

Functioning of the Gifts

- It seems clear there is a dual dimensionality for the use of the gifts (divine and human).
 - Divine dimension: the distribution of spiritual gifts and their empowerment for effective service is grounded in the Triune God (1 Cor. 12:4-6); specifically, the Holy Spirit sovereignly distributes spiritual gifts and empowers their functioning (1 Cor. 12:11)
 - Human dimension: spiritual gifts are endowments for the members of the body of Christ: as the gospel is announced, it is the evangelist who proclaims it; as a meeting is directed, it is by one who has the gift of leadership; as comfort is extended, one with the gift of mercy is ministering; as a revelation is communicated, it is communicated by a prophet: the exercise of the gifts is a fully (though not merely) human activity “for the common good.”
- Therefore, members need to recognize what spiritual gift (or gifts) they have received from the Holy Spirit, learn principles for the proper exercise of their gift (e.g., 1 Cor. 14:26-35), become skilled at and exercise faith (Rom. 12:6) when using their gift, and concretely implement their gift in the service of the church.



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- Ephesians 4:15-16 underscores this dual dimensionality: a two-fold reality is at the heart of church growth.
 - Ephesians 4:15-16 – But speaking the truth in love, let us grow in every way into him who is the head—Christ. ¹⁶ From him the whole body, fitted and knit together by every supporting ligament, promotes the growth of the body for building up itself in love by the proper working of each individual part.
- Paul is talking about the church and gifts given to it by Christ. We are to grow up in every way into Him who is the head, from whom the whole body is joined and held together when each part is working properly, makes the whole body grow. Each member has to do this so that body builds it up.
 - First and foremost, the divine dimension is at work.
 - Second, the human dimension is at work, derivative of the divine dimension.
 - Both the divine and human dimension work synergistically.
 - One extreme says the church grows only by God, and the other says it grows only from humans working hard. No, it is both.



Functioning of the Gifts

- There is no room for superiority or inferiority when understanding the spiritual gifts.
 - We need all the gifts.
 - But Paul gives us an order to gifts in 1 Cor 12:27 and on. In 14:1 Paul says pursue love, and earnestly pursue gifts, especially prophecy. It is not an order of superiority or inferiority, but it is looking at which gifts have the greatest potential to edify the whole church. Those are the higher gifts, as Paul contrasts prophecy with the speaking in tongues. But if there is tongue interpretation, then it is equal to prophecy. So it has to do with edification for the body.
- Any exercise of a gift that does not edify the body, is inappropriately used (like un-interpreted tongues). A gift rightly used builds up both the user of the gift and the rest of the church.
- It's also worth noting when it comes to the distribution of spiritual gifts, it is a matter for both divine sovereignty and human pursuit.
 - 1 Cor. 12:11: Holy Spirit gives as He wills.
 - 1 Cor 14:1: We desire gifts (more on next slide).



Desiring the Gifts

- In 1 Cor 14:1, he is commanding the church to earnestly desire all the gifts.
 - People wrongly read this for individuals, but it is for the church. As a church we need to pray for God to convert people and gift them with all the gifts that are mentioned.
 - Also, the church should “earnestly desire the greater gifts” (1 Cor.12: 31) — “first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then...” the rest (1 Cor. 12:28)—an ordering for of gifts for the church in general that is tied to their “potential for edifying the church:”
 - All are equally gifts of the Holy Spirit and thus have intrinsically the same value. But since the gifts are community oriented and ‘for the common good,’ whatever gifts most build up the community are most greatly to be desired.
- Love is the atmosphere for in which the gifts must be used (12:31 and chp 13).
 - In other words, the mere presence of teaching, mercy, giving, service, prophecy, tongues, and the like taking place in its assemblies is not enough.
 - Rather, spiritually gifted members—all of the church—evangelize with concern for the lost, heal not for show or fame but out of compassion for those who suffer, give not to get back in return but to care for others, lead not with complaining but out of devotion for the church, and the like.

Ministries of the Church

- Now we will look at the church in worship. This is the first ministry of the church that we will look at.
 - This is one way we display the doxological identity marker.
- In one sense, worship is the all-encompassing passion and purpose of the church.
 - It means approaching God and engaging God on the terms He proposes and in the way He makes possible. You abandon any loyalty that excludes a singular devotion to him.
 - Worship is faith expressing itself in obedience and adoration. So when the church is singing hymns of praise or feeding the poor, or whatever else, that is worship. The church in all of its aspects is glory-giving.
- In another sense, worship is a specific activity of the church. We will look at a Allen Ross's definition.



The Church Worships God

- True worship is the celebration of being in covenant fellowship with the sovereign and holy triune God, by means of three things.
- First, the reverent adoration and spontaneous praise of God's nature and works.
 - Some practical concrete elements expressing this would be singing songs of praise with many instruments and shouts of affirmation (like amens), the raising of hands, clapping (all of which is giving God glory physically); also responsive reading and praying of the Psalms, and speaking corporate prayers of adoration and praise.
- Second, the expressed commitment of trust and obedience to the covenant responsibilities. Here are the concrete elements of part two.
 - 1) The public reading of Scripture (to make the congregation aware of its covenant obligations –1 Tim 4:13); proclamation of the gospel; 2) exposition of the Word of God; 3) exhortations and admonitions to obedience—we urge our people to obey what they have learned from the Word. The Spirit has spoken to them through the word, and the Spirit expects them to trust and obey; 4) recitation of sound doctrine; 5) a public confession of sin; 6) acknowledgement that God has forgiven us through the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ; 7) praying (for the government and the fulfilling of the Great Commission); 8) giving (expresses obedience to the covenant obligation to give for the work of the ministry and the relief of the poor).

Worship

- Third, the memorial reenactment of entering into covenant and continuing in it through ritual acts.
 - We need not fear the word ritual. Ritual is not a bad thing. It has its origin in the noun rite, which means structure or protocol.
 - There are structured activities in which the church is to engaged, activities that follow a particular protocol by which the church reenacts, entering into the New Covenant.
 - These two acts are Baptism and the Lord’s Supper.
- Ross concludes by saying we do all this “with the confident anticipation of the fulfillment of the covenant promises in glory.”
 - In other words, We are sojourners and strangers on our way to something greater. We must worship with an eschatological future in mind.
 - Even when we are broken through tragedy, we still worship Him because we know that a perfect future awaits.



Worship

- Ross’s definition focuses on what the church does, which is helpful. Some older positions on worship focus more on us as the worshipers.
 - Yet, they are very platonic, emphasizing our spiritual selves (heart, mind, will, devotion, adoration, etc.).
 - We are not just spirits, but we are embodied, and therefore our worship is physical too. It will be expressed in things we actually do. This is why Ross’s definition is helpful.
- The big thing we need to keep in mind is worship will be contextualized.
- Contextualization of worship, however, raises the old debate between regulative principle and normative principle.

