

26 QUESTIONS YOU SHOULD BE ASKING!

QUESTION #23: WHERE DO I FIT IN THE CHURCH?

Where you fit in the church and why you're there is a direct result of the Spirit's sovereign gifting. How do we find that answer?

1. THE CHURCH AS A BODY

A. YOU ARE A MEMBER... SO ACT LIKE ONE!

Before we think about where individuals fit in the church we need to understand how the NT authors view the church and the purpose of the individual members.

1Cor 12¹² For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. ¹³ For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit. ¹⁴ For the body does not consist of one member but of many. ¹⁵ If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. ¹⁶ And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. ¹⁷ If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? ¹⁸ But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. ¹⁹ If all were a single member, where would the body be? ²⁰ As it is, there are many parts, yet one body.

How can you expect to have meaningful ministry to the rest of the body if you are not attached?

B. GIFTS ARE FOR THE GOOD OF ALL

Here is a point that we will repeat a lot... because the NT authors repeat it a lot. It is foundational!

1Cor 12⁷ To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

1Pet 4¹⁰ As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace... (See also, Eph 4.12)

2. THE GIFTS AS A BLESSING

A. SOME OF THE GIFTS ARE...

1 Cor 12.28

1. Apostle
 2. Prophet
 3. Teacher
 4. Miracles
 5. Kinds of healings
 6. Helps
 7. Administration
 8. Tongues
- ##### **1 Cor 12.8-10**
9. Word of wisdom
 10. Word of knowledge
 11. Faith

- (5) Gifts of healing
- (4) Miracles
- (2) Prophecy
12. Distinguishing between spirits
- (8) Tongues
13. Interpretation of tongues

Ephesians 4.11

- (1) Apostle
 - (2) Prophet
 14. Evangelist
 15. Pastor-teacher
- ##### **Romans 12.6-8**
- (2) Prophecy

16. Serving
 - (3) Teaching
 17. Encouraging
 18. Contributing
 19. Leadership
 20. Mercy
- ##### **1 Cor 7.7**
21. Marriage
 22. Celibacy
- ##### **1 Peter 4.11**
23. Whoever speaks (covers several)
 24. Whoever serves (covers several)

B. WHATEVER THE GIFT, LOVE IS 'THE RULE'

1Cor 13 ¹ If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.

C. A GIFT IS A GIFT IS A GIFT IS A GIFT

Sometimes we think of our gifts as either 'natural' or 'spiritual'. That's profoundly unhelpful, since all are given by the Spirit.

1Cor 4 ⁷ For who sees anything different in you? What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it?

D. THE GREATEST OF ALL GIFTS

In 1 Cor 12.31, Paul says we should 'earnestly desire the higher [greater] gifts.' How is 'greatness' defined?

1Cor 14 ⁵ Now I want you all to speak in tongues, but even more to prophesy. The one who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in tongues, unless someone interprets, so that the church may be built up.

3. WHERE DO I FIT IN THE CHURCH?

A. KNOW YOUR GOD

The Scriptures say that gifts are to be exercised according to the amount of faith we possess (Rom 12.6), that we are to practice the gifts we've been given (1 Tim 4.14) so as not to let them die out (2 Tim 1.6). The more we come to *know* our God and use our gifts, the more we will grow in them. That being said, the Spirit remains sovereign over the distribution of gifts in ways we cannot explain (1 Cor 12.11, 18).

B. KNOW YOUR GIFTS... AND KNOW YOUR CHURCH

If you have ever moved, you know that you won't fit in one church in the same way you would in another. Each church body has different needs and the Spirit equips members of that body to minister to the rest of the body. If you see a need, maybe God is gifting you to meet that need. Talk to your elders and try to serve. You never know how the Lord will bless!

4. APPLICATION: CORE VALUES

A. TRUTH

All believers are equipped by the Spirit for ministry in the church to other believers. Every one of us will be called to account for how we have used our gifts. Have I used mine or buried them?

B. HUMILITY

I don't choose my gifts, God does. This means that I must recognize my need for the ministry of other Christians. It also means that I should rejoice when I see God working through other Christians through things I could never do. I must take the gifts I have been given and use them with zeal for the sake of others!

C. AUTHORITY

Since all gifts are given to the church, they must be exercised under the oversight and authority of the elders. Also, since the Bible is our final authority, no gift may supplant—or even supplement—the words of Scripture.

D. FREEDOM / DELIGHT

I can finally be who God has called me to be. I don't need to be everything to everyone in the church. I just need to use the gifts that God has given and be the person he has created me to be, employing the gifts he's given me for his glory and for the good of his people.