at work or in a trusted community. Knowing our shape: The Spirit-inspired grace-gifts or natural, created talents that God is giving us. Our primary fivefold motivation or function. The fullness of Christ's ministry in the world is expressed when five things come together. (This last one is explored in a separate session).

What is the relationship between my talents and spiritual gifts? Talents are created and part of God's common grace to everyone - built into us only by God's work, they are capacities for serving others given us by God. Spiritual gifts are given through a particular anointing of God's Spirit. Charisma means a concrete expression of grace. It can be used to describe God's gracious gifts such as eternal life or marriage or deliverance from difficulty. The plural *charismata* describes those gifts which are given by the Spirit to the people of God for: Building up the church, making His presence and power known. Acts of service. Ministries in the church and world.

The aim of all of these is to **build up the community**. Often spiritual gifts are not permanent but rather **temporary** for building others up. The four main lists in the New Testament (Romans 12: 6-8; 1 Corinthians 12: 7-11, 27-31; Ephesians 4: 11-13; 1 Peter 4: 9-11) are not exhaustive.

Sometimes a spiritual gift seems to be an anointing by God's Spirit of a created talent. For example, giving is something many have the capacity to do but giving with generosity may be an anointed extra inspired by the Spirit. We may have the talent of public speaking, but God's Spirit may anoint that talent to communicate God's truth to others in ways we cannot anticipate.

The first two examples of grace-gifts from the Spirit we read about in the Bible illustrate this well. Joseph is given the ability to interpret dreams by God (Genesis 39-41) – something that could not be a development of a natural talent, but a particular gift. Yet the first person in the Bible who is specifically named as being graced by the Spirit is Bezalel, an artist: "See, I have chosen Bezalel ... and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with wisdom, with understanding, with knowledge and with all kinds of skills - to make artistic designs for work in gold, silver and bronze, to cut and set stones, to work in wood, and to engage in all kinds of crafts." (Exodus 31: 2-5) Here there is a clear sense that there is an overlap between spiritual gift and talent, as well as a wonderful example of the spirit giving gifts for everyday life and callings.

How may I receive and use spiritual gifts and talents? A natural talent might grow through our own effort and practice. Growing in a spiritual gift is much more dependent on how much we are surrendering and trusting in God. We can choose, or not, to exercise and grow in even the more obviously supernatural spiritual gifts. For example, even while miracles or prophecies are totally dependent on God's work, they will rarely happen without our involvement. It is even possible for us to grow in these kinds of gifts through practising them. Another key principle is that this mostly happens with others in a community.

It is really important to know that the gift never defines the person. Nevertheless, in terms of growing healthy churches, encouraging "gift-orientated ministry" is seen as the second most important factor. New Testament lists of gifts are written about in the context of being used for the building up of the church. But in a general sense throughout the Bible God anoints and gifts His people for the wider task of unfolding creation, being a blessing, and seeing His kingdom come. Just as Jesus demonstrated God's gifts in every place, so as the church we are God's temple not only when we are together but when we are dispersed. We are gifted by His grace and spirit for service in the world in the ways we can show mercy to his glory. Just as we see our natural talents and spiritual gifts as overlapping, so they are given for service in the church but also in our neighbourhoods, workplaces, homes and networks.

Discuss: What attitude do we need to grow in our talents and gifts?

Optional: Use the gifts and talents checklist, both to see what the Bible says, and to think about which particular gifts and talents God has given you.

Seeing how it looks in real lives (10 minutes)

Watch the video at:

<https://youtu.be/6srW4QNkBmk>

What struck you as important in the video?



Responding to God's leading (5 minutes)

Give people an opportunity to think about, "What might God be showing me and how might I respond?" They may like to write this down and/or share it with the group and/or share it with one other person. A friendly question is to ask each other, "Is there anything that would be helpful to ask you next time?"



Group prayer (5 minutes)

Take my life and let it be
consecrated, Lord, to thee.
Take my moments and my days;
let them flow in endless praise,

Take my hands and let them move
at the impulse of thy love.
Take my feet and let them be
swift and beautiful for thee,

Take my voice and let me sing
always, only, for my King.
Take my lips and let them be
filled with messages from thee,

Take my silver and my gold;
not a mite would I withhold.
Take my intellect and use
every power as thou shalt choose,

Take my will and make it thine;
it shall be no longer mine.
Take my heart it is thine own;
it shall be thy royal throne,

Take my love; my Lord, I pour
at thy feet its treasure store.
Take myself, and I will be
ever, only, all for thee,
ever, only, all for thee.





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GIFTS AND TALENTS



GIFTS THAT HELP PEOPLE TO BELONG

Hospitality. 1 Peter 4: 9- 10. The ability to make others feel welcomed and bring together all the things that create fellowship either at home, church or in the community.

Mercy. Romans 12: 8. Being able to understand hurt and provide compassionate support to those experiencing distress.

Pastoring. Ephesians 4: 12. Caring for a group of disciples and equipping them.



GIFTS THAT HELP US GROW UP INTO MATURITY.

Encouragement. Romans 12: 8. Motivating God's people to do His will especially when they are discouraged. Bringing out the best in others and challenging them to reach their potential.

Knowledge. 1 Corinthians 12: 8. The ability given by the Spirit to think about, understand and share truths that are useful to individuals.

Teaching. Ephesians 4: 12- 13. Educating God's people by explaining and applying scripture in different ways to different age groups. Timothy was gifted at preaching and teaching.

Wisdom. 1 Corinthians 12: 8. Receiving and offering insights that give God's perspective on life and sharing those in an accessible way. Explaining what is necessary to be done and how it might be done.



GIFTS THAT CELEBRATE GOD'S PRESENCE.

Arts and crafts. Exodus 31: 3- 11. Using creativity to point people towards God, beautifying places of worship and expressing worship in a variety of ways.

Prophecy. 1 Corinthians 14. Sharing messages received from God's Spirit, receiving revelation from God about His will or purpose through the imagination, words, pictures, visions. Leading to a sense of God's presence: "God is really among you".

Worship leading. Leading people into God's presence through music and bringing the church family together in worship.



GIFTS THAT RELEASE GOD'S POWER

Discernment of spirits. 1 Corinthians 12: 10. Knowing genuine from false truth or spirits. Discerning whether the source of what we experience comes from God, ourselves, or satan.

Faith. 1 Corinthians 12: 9. A particular ability to trust God for His purposes leading to the willingness to risk failure, expecting God to handle the difficulties.

Healing. 1 Corinthians 12: 9, 28. In Jesus' name to pray on behalf of people who need physical, emotional or spiritual healing and see God meeting them at their point of need. There are many different varieties of healings.

Intercession. Colossians 1: 9. Praying for the needs of others with intensity and persistence over periods of time and with effectiveness.

Miracles. 1 Corinthians 12: 10. Praying in faith for God to intervene in impossible situations, to respond to the prompting of God to pray in this kind of way, seeing His power work in ways that lead to a sense of awe and wonder.

Praying with my spirit, in tongues. 1 Corinthians 12 and 14. Praying in a language given and understood by God, or by someone who has the gift of interpretation at that time. It particularly helps us when our own words run out either in praise or pain.



GIFTS THAT SPREAD THE GOOD NEWS.

Apostle. Ephesians 4: 11. The ability to pioneer new work, start new churches or organisations and oversee their growth.

Evangelism. Ephesians 4: 11. Communicating the good news of Jesus to people of peace in an attractive way and seeing opportunities to share Christ.

Mission. 1 Corinthians 9: 19- 23. Being able to cross cultural divides for Christ to reach out to not yet Christians or to help disciples from that culture.

Preaching. 1 Timothy 4: 13. Publicly communicate God's word in an inspiring way that challenges, comforts or persuades.



GIFTS THAT SUPPORT THE WHOLE LIFE OF THE CHURCH

Administration. 1 Corinthians 12: 28. Organising people, managing resources, coordinating plans so that goals can be achieved.

Assistance or helping. 1 Corinthians 12: 28. Helping and supporting others so that they can achieve their goals.

Giving. Romans 12: 8. Generously contributing material resources or money so that the church can grow and its mission be developed.

Leadership. Romans 12: 8. Clarifying and communicating purpose and vision, motivating others and enabling the whole people of God to work together.

Service. Romans 12: 7. Seeing unmet needs and taking the initiative to provide assistance without needing to be recognised.



OTHER POSSIBLE ABILITIES AND NATURAL GIFTS

**Art and craft
Catering
Organising and systematising
Composing
Counselling
Working with numbers or data**

**Decorating
Editing
Entertaining
Evaluating
Graphics
Managing
Operating machinery or tools**

**Planning well
Advertising or promoting others
Handling difficulties
Fixing and restoring things
Researching
Welcoming people
Writing**



WHICH GIFTS OR TALENTS DO YOU USE, OR HAVE BEEN RECOGNISED IN YOU?

Gifts that help people to belong

| | | | |
|--------------|-------|-----------|-------|
| Hospitality. | Never | Sometimes | Often |
| Mercy. | Never | Sometimes | Often |
| Pastoring. | Never | Sometimes | Often |

Gifts that help us grow up into maturity.

| | | | |
|----------------|-------|-----------|-------|
| Encouragement. | Never | Sometimes | Often |
| Knowledge. | Never | Sometimes | Often |
| Teaching. | Never | Sometimes | Often |
| Wisdom. | Never | Sometimes | Often |

Gifts that celebrate God's presence.

| | | | |
|------------------|-------|-----------|-------|
| Arts and crafts. | Never | Sometimes | Often |
| Prophecy. | Never | Sometimes | Often |
| Worship leading. | Never | Sometimes | Often |

Gifts that release God's power

| | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------|-----------|-------|
| Discernment of spirits. | Never | Sometimes | Often |
| Faith. | Never | Sometimes | Often |
| Healing. | Never | Sometimes | Often |
| Intercession. | Never | Sometimes | Often |
| Miracles. | Never | Sometimes | Often |
| Praying with my spirit, in tongues. | Never | Sometimes | Often |

Gifts that spread the good news.

| | | | |
|-------------|-------|-----------|-------|
| Apostle. | Never | Sometimes | Often |
| Evangelism. | Never | Sometimes | Often |
| Mission. | Never | Sometimes | Often |
| Preaching. | Never | Sometimes | Often |

Gifts that support the whole life of the church

| | | | |
|------------------------|-------|-----------|-------|
| Administration. | Never | Sometimes | Often |
| Assistance or helping. | Never | Sometimes | Often |
| Giving. | Never | Sometimes | Often |
| Leadership. | Never | Sometimes | Often |
| Service. | Never | Sometimes | Often |

Other possible abilities and natural gifts (Tick which ones apply)

Art and craft

Catering

Organising and systematising

Composing

Counselling

Working with numbers or data

Decorating

Editing

Entertaining

Evaluating

Graphics

Managing

Operating machinery or tools

Planning well

Advertising or promoting others

Handling difficulties

Fixing and restoring things

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Welcoming people

Writing