

# Gifts of the Holy Spirit

There are various spiritual gifts mentioned in the New Testament.

- **Establishing Gifts** (Ephesians 4:11 and 1 Corinthians 12:29): Apostles, Prophets, Pastor-Teachers and Evangelists.  
These gifts are used primarily for planting and growing churches.
- **Supporting Gifts** (Romans 12:6-8): Prophecy, Service, Teaching, Encouragement, Giving, Administration/Leadership, and Mercy.  
These gifts are used primarily to organise and administrate the church so that it may best carry out its responsibilities.
- **Ministry Gifts** (1 Corinthians 12:8-10, 1 Corinthians 12:27-31): Wisdom, Knowledge, Faith, Healing, Miracles, Prophecy, Help, Administration, Leadership, Distinguishing Spirits, Speaking in Tongues, and Interpreting Tongues.  
These are the tools that the Holy Spirit utilises for the ongoing ministry of the church.

Every believer has at least one gift (1 Corinthians 12:6-7, 11).

And all believers are to evaluate themselves in terms of their God-given gifts (Romans 12:3).

## What is the difference between spiritual gifts and natural talents?

Natural talents are physical abilities to do special things. Some natural talents might be musical ability, carpentry, mechanical, and artistic skills. Spiritual gifts are spiritual abilities to do certain things. Natural talents are often the vehicle through which spiritual gifts can be used. For example, a Christian vocalist may have the spiritual gift of evangelism being expressed through the vehicle of musical talent.

In church we use both: spiritual gifts and natural talents. Both are important for the healthy and efficient life of the church community.

## When does the believer receive his/her gift?

There is no clear-cut Biblical teaching as to when the believer receives his/her gift. However, the gift comes with the Giver and is bestowed at conversion (2 Timothy 1:6).

### **Can a believer have any gift he or she wants?**

No! (1 Corinthians 12:29-31). The Holy Spirit gives out gifts as he sees fit (1 Corinthians 12:7, 8-9, 11). This is why there is no prescribed way to get a gift. However, if we are faithful with the gift, and we manage well our initial gift, and as our ministries expand, we may ask God for other gifts under the direction of the inner promptings of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:31; 1 Corinthians 14:39).

### **Do spiritual gifts come ready to operate?**

No! It often takes time for gifts to mature and develop into their full effectiveness. Spiritual gifts come "in the rough." Every believer is obligated to mature the gift (Romans 12:4-6).

### **Can spiritual gifts be lost?**

Yes! Gifts which are not used or developed can be lost. Jesus' parable of the talents illustrates the danger of neglecting the gift that the Holy Spirit has bestowed (Matthew 25:14-30).

### **Are some gifts more important than others?**

Yes! Prophecy is the most important. Speaking in tongues is the least. All the others fall somewhere in between (1 Corinthians 12:31). Paul wrote that due to the interdependent nature of all of the gifts, there should be no spiritual pride associated with any of these gifts.

### **Can spiritual gifts be misused?**

Yes! Paul described the use and misuse of the gift of tongues in the Corinthian church (1 Corinthians 14). Paul taught that speaking in tongues without someone in attendance with the gift of interpretation would only bring confusion to the church family and ridicule from unbelievers.

### **Are spiritual gifts the same as the fruit of the spirit?**

No. Gifts of the Spirit are given for outward manifestation (service to others), while fruits of the Spirit are about inner manifestation (your character). Both types of gifts work together.

When necessary, spiritual gifts may operate as a toolbox full of tools. For example, God may utilise a particular gift in our lives on a short-time basis to minister to a particular need in the body of Christ.

The existence of a gift is a call to exercise it. Paul advised Timothy, "Neglect not the gift that is in you" (1 Timothy 4:14).

Faithful utilisation of a gift brings increased effectiveness in its ministry, but failure to develop a gift curtails ministry!