

Spiritual Gifts and Luke 4 Commission

1 Cor 12 Gifts

Intro - As I Look around I'm wondering what you are?

Are you a **FOOT**? Someone who goes places Goes out of your way? Are you happy to do shopping, cleaning, give lifts? Do you "just pop round" to visit someone, take them to the doctor's appointment.....

"It's nothing really" you probably think.

But to the person on the receiving end you are their "**life-line**". You keep them out of depression, give them a window on the world..... Help them to be healthy and whole, not deserted. Keep it up please!

Are you an **EAR**? What a blessing you will be. Recently I asked Angela, our Verger, where she thought her gifts lay? She paused and said, "*I think I'm a **LISTENER**.*" She is that, and much more. At the end of a phone taking bookings for the church. And living in the village and she has a lots of opportunities to be with people. Starting from "weather conversations" there is soon the opportunity for people to share at a deeper level and because she really "hears" to ask later, "How are things now?"

To really be listened to, is to receive a huge gift. When someone really hears your heart, your pain, your hope perhaps, you feel validated, valued, worthwhile. If YOU are an EAR, a listener, you might think that you don't have

anything to offer.... You just are you!..... but **YOU are a gift** in the Body of Christ. People move away from you feeling built up with more hope in their hearts! Lighter somehow! And if you have a sense of humour and an encouraging smile like Angela, then then the person meeting with you will have received a blessing indeed.

But **EACH OF US** need to **develop a listening EAR to God.**

The Lord is a God of communication. He created through a **WORD** spoken out. He speaks through the written **WORD** and He speaks **through prophets, preaching** and the **neighbour next door**. He will speak into our hearts if we are attentive and give Him space to talk to us.

This way of listening might develop into receiving the supernatural gift of a **word of knowledge** where the Holy Spirit gives information that was not previously known but is needed in a difficult situation

An example would be when Jesus said to the woman at the well "**Go and fetch your husband**. "He had not met her before, nor knew her background, but because of His connection with the Holy Spirit He was able to make this request which further opened the conversation, causing her to wonder, and say "**Come see this man who has told me everything about me.**"

Or through listening to God someone might receive a **word of Holy Spirit Supernatural WISDOM**. An example might be King Solomon. Do you remember when 2 women both gave birth to babies and one of the babies died. There was a dispute between the mothers because each claimed the living child was hers. Solomon was given a strange gift of Wisdom when he said that the child should be cut in half and be divided between them. The real mother revealed herself by her love of her child, by saying that the other woman should keep the child so that the child would be saved.

Are you perhaps a **HAND**?..... a practical person, good at repairing things, decorating, gardening may be? Or perhaps you are a baker making delicious cakes. **Please invite me round.**

There are so many Godly opportunities to use your gifts. What a blessing you can be, and probably are already. You are probably the sort of person who does things quietly in the back- ground but makes lovely relationship and people can see God in who you are.

Perhaps you are a **NOSE**? (I was glad I wasn't when I worked with children with very severe learning difficulties and also when I was a Nursing Auxiliary. A poor sense of smell meant I didn't have a problem with the noxious jobs needed.)

But there are some people who we would say "**Have a nose for things**" We might call it a **gift of discernment**. They know when something is not quite as it might seem and are able to either alert someone to change things or they themselves work for that change.

The Holy Spirit gift of discernment mentioned just before our reading today is given by the **HOLY SPIRIT** to discern whether something is Godly or from an evil source.

Or you may be able to pick up things which are unnoticed... someone being neglected, or an area of work that needs to be done. Important gift! But Not if it leads to someone being "NOSEY"that is out of hand. We are not meant to become busybodies but we are meant to care not neglect or gossip

Or are you a **MOUTH**? **We all have one!** The Church of God and society needs people who will speak from **God's perspective**.

This can be done in various ways and other giftings and temperament will play a part.

The **word of encouragement or affirmation** is gladly received. But sometimes a Godly **word of correction or redirection** is also needed done in a helpful & caring way.

There are also gifts of **prophecy** given by God today to build up and occasionally to foretell and warn. Those who **receive a prophetic word need to spend time with God knowing how He works so that they have the discernment to**

know if it is their own thoughts, or coming from God, testing it against Scripture.

Speaking in tongues, in a language not known to the speaker but given by the Holy Spirit and the complimentary Spirit given Gift of **Interpretation** bring praise to God and encouragement to those hearing.

Counselling and Spiritual Direction from a Christian focus again are helpful, sometimes just given through friendship OR from a more professional approach.

Others are able to encourage the development of faith through **evangelism**, helping people to take the next step on the pilgrim journey, explain, teaching, what it means to take the step of commitment to God, to receive forgiveness and have a fresh start because of Jesus' death and resurrection.

A **basic way of using our mouth** for every Christian, is to **pray; to praise; to sing in worship**. For some, their gifting comes in leading others in these areas. **In our ordinary conversations we are all to encourage and to resist gossiping or critical words.**

Paul in his teaching says that everyone has a God-given gift, something He can use for God, in the church and in the community. He uses the words **"everyone"** and **"To each is given"**. He emphasises that everyone belongs and that we **can't** say to another "I don't need you..... and there is no age limit.

Everyone should be a **giver**. **Each of us is needed otherwise there will be a gap, as though something has been amputated.**

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In conclusion I want to introduce to a dear friend of ours who is with us today, Bishop Ronald Milner. He played a very significant part in my life.

I became a Christian when I was 14. **Previously I had had no Christian background and had been a very mixed up teenager** often rejected by my peers
In the Summer holidays after my decision to follow Jesus I went to Ronald, who was then my vicar, saying something which to me now seems a bit crazy, " **I know you are very busy is there anything that I can do to help you? "**

Amazingly Ronald took me seriously, & he sent me to help older people in the church who needed errands. He also suggested that I did some visiting along with some Church Army Cadets who were visiting people who were on the edge of Church life, like Baptism families and those who had been married in the church.

He saw that I might have something to offer. He knew that I needed to grow. but **believed** in me and gave me that chance. Ever since I have been involved in Pastoral care and in Evangelism. When I was 18 he gave me the opportunity to lead a Lent Bible Study group.

Who can **YOU** encourage to use their gifts? Many think they have nothing to offer..... tell them what you can see that they are good at and encourage them to step out to serve.

— Teresa of Avila said -

"Christ has no body now but yours. No hands, no feet on earth but yours.

Yours are the eyes through which he looks with compassion on this world.

Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good.

Yours are the hands through which he blesses all the world.

Yours are the hands, yours are the feet, yours are the eyes, **you are his body.**

Christ has no body now on earth but yours."

I want to recognise each one, who use their gifts in God's service. We are all blessed through YOU

What can YOU bring?

God has created us to be uniquely **US**
and as we make our offerings
He adds His Holy Spirit part.
Supernaturally..... natural!