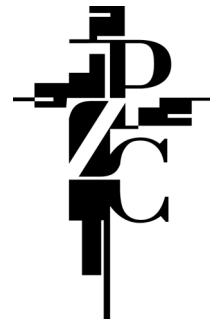


ZPC Inquirers Class

A Closer Look At the Gifts



The Bible nowhere provides precise definitions of the special abilities and gifts that God grants to Christian believers. Nevertheless, the following paragraphs are at least "working definitions" of the twenty gifts that seem to be commonly operative in our church. In each case a verse of scripture is included, either to provide a fuller definition or to illustrate the use of the gift in a Bible character's life.

Administration: The special ability to understand clearly what makes an organization function, and how best to devise and carry out plans that will increase the overall effectiveness of the Church

"Choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them"

(Acts 6:3 -- The Church's first delegation of administrative work)

Counseling: The special ability to listen to and care for those who are struggling in various life situations, and to offer insights and understanding that lead others to personal healing

"Reckless words pierce like a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing"

(Proverbs 12:18 -- Solomon's observation)

Craftsmanship: The special ability to use the hands, mind, and imagination for the construction of tools for ministry, and for the maintenance, care, and upkeep on God's Kingdom on earth

"See, I have chosen Bezalel son of Uri... and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with skill, ability, and knowledge in all kinds of crafts, to make artistic designs... to cut and set stones... to engage in all kinds of craftsmanship"

(Exodus 31:2-5 -- God's word to Moses concerning someone especially skilled to help build the first tabernacle)

Creative Communication: The special ability to use the hands, mind, and imagination to communicate God's truth through a variety of artistic and handcrafted means

"there was a disciple named Dorcas, who was always doing good and helping the poor...All the widows stood around (Peter), crying and showing him the robes and other clothing that Dorcas had made while she was with them..."

(Acts 9:36,39 -- One woman's power to help through her handiwork)

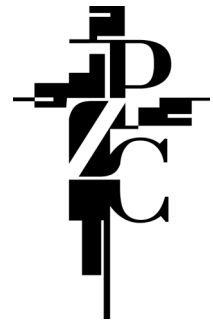
Encouragement: The special ability to comfort, challenge, and affirm those who are disheartened or wavering in their walk with Christ

"...warn those who are idle, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone"

(I Thessalonians 5:14 -- Paul's advice to young Christians)

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A Closer Look At the Gifts



Evangelism: The special ability to share the message of the Christian faith with those who are not spiritually committed so that they respond by trusting Christ and seek to be His disciples

"It was (Christ) who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers...so that the Body of Christ may be built up..."

(Ephesians 4:11,12 -- Paul, on the key role of evangelists)

Faith: The special ability to maintain a consistent trust in God's presence and His ability to provide help and guidance

"Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see"

(Hebrews 11:1 -- Beginning of the Bible's "faith chapter")

Giving: The special ability to contribute material resources to the work of the Lord with unusual enthusiasm, generosity, and joy

"We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If someone's gift is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously"

(Romans 12:6,8 -- Paul's encouragement to gifted givers)

Helping: The special ability to invest one's time and energy in the accomplishment of physical tasks within the Church, and to see spiritual value in doing work that will free others to use their gifts

"I ask you to receive her in the Lord in a way worthy of the saints...for she has been a great help to many people, including me"

(Romans 16:2 -- Paul's comments about Phoebe, the first "deaconness")

Hospitality: The special ability to care joyfully for guests, strangers, or needy people, by providing an open house, food, and warm welcome

"Keep on loving each other as brothers. Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it"

(Hebrews 13:1,2 -- An interesting opportunity for those who open their homes)

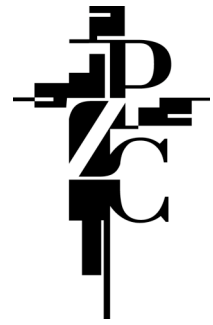
Instrumental Music: The special ability to play a musical instrument to offer praise and thanks to God, and to enhance the worship experience of others

"The trumpeters and singers joined in unison, as with one voice, to give praise and thanks to the Lord. Accompanied by trumpets, cymbals, and other instruments, they raised their voices in praise to the Lord and sang, 'He is good, His love endures forever'"

(II Chronicles 5:13 -- Dedication of Solomon's Temple)

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A Closer Look At the Gifts



Intercession: The special ability and motivation to pray consistently and for extended periods of time, and to see answers to prayer at a frequency beyond that of most other Christians

"...pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective."

(James 5:16 -- First century recognition of the power of prayer)

Knowledge: The special ability to discover, accumulate, and analyze information in an effective way, so that others might grow from the results of such studies

"I myself am convinced, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, complete in knowledge, and competent to instruct one another"

(Romans 15:14 -- Paul's threefold description of Christian maturity)

Leadership: The special ability to set goals consistent with God's desires, and to attract, guide, and motivate other people to accomplish them in an effective way

"Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as those who must give an account..."

(Hebrews 13:17 -- Leadership equated with the skills of shepherding)

Mercy: The special ability to bring genuine concern and compassion to those who are suffering, and to minister to them in ways that are specific, cheerful, and appropriate

"If a man's gift is...showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully"

(Romans 12:8 -- Reminder to combine warmth with "doing the right thing")

Shepherding: The special ability to offer leadership, encouragement, nurture, and care to individuals and groups within Christ's Body as they seek to grow spiritually

"Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers -- not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock"

(1 Peter 5:2,3 -- Bible's description of servant leadership)

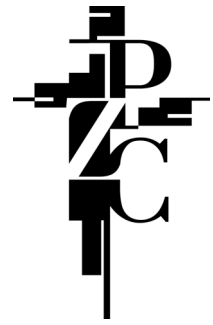
Teaching: The special ability to understand, clearly explain, and effectively communicate the truth of God's Word, so that children and/or adults are willing and able to apply it to their lives

"You know that I have not hesitated to preach anything that would be helpful to you but have taught you publicly and from house to house"

(Acts 20:20 -- Paul's sense of having "taught it all" at Ephesus)

ZPC Inquirers Class

A Closer Look At the Gifts



Vocal Music: The special ability to use one's voice to offer praise and thanks to God, and to enhance the worship experience of others

"Speak to one another with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything..."

(Ephesians 5:19,20 -- Paul's challenge to Christians to keep singing)

Wisdom: The special ability to apply knowledge and insights in the most appropriate and helpful ways to the real life situations of others

"Proverbs...for attaining wisdom and discipline; for understanding words of insight; for acquiring a disciplined and prudent life, doing what is right and just and fair; for giving prudence to the simple, knowledge and discretion to the young..."

(Proverbs 1:1-4 -- The proverbs as examples of the gift of wisdom)

Writing: The special ability to put knowledge, teaching, and insights into written forms, such that children and/or adults are better able to see and apply God's truth to their lives
"It is no trouble for me to write the same things to you again, and it is a safeguard for you"

(Philippians 3:1 -- Paul's assurance that his writing made a difference)

About the "Charismatic Gifts" of the Spirit. At least five other spiritual gifts are described in the New Testament: Healing, Ability to Perform Miracles, Discernment of Spirits, Speaking in Tongues, and the Ability to Interpret Speaking in Tongues (see esp. I Corinthians, chapter 12).

While our church does not openly practice these gifts, we certainly believe some of our members are so gifted, and that the Body of Christ benefits from their use. If you have had such experiences, or would like to do some study in this area, please contact the pastor.