

Center Grove Presbyterian Church
Spiritual Gifts Class – “Discover Your Gifts and Learn How to Use Them”
Rev. Don Hulsey
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SESSION 6: THE GIFTED COMMUNITY; EMPOWERED FOR MINISTRY

In this FINAL session we will:

- see the church as a **gifted community** that is united, mobilized, and advancing by means of gift ministries.
- understand the need for **empowerment** as a precondition to exercising gifts.
- explore the Spiritual Gifts of Giving, Hospitality, and Intercession
 GIVING was the SIXTH highest rated gift identified for our congregation in our survey in Oct, and HOSPITALITY was the FIFTH highest rated gift.
 The top 6 were: serving, teaching, faith, knowledge, hospitality, giving

The Gifted Community

Romans 12: 4-6a:

- We do not all have the same Spiritual Gifts; each member’s Spiritual Gifts fit in uniquely to the community of believers where he/she belongs. (v. 4)
- Our Spiritual Gifts should work together in our church to form one unique community in the Body of Christ. (v. 5a)
- As members in a unique community of believers we are interconnected; we are interdependent upon each other. (v. 5b)
- Each of us has a different Spiritual Gift Mix that has been given to us by the grace of God. This is determined by God Himself, not us, and it is His gift to us! (v. 6)

1 Corinthians 12: 25-26:

- A gifted community that uses its Spiritual Gifts is a UNITED community. (v. 25a)
- We should look upon each other as each being equally important in the Body. No one is more important than anyone else, regardless of how they are gifted. (v. 25b)
- We should be concerned with each other’s welfare within the Body, not playing favorites to anyone, regardless of their gifts. (v. 25b)
- If we are truly UNITED and using our gifts for the common good of the Body, we should share in each other’s joys and sorrows. (v. 26)

Ephesians 4: 11-16 show us that a gifted community using its gifts is a church community that is MOBILIZED for service in Christ’s Kingdom (v. 12) AND it is ADVANCING or growing in the image of Christ for the good of the church community and for the good of the community outside of the church (vv. 13-16).

In his book, The Problem of Wineskins, Howard Snyder underscores the need for proper regard of Spiritual Gifts in the Church:

“The urgent need today is that spiritual gifts be seen and understood in the context of ecclesiology (the church), as in the New Testament. A biblical understanding of spiritual gifts is absolutely essential for a biblical conception of the church. . . . When spiritual gifts are misunderstood – through being individualized, denied, divorced from community, or otherwise distorted – it is the church which suffers. The church truly becomes the church only when the biblical meaning of spiritual gifts is recovered. A church whose life and ministry is not built upon the exercise of spiritual gifts is biblically a contradiction in terms.”

AN EMPHASIS ON GIFT-CONSCIOUS BENEFITS A CHURCH IN AT LEAST 5 WAYS:

- 1) The church will awaken and mobilize.
- 2) A heightened awareness of gifts will assure the church of better leadership.
- 3) A new spirit of unity will come to the church.
- 4) Churches will be strengthened in evangelism as outreach-oriented gifts are developed.
- 5) As the gifts of shepherding and hospitality function well, new people will become connected to the community quicker AND the Church will grow.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A CHURCH IGNORES SPIRITUAL GIFTS?

- 1) The result is an inactive, uninvolved membership.
- 2) Another result is an overworked minority. (a MERCHANT SHIP vs. a CRUISE SHIP)
- 3) Another result is an unsatisfied community life.
- 4) A lack of conversion growth.
- 5) Overdependence on programs.

Empowered for Ministry

There is ONE THING we must have in order to have a POWERFUL, LASTING, and EFFECTIVE MINISTRY. Do you know what that is?

When we REPENT of our sin AND come to FAITH in Christ, the Holy Spirit lives within us to TRANSFORM us more into the image of Christ, AND He EMPOWERS us for ministry.

2 Corinthians 3:18; Ephesians 2: 8-10; Ephesians 4: 22-24

Consider the following passages from the RESURRECTED Jesus that teach our need for the EMPOWERMENT of the Holy Spirit to MINISTER inside AND outside of the Church.

Luke 24:49; John 20: 21-22; Acts 1: 4-5; Acts 1:8

Jesus made an incredible promise to His disciples just before His crucifixion:

John 14:12; 14: 16-17a; 16:7

We must RELY on and SUBMIT to the Spirit's POWER in order for our ministry to be LASTING and EFFECTIVE, ALL for God's GLORY and not our own!

The Spiritual Gift of GIVING (Romans 12:8)

The special Spirit-given ability to contribute significant personal and material resources to the Lord's work freely, cheerfully, and sacrificially. Recipients of help from Christians with this gift have a clear sense that God has provided, not man.

The Spiritual Gift of GIVING involves responding to a specific need out of a compassionate concern. It may involve giving of SELF or of RESOURCES.

The Spiritual Gift of GIVING does not belong exclusively to high-income people.

The AMOUNT that is given is NOT THE ISSUE. The issue is the HEART-ATTITUDE of the giver. It should be done with overflowing JOY.

Biblical examples of those who were gifted with the Spiritual Gift of Giving:

The poor widow (Luke 21: 1-4); Dorcas (Acts 9: 36-39); the apostles after Jesus' resurrection; Paul (1 Thessalonians 2:8); Jesus (Mark 10:45) - gave Himself as a ransom for many.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SPIRITUALLY GIFTED GIVER

- You find great JOY in giving, and you look for ways to meet human needs by giving of yourself as well as of your material resources.
- You give cheerfully and liberally, often above what is expected.
- You take a strong personal interest in the causes and people you support, and you see giving as a way to minister.
- You are easily moved to give when you become aware of a need or opportunity in people's lives or in God's Kingdom.
- You are willing to make personal sacrifices and maintain a lower standard of living in order to benefit God's work.
- You see money and possessions as tools to serve God, and you regularly set them aside for this purpose.

WAYS TO USE THE GIFT OF GIVING IN THE CHURCH

- Practice giving or your time and talents in ministries of the church to serve others.
- Assist someone financially when you become aware of their REAL need.
- Contribute generously to our Missions Faith Promise funding.
- Go beyond the tithe in giving to the church. This is an "offering" beyond the tithe.
- Teach a stewardship class or encourage others to discover the JOY of giving – both of oneself and of one's resources.
- Give liberally to other Kingdom causes.

The Spiritual Gift of HOSPITALITY (Romans 12:13)

The special Spirit-given ability to love, welcome, and graciously serve guests and strangers so that they feel at home.

One Spiritually Gifted in HOSPITALITY is one who is comfortable entertaining not only friends or relatives but also strangers. Hospitable people are able to make others feel at home in their presence, in their home, or in their church. The comfort of the guest or stranger is a higher priority than their own comfort. Those with this gift truly love hosting others.

Biblical examples of those gifted with HOSPITALITY:

Jesus exercised this gift when He welcomed sinners and ate with them (Luke 15: 1-2), and Jesus challenged His followers to "invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind" instead of focusing exclusively on friends and relatives (Luke 14: 12-14); Lydia (Acts 16:15); according to 1 Timothy 3:2, Elders are expected to show hospitality; Gaius (3 John 1: 5-8).

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PERSON SPIRITUALLY GIFTED WITH HOSPITALITY

- You enjoy providing a haven for guests, and you do not feel imposed upon by unexpected visitors.
- You have a knack for making strangers feel at ease in your home and at church.
- Your home is always open to those in need of hospitality.
- You are sensitive to offer small acts of kindness that made a difference for guests or strangers.
- You tend to be more aware of the needs of guests than of your own needs.
- You have a genuine appreciation for each person to whom you show hospitality.

WAYS TO USE THE SPIRITUAL GIFT OF HOSPITALITY IN THE CHURCH

- Welcome and take an interest in visitors who come to the church.
- Be a greeter or usher.
- Desire to contact by phone those who have visited the church (see Pastor Don).
- Come alongside new people to the church to make sure they get connected to the church.
- Prepare and host our fellowship time between worship and Sunday school.
- Serve on the WIC Hospitality Committee
- Have people over to your home for Sunday lunch
- Be willing to provide lodging and/or meals for guests of the church, such as missionaries or conference speakers.
- Be willing to provide your home to host a Care Group meeting (see your Elder).
- Plan, organize, and host a fellowship event for the church.

The Spiritual Gift of INTERCESSION

The special Spirit-given ability whereby the Spirit enables certain Christians to pray faithfully for extended periods of time with great positive effect for the building of the Kingdom of God.

Intercession is more than verbal requests to God. The one with this Spiritual Gift cannot intercede without becoming somewhat involved in the life of the one for whom they are praying.

Biblical examples of those Spiritually Gifted with the gift of INTERCESSION:

Abraham (Gen. 20:17); Moses (Numbers 21:7); Samuel (1 Sam. 8:6); Elijah (1 Kings 17: 21-22; 18: 42-45); David (many of the psalms); Nehemiah (Nehemiah 4: 4-5); Daniel (Daniel 9); Jesus (all throughout the Gospels, Luke 5:16 says, "Jesus often withdrew to lonely places."); and Paul (seen in many of his letters)

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SPIRITUALLY GIFTED INTERCESSOR

- You consider the prayer requests of others seriously, and you faithfully pray for them for extended periods.
- You wake up in the night with a pressing need to pray for something/someone specifically.
- You pay a price when you pray, agonizing over and identifying with those for whom you pray.
- You are conscious of ministering to others as you pray for them, requesting God's power and grace in their lives.
- You are motivated to pray by an inner conviction that God does things in response to prayer.
- You like to advance the Lord's work through interceding regularly for believers in ministry.

WAYS TO USE THE SPIRITUAL GIFT OF INTERCESSION IN THE CHURCH

- Faithfully intercede FOR those who have requested you to pray and you have indicated that you would pray for them.
- Pray WITH those who have requested you to pray for them.
- Be on the prayer team for a particular ministry – such as the Good News Club, Youth Ministry
- Participate in our Wednesday evening prayer time. A weekly handout is distributed each Wednesday evening with specific current needs of individuals AND each ministry is included at least once each month. Pastor Tony has indicated that the Wednesday prayer time is the second most important time we meet each week – second only to Sunday morning worship. Prayer unleashes God's power that is needed for all of our ministries.

Consider these six suggestions you can do to help you to find your ministry:

1) Pray for guidance and strength; 2) Be sensitive to the needs of others; 3) Focus your efforts in the area of your gifts; 4) Be willing to begin small; 5) Be yourself; 6) Be prepared to give yourself (Matthew 16:24, "Deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow me.")