

# THE BIBLICAL BASIS FOR THE GIFTS

## NORTH RIVER CHURCH OF CHRIST

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### 1. Introduction

In the OT we find various gifts (leadership, music, craftsmanship, poetry, etc). Here we focus on the NT doctrine of the gifts.

2. **1 Peter 4:8-11:** *Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins. Be hospitable to one another without complaint. As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. Whoever speaks, let him speak, as it were, the utterances of God; whoever serves, let him do so as by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ...*
- a. Use your gifts to serve others.
  - b. Classes of gifts
    - i. Speech gifts (Eph 4)
    - ii. Service gifts (Rom 12)

### 3. Gifts are God-given

- a. There two kinds of gifts.
  - i. Natural gifts (the majority of the gifts mentioned in the NT).
  - ii. Supernatural gifts. Important at the start of the church (Micah 7, Acts 2).
- b. Every good and perfect gift is from above (James 1).
- c. If this is the case, how should think and act vis-à-vis our gifts?
  - i. Be grateful!
  - ii. Be honest
  - iii. Be generous
  - iv. Be persistent. Develop it!

### 4. Service is ministry (diakonia)

- a. Terms
  - i. *Greek original*    *Translation*            *Latin term*            *Latinized (traditional) term*
  - ii. diakonia            service            ministerium            ministry
  - iii. diakonoun        serve            ministrare            minister
  - iv. diakonos          servant            minister            minister
- b. We have some unlearning and rethinking to do!

### 5. Everyone has gifts!

- a. Need a biblical emphasis
  - i. In the broader Christian world
    - 1. Clergy are typically the only ones viewed to have any gift.
    - 2. The rest of churchgoers are spectators. They are called “laity” (<laos).
  - ii. In our own not-so-distant past
    - 1. The evangelist gift was exalted above all others (bad); all were called to commitment (good).
    - 2. We spoke of the universal priesthood of all believers (1 Pet 2), yet most of the gifts were ignored, downplayed, or subordinated to the evangelist gift.
  - iii. In the new day
    - 1. All should be recognized as gifted, though at different levels and in different ways.
    - 2. No one should be shamed for not being as gifted or talented as another person who may have a different matrix of strengths.
    - 3. And yet we must speak the truth in love to one another, accepting how God has made us (Rom 12).
    - 4. The NT pictures a highly dynamic, interactive, collaborative fellowship. Everyone busy!
- b. We must seek to identify our gifts. (Please see second sheet.)
- c. When our ministry matches our gifts, we will be most happy!

### 6. Conclusion

- a. Interesting implications
  - i. Apart from resembling Christ in our spirit and priorities, Christians are probably more dissimilar than similar! the NT emphasis on the body is almost opposite our own past teaching, which tended to create a homogenized church culture. But in the NT, membership implies diversity, not uniformity (1 Cor 12).
  - ii. We must change our traditional terminology. This won't be easy! (All of us are in the ministry; ministry is service based on gifts, and everyone is a minister—2 Cor 5; no clergy, laity, lay leaders, reverends, etc.)
  - iii. If we take the biblical teaching seriously, there will be nowhere to hide!
- b. For further study, see *The Spirit* (IPI, 2005).