

Look down the list below tick the things you are doing now.  
 Put a double tick if you see this as a special gift you have  
 Put a star next to things you think you might like to do, or to try.  
 Circle the things you feel we don't have, but really need.

- Apostleship
- Teaching
- Prophesying
- Speaking in Tongues
- Interpreting tongues
- Discerning spirits
- Serving
- Encouraging (Exhorting)
- Contributing money
- Helping
- Particular skills such as...
  - craft work
  - gardening
  - art
  - drama
  - puppetry

- Healing
  - Demonstrating faith
  - Being a peacemaker
  - Showing wisdom
  - Words of knowledge
  - Comforting
  - Administration
  - Working with finances
  - Leadership
  - Music—playing, singing
  - Merciful acts
  - Showing Hospitality
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Feel free to add to the list, and then share some of your perceptions with others, who may then point out other abilities that you have.

Pray  
 For God's gifts to be used wisely in your church  
 For the gifts God wants you to have  
 With thanks for the gifts of others in the group  
 That our churches may continue to grow to maturity in Jesus Christ.

# GIFTS, for you, for us all.



John West



WEEK 1  
WHY GIFTS?



As you look at the Gifts God gives us, keep reminding yourself of these purposes for which they are given.

**Read Ephesians 4:7-16**

The passage tells us that it is Christ who has ascended to heaven and given some to be \_\_\_\_\_

For what purpose (v12)

What sorts of ministry or works of service could Paul have in mind?

What are the further purposes? (v13)

What are the signs of maturity?

What are we actually looking for in Christian people?

What do you think it means by

*“The whole measure of the fullness of Christ”?*

There is a temptation to divide gifts into categories. To talk about natural gifts and aptitudes that we are born with, and spiritual gifts that we are given when we are Christians.

As you read Psalm 104:26-32 what does it tell us about where gifts come from? How should this knowledge affect our attitude towards our gifts?

The truth is that everything we are, and everything we have, comes from God. Moreover, all our experiences of life, whether good or bad, are a part of who we are, and can be used by God in positive ways to build up and encourage other Christians.



WEEK 4

**Other gifts for building the church**

Apostleship, teaching, faith, distinguishing spirits  
Service, Exhortation, Contributing, Giving aid, Acts of mercy



According to Romans 12:3-8 what sort of attitude should we have in exercising the gifts God has given us. What should we bear in mind to help us maintain the right attitude and balance?

Look at the list of gifts above. They are not the only gifts available. Where do you see these gifts being used in your church?

How do they benefit your congregation (with relation to the aims expressed in week 1)?

(Apostles were those who were leaders and recognised as authorities on Jesus in all the churches. Apostles such as Paul, went from place to place encouraging, teaching and establishing churches.

Those who distinguish between spirits presumably know when something is from God or from Satan, whether it be through tongues, prophecies or expressed ideas.)

From your reading of Matthew 5:1-12, pick out some valuable gifts which should be characteristics of God's children?

If prophecy is a message directly from God, how does it compare with Old Testament prophecies which became Scripture?

What do you think is the function of prophecy in the New Testament and today? (See also Acts 11:27-30 and 21:7-14)

What was one of the primary functions of Old Testament prophecy, highlighted in Luke 4:16-30?

Words of Wisdom and Knowledge probably have considerable overlap. Wisdom is to be able to discern what will work, what is best. According to James' letter (1:5) it is available for the asking though here it probably denotes an especially wise person.

Knowledge is probably more than just being knowledgeable (though it may well include that), but implies a spiritual insight about something which could not otherwise be known. (eg See Peter's knowledge that Ananias and Sapphira were lying—Acts 5:1-4). Another example could happen in a counselling situation where the Spirit might reveal something to the counsellor which neither counsellor nor patient were aware of, and which helps to break through to the root of the problem.

Do you know anyone with these unusual speaking gifts?

How do they use them?

Can you see a place for them in your church?

For prayer

Pray for wisdom and insight, especially for those who have leadership positions and who serve on Parish Councils, Vestries and committees.

So we have life, food, shelter, love of others, fellowship and so on. We also have certain things that we do better than others. What are a couple of things that you are good at ?  
*(You don't have to be an expert but maybe just enjoy doing those things).*

How might you use some of these abilities to further God's work in the church?

**1 Corinthians 12:1-11** talks of spiritual gifts.

While all gifts come from God (and therefore could be termed spiritual in one way or another) the Corinthians appear to have questioned Paul about some of the more unusual gifts given by God's Spirit, after they turned to Christianity. In addressing these matters Paul points out that there are a variety of gifts, but that, if they are from God, they must all move us in one direction. What are some of the words in the passage that spell out this purpose?

Who determines the gifts that each person has?

Should that deter us from asking for gifts? (Give reasons)

Read **Matthew 7:7-10**

What does this passage tell us about God's readiness to give us the Holy Spirit (and by implication, the gifts of the Spirit)?

**For Prayer**

Pray that Christians may grow to maturity in Christ

Pray that you may help in that process

Pray that God will show you your gifts, give you those gifts he wants you to have, and help you to see how you can use them most effectively



## WEEK 2

### The gift of healings and miracles



The whole question of healing and miracles requires some balanced thinking. On the one hand we read of wonderful things happening through Jesus and the disciples, and the Church's history contains many similar stories to the present day. You may know people who have experienced miraculous healing in answer to prayer, but also know of those who have prayed sincerely without seeing healing occur. Then there is the element of faith. We ask ourselves when someone fails to recover, "Did we believe enough?"

Here are some observations that you might like to discuss.

Trying to explain away the miracles of the gospels undermines people's faith in the scriptures and fails to come to grips with the authenticity of the accounts of eye-witnesses.

The miracles witnessed to Jesus as the Christ, the Messiah. They proclaimed a message of the wholeness of the Kingdom of God which was coming into the world through Jesus. Later they affirmed the gospel message of the Kingdom proclaimed by the disciples. As such they had a special place in history.

As you look back in Israel's history, miraculous events tend to occur at critical points in time. Times of conflict, of salvation and of extreme need.

In countries which practice spirit worship it would seem that missionaries experience more miraculous events (unusual acts of God) than we often do in our society.

Miracles do still appear to happen in our society, but less often.

This may be because our society is more sceptical of such things and wouldn't believe that God was behind them if they saw them with their own eyes (remember that Jesus did no mighty works in Nazareth because of their unbelief).

It may be that we as Christians don't expect that such things will happen.

Perhaps we as Christians do not have a sufficiently developed prayer life. That we do not live close enough to God.

At times it will simply not be God's will for a person to recover from an illness (Remember the thorn that Paul endured).

I believe we should pray positively and let people know we are praying positively, with the proviso that God's will should be done. I believe that the more time we spend in God's presence the better we will know the will of God instinctively (ie because God's Spirit is working with our spirit)

#### Now read 1 Corinthians 12:12-31

There is a temptation to regard miracle-working as a sign of deep spirituality.

What does this passage indicate about such an idea?

Which three gifts are ranked by Paul?

Why those?

In Psalm 30 what is the right response to healing?

#### Read Matthew 8:1-17

What did the healings by Jesus confirm?

What part did faith play in these healings?

How much faith do you think you need to see God act?

Can others have faith for you?

Does it make a difference how many people pray?

Is faith demonstrated simply in the asking?

For prayer

Pray that Christians in your church should know a deeper prayer life  
Pray that we might be sensitive to the will of God  
Pray for those who are sick and that their healing may bring glory and thankfulness to God



## WEEK 3

### Unusual speaking gifts

Tongues, Interpretation, Prophecy,  
Words of wisdom and knowledge.



NB Prophecy (pronounced profes - ee) is the noun (the gift)

Prophecy (pronounced profes - eye) is the verb (what you do)

So... I may have the gift of prophecy to go out and prophesy.

The gift of Tongues has been a divisive issue amongst Christians. Some have argued that it died out with the apostolic age (ie after the last of the original witnesses to the resurrection died). However there is no evidence of this either in scripture or in experience.

There are two areas in which tongues were used. In enhancing one's own prayer life, and as a way in which messages were passed on to others.

#### Read 1 Corinthians 14:1-9.

What does Paul say is the purpose of Tongues and how were they to be used in church? How do they compare with prophecy?