

There's a Gift for That
First Presbyterian Church, Visalia
January 2010

Session 1

Goal – People discover that God created them to accomplish God's work according to their gifts

What Are we Created for?

→ Discussion question: Why did God create people?

- Ephesians 2:10 – For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.
- We were created for more than just being. We were created to affect change in God's world.

How do we find out what we are created for? It starts with how we understand God.

Three experiences of God – God, Jesus, Spirit

Three Dimensions of Ministry – wisdom, commitment, power

Three Color Christian – Demonstrates a complete Christian life including all the variety of ways God created us to experience and follow him.

- Colossians 1:9-11 – For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might.
- *The message of this book is quite simple. Are you lacking power? Strengthen your spiritual gifts. Is commitment your weakness? Relate your gifts to concrete services. Have you done this and still find that your ministry is not as fruitful as you would like it to be? Strive for more wisdom. Knowing your starting point is the precondition for taking the right steps. (p. 21)*

Your Starting Point – Knowing where we are points to where we need to go

Change Compass Exercise – p.35

- Complete the exercise
- Discuss results around tables
- Discuss needed growth to pursue the Three Color model

Session 2

Goal – People discover why and where spiritual gifts are useful

Take Spiritual Gifts Quiz – p. 54

Recap Session 1 – Spiritual gifts steer us toward fulfilling God's mission for us: to do good works that God prepared for us to do.

What are spiritual gifts for?

- For the development of the church
- What does it mean to develop the church? (not further the "institution"; further what Jesus designed)
- That depends on our understanding of what the church is

→ Activity – In groups – Discuss and write a definition for the church

What is the church?

- A concept coined by Jesus
- A gathering of people who follow Jesus

So, what does it mean to develop the church?

- Nurture followers of Jesus and communicate Jesus to other people.
- This is focused on people already following Jesus and those not yet following Jesus
- This involves: teaching, helping, caring, evangelizing, serving, discerning, giving, leading, and many other things.
- This requires everyone

When we combine (1) what God created us for, (2) what the church is, and (3) what spiritual gifts are for, we find that spiritual gifts are:

- Special abilities that God gives according to his grace to each member of the body of Christ.

Since the church is of spiritual origin, it requires spiritual operation. We cannot operate the church without spiritual dependence on God's gifts.

What are the spiritual gifts?

→ Activity – In groups – Each group studies a Bible passage and lists the gifts

- Discuss the variety of gifts each group found: 1 Corinthians 12:1-11
- Romans 12:4-8
- Ephesians 4:7-13

How do we discover our gifts?

• Gifts are often not best discovered through tests, but through:

1. Open your heart to God in prayer
2. Be ready to apply your gifts
3. Get informed
4. Begin with what you enjoy
5. Experiment as much as possible
6. Verify your effectiveness
7. Seek the opinion of others
8. A Gift Test

Gift Tests – Realize this is one of several steps to understanding your gifts

Complete Spiritual Gifts Test – p. 64

Session 3

Goal – People imagine what happens when they use their gifts

Recap Session 1 – Spiritual gifts steer us toward fulfilling God's mission for us: to do good works that God prepared for us to do.

Recap Session 2 – Spiritual gifts are necessary to develop the church

Therefore, using our spiritual gifts is not about getting something done in the church. Using our spiritual gifts is part of following Jesus Christ.

→ Discuss – In groups – What are your top several gifts?

Compile everyone's gifts together to visualize spectrum/breakdown of gifts

Explore further the purpose, origin, and use of spiritual gifts

- Read / Discuss / Teach 1 Corinthians 12, noting:
 - It is possible and important to understand spiritual gifts (v. 1)
 - Why does it matter that all the gifts have the same God as the origin? (vv. 4-11)
 - How many principles can you draw from the analogy of the body? (vv. 12-31)
 - Spiritual gifts are spiritual tools for spiritual purposes that have practical relevance

→ Discuss – In partners – Apply your gifts to the Three Color Christian model. What color are you strong in? What color are you weak in? Is this what you expected? If you could improve in any one area, what would it be?

Resource List of First Pres ministries

- All ministries at First Pres began with leaders who were gifted in those areas
 - Many ministries persist with new groups of leaders gifted in those areas
 - New ministries begin when people tackle a need in their area of giftedness
 - Our goal is not to force each person to get a ministry at First Pres done. Our goal is to provide ideas about ways we can all use our gifts. This Resource List is how people are currently using their gifts. Perhaps this list makes you want to join an existing team. Perhaps this list inspires you to new ideas.
- Hand out Resource List of First Pres ministries with relevant gifts listed – Discuss in partners or take home and explore where your gifted areas match with ministry opportunities. What does this list make you think of?

Session 4

Goal – People connect their gifts with places of service

** You'll need to find and invite several guests for this session – see below

Recap Session 1 – Spiritual gifts steer us toward fulfilling God's mission for us: to do good works that God prepared for us to do.

Recap Session 2 – Spiritual gifts are necessary to develop the church

Recap Session 3 – Spiritual gifts are spiritual tools God uses for spiritual purposes that have practical relevance

Therefore, using our spiritual gifts is not about getting something done in the church. Using our spiritual gifts is part of following Jesus Christ.

Guests – Invite several people not from the group to come and tell stories about how serving in areas of their giftedness makes all the difference.

→ Discuss – In partners – Explore where your gifted areas match with ministry opportunities. What does this list make you think of? Where do your gifts intersect with existing ministries? Where do your gifts intersect with a desire you have to serve in an area not yet addressed at First Pres? What can be done to move toward that area?

Guests and leader(s) serve as gift consultants – Talk with people as they arrive at wanting to understand more about a specific ministries and how to apply their gifts to that ministry.