

Motivational gifts preface

At a recent national ministers' conference, one message rang out loud and clear that our pastors and ministry leaders are running on empty. Burnout is spreading because too many are carrying the load alone. They're preaching the Word, praying for the people, leading the ministries, and pouring themselves out day and night, but the hands to help are too few.

Even when some members do step forward, many quickly feel overwhelmed because they've never been trained or don't yet see how God has uniquely gifted them. They may have the heart to serve, but without understanding their spiritual gifts, they can't step into their calling with confidence. And without that confidence, passion fades, and the work becomes a burden instead of a joy.

But here's the good news, this is a problem we can solve! The solution is not complicated. It begins when we, as leaders, help our people discover what stirs their heart for God and identify the gifts He's placed inside them. When members see their purpose, when they realize they are a vital part of God's plan, they move from sitting in the pew to standing on the front lines.

A church where people know their gifts is a church where burnout is replaced by boldness, where ministry leaders are not drained but strengthened, and where the work of God advances with power. This is the call to action to help your people find their God-given purpose, and you will not only lift the weight from weary shoulders but ignite a movement that transforms your entire church.

As we investigate the sixteen ministry and motivational gifts, we need to understand that each of us is unique. Not all of the characteristics of each gift will match the person. We are the accumulation of several gifts so the best thing to do is check each one and find the ones that fit you. Sometimes you will need to have an impartial person that knows you well to help you see the real picture of yourself. Many times we are harder on ourselves or wish we had certain characteristics but in reality we do not have them.

Each gift analogy

The gift of **administration** is like the **rudder on a ship**

The gift of **discernment** is like a **spiritual security system**

The gift of **evangelism** is like the **voice of a messenger**

The gift of **exhortation** is like a **spiritual coach and comforter**

The gift of **faith** is like an **unshakable pillar in the storm**

The gift of **giving** is like a **life-giving stream**

The gift of **helps** is like the **hands that hold the body steady**

The gift of **hospitality** is like an **open door into God's family**

The gift of **knowledge** is like a **spiritual light bulb**

The gift of **leadership** is like a **shepherd guiding a flock**

The gift of **mercy** is like a **gentle embrace of God's love**

The gift of **prophecy** is like a **clear trumpet call**

The gift of **service** is like the **quiet backbone of the church**

The gift of **shepherding** is like a **gentle, vigilant shepherd caring for sheep**

The gift of **teaching** is like a **light that makes Scripture clear,**

The gift of **wisdom** is like a **Spirit-guided compass**

Administration

The gift of administration is the Spirit-given ability to **organize, plan, delegate, and coordinate resources and people** so that the Body of Christ can function effectively and accomplish God's purposes.

It is not about bossing or controlling—it's about *stewarding God's work with wisdom and structure*.

Scripture 1 Corinthians 12:28: *“And God has placed in the church first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, of helping, of guidance [administration], and of different kinds of tongues.”*

The Greek word used for *administration* is **kubernēsis**, which literally means *steering, piloting, or guiding a ship*. This gives us the picture of someone who helps keep things on course, organizing, directing, and coordinating so that the mission of the church (or ministry) reaches its destination.

Biblical Examples

1. Joseph in Egypt (Genesis 41:39–40, 55–57)

- Joseph organized food storage during seven years of plenty so that Egypt (and many surrounding nations) survived the seven years of famine.
- His administrative skill saved lives and fulfilled God's bigger plan for Israel.

2. Moses and the appointment of leaders (Exodus 18:13–26)

- Moses was trying to handle everything himself until Jethro advised him to appoint leaders over thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens.
- This delegation was a God-given administrative structure that kept the people cared for.

3. The Apostles in the early church (Acts 6:1–4)

- When complaints arose about food distribution, the apostles appointed seven deacons to oversee the matter.
- This administrative action ensured fairness, kept unity, and freed the apostles to focus on prayer and teaching.

4. Nehemiah rebuilding the wall (Nehemiah 2–6)

- Nehemiah organized workers, set guards, assigned tasks, and kept people motivated to rebuild Jerusalem's wall in record time.
- His administrative gift brought protection and restoration to God's people.

Modern Examples

- A church member who **creates volunteer schedules**, making sure worship teams, greeters, and children's workers are all covered.
- A ministry leader who **sets up budgets and fundraising plans** so that a mission project can be sustained.
- Someone who **maps out long-term strategy**, ensuring the church stays focused on its God-given vision.
- A person who is skilled at **delegating responsibilities**, making sure people serve in their area of gifting without burning out.

How the Gift of Administration Serves the Body

- Keeps the church from falling into **chaos and confusion**.
- Ensures **resources are wisely managed**.
- Helps leaders **focus on their strengths** (teaching, preaching, evangelizing, shepherding).
- Provides **structure and direction** so that spiritual momentum is not wasted.

👉 In short: The gift of administration is like the **rudder on a ship**—it may not be the most visible part, but it helps the whole body move toward God's destination.

Discernment

The gift of discernment (sometimes called “discerning of spirits”) is the Spirit-given ability to **recognize whether something is from God, human nature, or demonic influence**. It helps the church distinguish truth from error, good from evil, and God’s will from deception.

Paul lists it in **1 Corinthians 12:10**: “...to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues...”

Biblical Examples

1. Jesus discerning Satan’s influence (Matthew 16:21–23)

- Peter urged Jesus not to go to the cross. Jesus immediately recognized that this was not from God but Satan’s attempt to derail His mission.
- He said, “*Get behind me, Satan!*”

2. Paul confronting a spirit of divination (Acts 16:16–18)

- A slave girl followed Paul, shouting truth (“These men are servants of the Most High God...”).
- But Paul discerned that the source was a demonic spirit and commanded it to leave.

3. John’s warning to the church (1 John 4:1)

- John instructed believers: “*Do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.*”
- This highlights discernment as protection against false teaching.

4. Elisha and Gehazi (2 Kings 5:25–27)

- Gehazi lied about taking money from Naaman. Elisha discerned the truth supernaturally, exposing the deception.

Modern Examples

- A believer senses that a teaching, though polished, is **not aligned with Scripture** and protects the church from deception.
- A leader feels spiritual heaviness in a situation and discerns it's due to **demonic oppression**, prompting prayer and deliverance.
- A counselor senses when someone's words hide **unspoken motives** or wounds and gently guides them toward healing.
- A prayer team member distinguishes between a genuine **move of the Holy Spirit** and emotional hype.

How the Gift of Discernment Serves the Body

- Protects the church from **false prophets and deceptive teachings**.
- Guards believers from **spiritual attacks or manipulations**.
- Helps leaders **make wise decisions** rooted in God's will.
- Keeps the church aligned with **truth and holiness**.

Cautions with the Gift

- Discernment should never become **suspicion or judgmentalism**.
- It must always be tested against **Scripture** and confirmed by the Spirit.
- The gift is for **edification and protection**, not tearing people down.

👉 In short: The gift of discernment is like a **spiritual security system**—alerting the Body of Christ to danger, deception, or direction, so that God's people walk in truth and safety.

Evangelism

The gift of evangelism is the Spirit-given ability to **share the gospel of Jesus Christ with clarity, boldness, and effectiveness**, leading others to faith and equipping the church to do the same.

Paul mentions evangelists in **Ephesians 4:11–12**: *“So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.”*

Biblical Examples

1. Philip the Evangelist (Acts 8:4–6, 26–40)

- Preached in Samaria, leading many to Christ.
- Later, the Spirit led him to explain the Scriptures to the Ethiopian eunuch, who immediately believed and was baptized.

2. Paul the Apostle (Acts 17:16–34; Acts 20:20–21)

- Boldly proclaimed Christ in synagogues, marketplaces, and even before kings.
- Adapted his approach depending on the audience but always centered on the gospel.

3. The Samaritan Woman (John 4:28–30, 39)

- After meeting Jesus, she ran to her village declaring, *“Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did.”*
- Many believed because of her testimony—an example of evangelistic impact.

4. Early Church Believers (Acts 8:1–4)

- When scattered by persecution, ordinary Christians shared the gospel everywhere they went, showing that evangelism isn’t limited to leaders but is a calling for all.

Modern Examples

- A believer who can **explain the gospel simply** so that children, teens, or adults can grasp it.
- A missionary who is effective at **cross-cultural communication**, leading people to Christ in another culture.
- Someone who naturally turns **conversations toward spiritual things** and creates openness for faith discussions.
- An evangelist who not only wins people to Christ but also **equips others to share their faith** with boldness.

How the Gift of Evangelism Serves the Body

- Brings **new believers** into the family of God.
- Keeps the church focused on its **mission to reach the lost**, not just care for the found.
- Equips and inspires others to **share their faith**.
- Expands the influence of the gospel into new communities, workplaces, and nations.

Cautions with the Gift

- Evangelists must guard against focusing only on **numbers or decisions**, remembering discipleship and follow-up are vital.
- They may feel frustrated with believers who are less passionate about outreach—balance and patience are needed.
- Evangelism should be rooted in **love and humility**, not pressure or manipulation.

👉 In short: The gift of evangelism is like the **voice of a herald**—boldly proclaiming the good news so that people hear, believe, and are brought into God's kingdom.

Exhortation (Encouragement)

The gift of exhortation (sometimes translated “encouragement”) is the Spirit-given ability to **comfort, encourage, strengthen, and urge others toward faithfulness in Christ**. It can involve **lifting the weary, correcting the straying, or motivating the discouraged** with Spirit-filled words of hope and challenge.

Paul mentions this gift in **Romans 12:8**: “...*if it is to encourage, then give encouragement...*”

The Greek word is **paraklēsis**, meaning *to come alongside and help, comfort, or urge forward*.

Biblical Examples

1. **Barnabas – “Son of Encouragement” (Acts 4:36–37; Acts 9:26–27; Acts 11:22–24)**
 - Sold land to support the church.
 - Welcomed Paul when others were afraid of him, vouching for his genuine conversion.
 - Encouraged new believers in Antioch, strengthening their faith.
2. **Paul’s Letters (1 Thessalonians 2:11–12)**
 - Paul wrote to exhort believers like a father, urging them to live lives worthy of God.
3. **Jesus with the Disciples (John 14:1; Luke 22:32)**
 - Encouraged them not to be troubled and reassured Peter that his faith would be restored after failure.
4. **Prophetic Encouragement (Acts 15:30–32)**
 - Judas and Silas, being prophets, encouraged and strengthened the believers with many words.

Modern Examples

- A small group leader who **notices someone struggling** and speaks words of faith that renew hope.

- A church member who writes **uplifting notes or messages** that strengthen the weary.
- A mentor who **challenges others to grow spiritually** and not give up when facing trials.
- A counselor or pastor who offers **comfort in grief** and points people back to God's promises.

How the Gift of Exhortation Serves the Body

- Strengthens believers to **persevere in trials**.
- Keeps the church motivated in **living out the faith**, not just hearing it.
- Builds unity and hope within the body by **lifting burdens**.
- Encourages **obedience to Scripture**, not just emotional comfort.

Cautions with the Gift

- Must avoid offering **shallow or empty encouragement**; it must be rooted in God's truth.
- Should not shy away from **correction when needed**—true encouragement sometimes includes challenge.
- Needs balance so that encouragement does not replace **teaching or accountability**.

👉 In short: The gift of exhortation is like a **spiritual coach and comforter**—coming alongside others with words that heal, strengthen, and push them closer to Christ.

Faith

The gift of faith is the Spirit-given ability to **confidently trust God for the impossible and inspire others to believe His promises**, even when circumstances look hopeless. It goes beyond saving faith (which all believers have) and is a **special capacity to see God's hand at work and stand firm in trust until it comes to pass**.

Paul includes it in **1 Corinthians 12:9**: “...to another faith by the same Spirit...”

This is not ordinary faith but **extraordinary, Spirit-empowered confidence** in God's will and power.

Biblical Examples

1. Abraham (Romans 4:18–21; Hebrews 11:8–12)

- Believed God's promise of a son despite his and Sarah's old age.
- Called “*the father of faith*.”

2. Joshua and Caleb (Numbers 13:30; 14:6–9)

- While others doubted, they believed God would give Israel the Promised Land, urging the people not to fear.

3. David vs. Goliath (1 Samuel 17:45–47)

- Trusted God to deliver him in battle against a giant warrior.

4. The Centurion (Matthew 8:5–10)

- Believed Jesus could heal his servant with just a word. Jesus marveled at his great faith.

5. Paul in the Storm (Acts 27:21–25)

- Assured everyone on the ship that God had promised their safety, urging them to take courage.

Modern Examples

- A believer who **prays boldly for healing or provision**, trusting God will act according to His will.

- A missionary who goes to a difficult field with **unwavering confidence** that God will open doors.
- A church member who encourages others to **trust God in crisis**, standing as a pillar of hope.
- Someone who sees **opportunity instead of obstacles**, urging others to believe God for greater things.

How the Gift of Faith Serves the Body

- Inspires others to **trust God more deeply**.
- Brings courage in seasons of trial, fear, or uncertainty.
- Builds confidence in God's promises, fueling prayer and bold action.
- Often precedes or accompanies **miracles and breakthroughs** in ministry.

Cautions with the Gift

- Faith must remain grounded in **God's Word**, not personal desires or presumption.
- Those with this gift may become frustrated with believers who struggle to trust—but patience and gentleness are vital.
- Needs balance with wisdom and discernment to ensure faith-filled action aligns with God's will.

👉 In short: The gift of faith is like an **unshakable pillar in the storm**—holding fast to God's promises and inspiring others to believe for the impossible.

Giver

The gift of giving is the Spirit-given ability to **share resources—financial, material, or personal—with joy, generosity, and wisdom—to advance God’s work and meet the needs of others.**

This is more than the general call for all believers to give; it is a **supernatural eagerness and effectiveness in supplying needs.**

Paul lists it in **Romans 12:8**: “...if it is giving, then give generously...”

The Greek word is **metadidōmi**, meaning *to share, impart, or distribute*.

Biblical Examples

1. Abraham offering to Melchizedek (Genesis 14:18–20)

- Gave a tenth of everything as an act of honor to God.

2. The Israelites contributing to the Tabernacle (Exodus 35:20–29)

- Those stirred by God gave freely of gold, silver, cloth, and skills to build God’s dwelling place.

3. The Widow’s Offering (Mark 12:41–44)

- Gave two small coins, all she had, demonstrating radical trust and generosity.

4. Barnabas (Acts 4:36–37)

- Sold a field and laid the money at the apostles’ feet to care for the poor.

5. The Macedonian Churches (2 Corinthians 8:1–5)

- Out of extreme poverty, they gave generously and even beyond their ability, motivated by love for Christ.

Modern Examples

- A business owner who **joyfully funds missions and church ministries** without seeking recognition.
- A believer who **quietly provides financial help** to families in need.

- Someone who **loves supplying materials, meals, or housing** to support ministry.
- A giver who **sees needs before others notice them** and meets them promptly.

How the Gift of Giving Serves the Body

- Provides financial and material resources for **ministry and outreach**.
- Demonstrates God's generosity and provision in visible ways.
- Relieves burdens for those in need, reflecting the **heart of Christ's compassion**.
- Encourages others in the church to **trust God with their own resources**.

Cautions with the Gift

- Givers must guard against giving for **recognition or influence**; generosity should remain humble.
- They may be tempted to feel **pride or superiority** because of their ability to give.
- Must ensure their giving is **Spirit-led and wise**, not driven by guilt or pressure.
- Should remember that giving includes **time, energy, and love**, not only finances.

👉 In short: The gift of giving is like a **life-giving stream**—quietly pouring out resources so that God's kingdom advances and His people are cared for.

Helps

The gift of helps is the Spirit-given ability to **support, assist, and serve others in practical ways** so that the Body of Christ can function smoothly and leaders can focus on their primary calling.

It often works quietly in the background, yet it provides the strength and stability that allows ministry to move forward effectively.

Paul includes it in **1 Corinthians 12:28**: *“...God has placed in the church first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, of helping, of guidance, and of different kinds of tongues.”*

The Greek word for *helps* is **antilēmpseis**, meaning *to take hold of, to support, to aid*.

Biblical Examples

1. Moses and Aaron/Hur (Exodus 17:10–13)

- As Moses' arms grew tired, Aaron and Hur held them up so Israel could win the battle. A perfect picture of the gift of helps—supporting a leader so God's work succeeds.

2. The women who supported Jesus' ministry (Luke 8:1–3)

- Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Susanna, and many others provided resources and practical care so Jesus and His disciples could minister freely.

3. Phoebe (Romans 16:1–2)

- Described as a servant (deacon) of the church, helping Paul and many others.

4. The Seven Deacons (Acts 6:1–4)

- Chosen to handle food distribution so the apostles could devote themselves to prayer and preaching.

5. Onesiphorus (2 Timothy 1:16–18)

- Often refreshed Paul, visiting and caring for him in prison without shame.

Modern Examples

- A church member who faithfully **sets up chairs, cleans, or prepares communion** without seeking recognition.
- Someone who **supports pastoral staff** with administrative or practical tasks.
- A volunteer who **drives others to appointments, visits the sick, or provides meals**.
- The person who notices **little details** others overlook and steps in to take care of them.

How the Gift of Helps Serves the Body

- Keeps ministries and leaders from becoming **overwhelmed**.
- Ensures that the practical, often unseen needs of the church are **met with excellence**.
- Provides a spirit of **service and humility**, modeling Christ, who came to serve (Mark 10:45).
- Strengthens unity by allowing each person to contribute in different ways.

Cautions with the Gift

- Those with this gift may feel **overlooked or underappreciated**, since their work is often behind the scenes.
- Can be tempted to **overcommit** and burn out.
- Must guard against **resentment** if others don't notice or help.
- Needs to remember their service is **unto the Lord, not people** (Colossians 3:23).

👉 In short: The gift of helps is like the **hands that hold the body steady**—quiet, steady, and faithful, enabling the whole church to flourish.

Hospitality

The gift of hospitality is the Spirit-given ability to **create a welcoming, safe, and loving environment where others feel valued, cared for, and at home.**

Hospitality goes beyond entertaining—it is a heart posture of **open doors and open hearts**, reflecting Christ's love by caring for strangers, guests, and fellow believers.

Peter highlights it in **1 Peter 4:9–10**: *“Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.”*

Paul also exhorts believers in **Romans 12:13**: *“...practice hospitality.”*

The Greek word **philoxenia** literally means *love of strangers*.

Biblical Examples

1. Abraham and Sarah (Genesis 18:1–8)

- Welcomed three strangers (angels of the Lord) with food and rest, unknowingly entertaining God’s messengers.

2. The Shunammite Woman (2 Kings 4:8–10)

- Built a room for Elisha the prophet, offering ongoing hospitality.

3. Martha and Mary (Luke 10:38–42)

- Welcomed Jesus into their home. Martha served, while Mary listened at His feet.

4. Lydia (Acts 16:14–15, 40)

- After believing in Christ, she immediately invited Paul and his companions to stay at her house.

5. Priscilla and Aquila (Acts 18:2–3, 26; Romans 16:3–5)

- Opened their home for Paul and even hosted a church there.

Modern Examples

- A family that regularly **invites newcomers, missionaries, or neighbors** into their home for meals.
- A believer who makes people feel **safe and welcome in small groups, Bible studies, or church gatherings**.
- Someone who **hosts and cares for out-of-town guests, visiting speakers, or traveling ministers**.
- A church member who creates a **warm, inviting environment in the church lobby**, greeting people with genuine love.

How the Gift of Hospitality Serves the Body

- Helps **outsiders feel like insiders**, drawing them closer to Christ and the church.
- Provides a **safe space for fellowship, discipleship, and ministry**.
- Models Christ's love by **caring for the stranger and the weary**.
- Strengthens unity and friendship within the body of Christ.

Cautions with the Gift

- Must guard against **pride or comparison**, thinking hospitality is about the house, food, or presentation, rather than the heart.
- Should avoid **burnout** from overextending themselves.
- Needs balance to not **neglect their own family** while caring for others.
- Must remember true hospitality flows from **love, not obligation**.

👉 In short: The gift of hospitality is like an **open door into God's family**—where people feel seen, safe, and embraced by the love of Christ.

Knowledge

The gift of knowledge is the Spirit-given ability to **understand deep truths of God's Word and His mysteries** and to **apply that understanding to life and ministry**.

It can also include a Spirit-revealed knowledge about specific situations that could not have been known naturally.

Paul lists it in **1 Corinthians 12:8**: *“To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit...”*

The Greek word **gnōsis** means *understanding, insight, or revealed knowledge*.

Biblical Examples

1. Daniel (Daniel 1:17; 2:19–23)

- God gave Daniel knowledge and understanding of visions and dreams, equipping him to serve in a pagan kingdom with wisdom.

2. Jesus with the Samaritan Woman (John 4:16–18)

- Jesus revealed knowledge of her past marriages and current life situation, which led to her conversion and the salvation of many in her town.

3. Peter with Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1–4)

- Through the Spirit, Peter knew they had lied about their gift. This was knowledge beyond human observation.

4. Paul's Understanding of Mysteries (Ephesians 3:3–4)

- Paul received knowledge of the mystery of Christ—that Gentiles were now fellow heirs in God's family.

Modern Examples

- A believer who has a deep **understanding of Scripture** and can explain it clearly to others.
- Someone who receives **spiritual insight about a person's struggle** that leads to healing, repentance, or encouragement.

- A teacher who connects **biblical truth with practical application** in a way that transforms lives.
- A prayer leader who suddenly **knows what to pray** for someone without being told, because the Spirit revealed it.

How the Gift of Knowledge Serves the Body

- Deepens the church's **understanding of God's Word and character**.
- Protects against false teaching by providing **clarity and truth**.
- Strengthens faith by showing that **God knows and cares about individual situations**.
- Brings wisdom to leaders making decisions, rooted in God's revealed truth.

Cautions with the Gift

- Must be exercised with **humility**, not arrogance or pride in knowledge (1 Corinthians 8:1: *"Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up"*).
- Knowledge must be **paired with wisdom and love**, or it can become cold and harsh.
- Needs discernment—sometimes what is revealed is **for prayer only, not public sharing**.
- Should always align with **Scripture**, never contradict it.

👉 In short: The gift of knowledge is like a **spiritual light bulb**—bringing understanding, revelation, and clarity so that God's people walk in truth and freedom.

Leadership

The spiritual gift of leadership is the God-given ability to guide, direct, and influence individuals or groups to accomplish God's purposes. It involves setting vision, organizing people and resources, making wise decisions, and motivating others to work together in unity for the growth and effectiveness of the church.

Scripture Romans 12:8 — "...the one who leads with diligence..."

The Greek Word: *Proistēmi* (προϊστημι) meaning "to stand before," "to lead," "to manage," or "to preside over with care and diligence."

This gift is not just about authority, but responsibility. It combines vision with servanthood—leading in a way that reflects Christ by caring for people while moving the mission forward. Effective spiritual leaders create clarity, foster unity, and equip others to fulfill their roles within the body of Christ.

Biblical Examples

1. **Moses (Exodus 18:13–26; Numbers 12:7)**

- Led Israel through the wilderness, appointing leaders under him to manage the people.
- Called the most humble man on earth, showing that true leadership flows from humility.

2. **Joshua (Joshua 1:6–9)**

- Courageously led Israel into the Promised Land, relying on God's promises.

3. **David (2 Samuel 5:1–3; Psalm 78:72)**

- Shepherded Israel with integrity of heart and skillful hands.

4. **Nehemiah (Nehemiah 2–6)**

- Cast vision, organized workers, faced opposition, and rebuilt Jerusalem's wall in record time.

5. **Paul (Acts 20:28; 1 Thessalonians 2:10–12)**

- Modeled sacrificial leadership, urging church elders to shepherd the flock with care.

Modern Examples

- A pastor or elder who **casts vision and guides the church** toward God's mission.
- A ministry leader who **inspires volunteers**, organizes teams, and keeps them motivated.
- A small group leader who **guides discussions, cares for members, and steers the group spiritually**.
- A Christian business leader who **models integrity** and uses influence to glorify God.

How the Gift of Leadership Serves the Body

- Provides **direction and vision**, preventing confusion and stagnation.
- Mobilizes others to **use their gifts effectively**.
- Protects the church from drifting into division or aimlessness.
- Models Christlike, **servant-hearted leadership** for others to follow.

Cautions with the Gift

- Must avoid becoming **authoritarian or self-serving**; leadership should reflect Christ, who washed His disciples' feet.
- Can be tempted toward **pride or control**, forgetting that authority is given by God.
- Needs to stay grounded in **prayer and dependence on the Spirit**, not just natural ability.
- Should balance **vision with care**—people are not projects but God's flock.

👉 In short: The gift of leadership is like a **shepherd guiding a flock**—leading with vision, protecting with wisdom, and serving with love so that God's people move forward together.

Mercy

The gift of mercy is the Spirit-given ability to **see and respond with compassion to those who are suffering or in need**, bringing comfort, care, and healing in ways that reflect the heart of Christ.

This gift enables believers to **empathize deeply** and move toward the hurting with gentleness and love.

Paul lists it in **Romans 12:8**: “...if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.”

The Greek word is **eleeō**, meaning *to show compassion, to help the afflicted, to bring relief to the miserable*.

Biblical Examples

1. The Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30–37)

- Showed compassion to a beaten man when others passed by.
- Jesus commended this as the model of mercy.

2. Jesus with the Sick and Broken (Matthew 9:35–36; Mark 1:40–41)

- Moved with compassion for the crowds and healed many who suffered.
- Touched the leper when others recoiled.

3. The Father of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:20)

- Filled with compassion, he ran to embrace his wayward son, restoring him with love.

4. Tabitha (Dorcas) (Acts 9:36–39)

- Known for her acts of kindness and charity toward the poor and widows.

5. Paul’s Call to Mercy (2 Corinthians 1:3–4)

- Reminds believers that God comforts us in our troubles so we can comfort others.

Modern Examples

- A believer who **comforts the grieving**, sitting quietly with them in their pain.
- Someone drawn to **minister in hospitals, prisons, or shelters**, offering hope and presence.
- A church member who notices those on the **margins or forgotten** and makes sure they feel loved.
- A counselor or mentor who listens with **gentleness and empathy**, helping others experience God's healing.

How the Gift of Mercy Serves the Body

- Reflects the **heart of Christ** to the hurting and broken.
- Brings **healing and restoration** to those in emotional, physical, or spiritual pain.
- Helps the church embody **compassion and grace**, not just truth.
- Breaks down barriers, making the gospel tangible through love in action.

Cautions with the Gift

- Those with mercy may **take on too much pain**, becoming overwhelmed or burned out.
- Must guard against **emotional decision-making** that overlooks truth or boundaries.
- May struggle with **enabling unhealthy behavior** if compassion isn't balanced with wisdom.
- Needs to stay rooted in God's strength, remembering **only Christ is the ultimate healer**.

👉 In short: The gift of mercy is like a **gentle embrace of God's love**—bringing compassion, comfort, and healing to those who are hurting.

Prophecy

The gift of prophecy is the Spirit-given ability to **hear and communicate God's message** for encouragement, strengthening, correction, or guidance of His people.

It is not primarily about predicting the future but about **speaking God's truth in the present**, in alignment with His Word and Spirit.

Paul lists it in **1 Corinthians 12:10** and gives this guidance in **1 Corinthians 14:3**: *"But the one who prophesies speaks to people for their strengthening, encouraging and comfort."*

The Greek word **prophēteia** means *to speak forth, to declare God's message under divine inspiration*.

Biblical Examples

1. **Moses (Deuteronomy 18:15–18)**

- Spoke God's words to Israel, serving as God's messenger.

2. **Nathan confronting David (2 Samuel 12:1–7)**

- Boldly delivered God's word of correction about David's sin with Bathsheba.

3. **Agabus (Acts 11:27–28; Acts 21:10–11)**

- Prophesied a coming famine and later Paul's arrest in Jerusalem.

4. **Joel's Prophecy fulfilled at Pentecost (Acts 2:16–18)**

- Declared that in the last days, sons and daughters would prophesy as the Spirit is poured out.

5. **The Prophets of the Early Church (Acts 13:1–2)**

- While worshiping and fasting, the Spirit spoke through prophets to set apart Barnabas and Saul for mission.

Modern Examples

- A believer who speaks a **timely word of encouragement or correction** that aligns with Scripture and ministers deeply to someone's need.
- A prayer leader who **shares God-given insight** for direction during intercession.
- A pastor who preaches with such Spirit-anointed clarity that it feels like **God is speaking directly** to the listeners' hearts.
- A church member who receives a **prophetic picture or word** for the body that inspires faith and action.

How the Gift of Prophecy Serves the Body

- Strengthens, encourages, and comforts believers (1 Corinthians 14:3).
- Provides **confirmation of God's will** in specific situations.
- Calls the church back to **holiness and obedience**.
- Helps the church stay **sensitive to the Spirit's leading**.

Cautions with the Gift

- Must always be **tested against Scripture** (1 Thessalonians 5:20–21). God's Word is the final authority.
- Should be delivered with **humility and love**, not arrogance or manipulation.
- Requires discernment—sometimes what is revealed is **for prayer, not public sharing**.
- Prophecy should **edify the church**, not cause fear, division, or confusion.
- No one prophet is infallible—prophecy is to be **weighed by the church community** (1 Corinthians 14:29).

👉 In short: The gift of prophecy is like a **clear trumpet call**—communicating God's heart and truth in the moment, to strengthen, encourage, and guide His people.

Service (Server)

The gift of service (sometimes called **ministering or serving**) is the Spirit-given ability to **see practical needs and joyfully meet them** in order to support and strengthen others.

It focuses less on being seen in front and more on **quiet, faithful action behind the scenes**.

Paul lists it in **Romans 12:7**: *“If it is serving, then serve...”*

The Greek word is **diakonia**, meaning *to minister, attend to, or render practical help*.

Biblical Examples

1. Martha (Luke 10:38–40)

- Welcomed Jesus into her home and busied herself with serving, showing her heart to care for others' needs.

2. The Seven Chosen to Serve (Acts 6:1–6)

- Appointed to distribute food fairly to widows, freeing the apostles to focus on prayer and the Word.

3. Tabitha (Dorcas) (Acts 9:36)

- Known for her good works and acts of charity, especially making clothing for widows.

4. Epaphroditus (Philippians 2:25–30)

- Served Paul faithfully, even risking his life to help him in prison.

5. Jesus Washing the Disciples' Feet (John 13:12–15)

- The ultimate model of humble service, showing that greatness comes through serving.

Modern Examples

- The believer who **sets up chairs, cleans, or prepares meals** without needing recognition.
- A church member who quietly **takes meals to the sick** or drives others to appointments.
- The tech team or ushers who ensure **worship services run smoothly**.
- Volunteers who **maintain the church building, grounds, or resources**.
- Someone who consistently asks, *“What needs to be done? How can I help?”* and does it joyfully.

How the Gift of Service Serves the Body

- Makes **practical ministry possible**, ensuring needs are met.
- Frees leaders and teachers to focus on their callings.
- Demonstrates **Christ’s servant heart**, reminding the church that love is shown in action.
- Builds unity—when needs are met, people feel cared for.

Cautions with the Gift

- May feel **unseen or undervalued** since service often happens in the background.
- Can become **overextended**, saying “yes” to every need without balance.
- Must guard against **resentment** if others don’t notice or help.
- Needs to remember service is ultimately **unto the Lord**, not human approval (Colossians 3:23).

👉 In short: The gift of service is like the **quiet backbone of the church**—faithfully meeting practical needs so that God’s work can flourish.

Shepherding (Pastor/Shepherd)

The gift of shepherding is the Spirit-given ability to **nurture, guide, protect, and care for God's people** as a shepherd tends to a flock.

It emphasizes **personal care and relationship**, helping believers grow spiritually and remain healthy in their walk with Christ.

Paul mentions shepherds (pastors) in **Ephesians 4:11–12**: *“So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up...”*

The Greek word **poimēn** literally means *shepherd, one who tends flocks*.

Biblical Examples

1. Jesus, the Good Shepherd (John 10:11, 14)

- He knows His sheep by name, lays down His life for them, and leads them to safety and provision.

2. David (Psalm 78:70–72)

- Shepherded Israel “with integrity of heart and skillful hands,” reflecting both care and leadership.

3. Peter (John 21:15–17)

- Commissioned by Jesus to “feed my sheep,” showing pastoral love through care and teaching.

4. Paul with the Ephesian Elders (Acts 20:28)

- Urged them to “keep watch over yourselves and all the flock” which the Spirit made them overseers of.

5. The Elders of the Early Church (1 Peter 5:2–3)

- Called to “shepherd God’s flock under your care... being examples to the flock.”

Modern Examples

- A pastor who **knows his congregation personally**, visiting the sick, counseling the hurting, and praying with them.
- A small group leader who **guides members through struggles** with care and encouragement.
- A youth leader who not only teaches but also **invests in students' lives** outside of meetings.
- A church elder who quietly **checks in on families**, making sure they are cared for spiritually and practically.

How the Gift of Shepherding Serves the Body

- Provides **spiritual protection**, helping believers resist false teaching and harmful influences.
- Offers **personal care**, ensuring no one feels overlooked or abandoned.
- Guides believers toward maturity in Christ, not just attendance.
- Builds a sense of **family and belonging** within the church.

Cautions with the Gift

- Can be tempted to **overextend**, carrying burdens that only Christ can bear.
- May struggle with **favoritism**, focusing on a few while neglecting others.
- Needs balance with other gifts (like leadership or teaching) to avoid becoming only a comforter.
- Must remember the flock belongs to **Jesus, the Chief Shepherd** (1 Peter 5:4), not the under-shepherd.

👉 In short: The gift of shepherding is like a **gentle, vigilant shepherd caring for sheep**—protecting, guiding, and nurturing so the flock stays healthy and fruitful.

Teaching

The gift of teaching is the Spirit-given ability to **explain and apply the truth of God's Word** in a clear, accurate, and life-giving way.

Those with this gift help others not only **understand Scripture** but also **live it out** in practical ways.

Paul includes teaching in **Romans 12:7**: “...if it is teaching, then teach.”

The Greek word **didaskō** means *to instruct, to impart knowledge, to explain doctrine*.

Biblical Examples

1. Jesus (Matthew 5–7; Mark 4:1–2)

- Called “Rabbi” (Teacher), He taught with authority, using parables and real-life examples to make truth clear.

2. The Apostles (Acts 2:42)

- Early believers devoted themselves to “the apostles’ teaching” as the foundation of discipleship.

3. Paul (Acts 18:11; 2 Timothy 1:11)

- Spent a year and a half in Corinth teaching the Word of God, and referred to himself as “a teacher of the Gentiles.”

4. Apollos (Acts 18:24–26)

- Described as “mighty in the Scriptures,” he taught with accuracy but humbly received correction from Priscilla and Aquila.

5. Ezra (Nehemiah 8:1–8)

- Read the Law and explained it so the people could understand clearly.

Modern Examples

- A pastor or Bible teacher who **makes Scripture come alive**, showing its relevance for today.
- A small group leader who **guides discussion**, ensuring truth stays central.

- A seminary or Sunday School teacher who **trains others in doctrine and theology**.
- A writer, blogger, or podcaster who **clarifies biblical truths** for a wide audience.
- Parents who **teach their children God's Word** faithfully at home.

How the Gift of Teaching Serves the Body

- Grounds believers in **sound doctrine**, protecting against error.
- Helps the church **grow in wisdom and maturity**, not just knowledge.
- Equips disciples to **live biblically** in daily life.
- Brings **clarity and understanding** where Scripture might otherwise feel confusing.

Cautions with the Gift

- May become **too intellectual**, focusing on head knowledge without heart transformation.
- Can drift into **pride**, enjoying recognition of knowledge.
- Must guard against **teaching personal opinion** rather than God's Word.
- Needs balance with compassion, ensuring truth is spoken **in love** (Ephesians 4:15).

👉 In short: The gift of teaching is like a **light that makes Scripture clear**, helping God's people understand truth and walk in it faithfully.

Wisdom

The gift of wisdom is the Spirit-given ability to **apply God's truth to real-life situations** in a way that brings clarity, direction, and peace.

It's more than knowledge—it's **knowing what to do with knowledge** in specific circumstances, guided by the Spirit.

Paul lists it in **1 Corinthians 12:8**: *"To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit..."*

The Greek word **sophia** means *insight, skill, practical wisdom for life and decision-making*.

Biblical Examples

1. Solomon (1 Kings 3:9–12)

- Asked God for wisdom to govern, and became known worldwide for his wise judgments (example: the two women claiming the same baby, 1 Kings 3:16–28).

2. Joseph (Genesis 41:38–40)

- Interpreted Pharaoh's dream and applied wisdom by planning for seven years of famine.

3. Daniel (Daniel 2:20–23)

- Praised God for giving wisdom and insight to interpret Nebuchadnezzar's dream.

4. Stephen (Acts 6:8–10)

- Spoke with wisdom by the Spirit, which opponents could not refute.

5. Jesus (Matthew 13:54)

- The people marveled: *"Where did this man get this wisdom and these miraculous powers?"*

Modern Examples

- A church elder helping resolve a conflict with Spirit-led discernment and fairness.
- A counselor giving biblical guidance that brings breakthrough in a tough decision.
- A leader making wise choices for ministry direction that bless generations.
- An everyday believer who, in conversation, **speaks a Spirit-prompted word** that changes someone's perspective.
- Parents wisely guiding their children through difficult moral or cultural challenges.

How the Gift of Wisdom Serves the Body

- Provides **godly direction** when the path forward seems unclear.
- Helps resolve **conflict and confusion** in a Christ-honoring way.
- Protects the church from **hasty or flesh-driven decisions**.
- Strengthens faith by showing God cares about the **details of daily life**.

Cautions with the Gift

- Must be careful not to **confuse human cleverness with Spirit-led wisdom**.
- Can be **misunderstood or resisted**, especially if wisdom goes against popular opinion.
- May need patience—others might not immediately recognize the value of Spirit-given counsel.
- Should remain humble, remembering all wisdom comes from **God, the true source** (James 1:5).

👉 In short: The gift of wisdom is like a **Spirit-guided compass**, helping believers apply God's truth to real-life situations in ways that bring peace, clarity, and alignment with His will.