

**ETHAN TEMPLE MINISTRIES**  
**TOOLS FOR LIFE**  
**SENIOR PASTOR JOHN A. TRUSTY, D.MIN.**

---

**THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT AND FELLOWSHIP**

Another essential ingredient for a fellowship group to be successful is the functioning of the gifts of the Spirit in the group. Since spiritual gifts are manifested through Spirit-filled believers, it is essential that the participants be baptized in the Holy Spirit.

Several chapters in the New Testament discuss spiritual gifts. The most prominent scriptures concerning spiritual gifts are found in Paul's letters.

“For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness” (Rom. 12:4-8).

“But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: but all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will. For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ” (1 Cor. 12:7-12).

“But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men... And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers” (Eph. 4:7-11).

These gifts serve a most important role in the spiritual growth of the individual believer and the church. Paul uses the analogy of the human body and lists various body parts, pointing out the importance each part plays in the functioning of the whole body. The conclusion is clear. It is necessary that every body part function effectively in order for the body as a whole to be healthy and effective in fulfilling its mission:

“For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary” (1 Cor. 12:14-22).

Paul states that “the members should have the same care one for another” (verse 25). When functioning in the church body, the gifts prove a great blessing to each member of the body of Christ.

It should be very clear from Paul’s description that the gifts of the Spirit are necessary if the individual Christian and church are to grow. Paul’s statement that members should have the “same care one for another” is a clear reference to genuine Christian fellowship. In order to experience a deep empathy for our fellow members we must truly know them. We must be free to share our deepest needs, struggles, hopes, and dreams if we are to minister to one another. Paul was referring to the importance of ministering to one another when he wrote:

“Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ” (Gal. 6:2).

This kind of fellowship cannot happen by doing church in the traditional way. If our only connection with the members of our church is meeting

them on Sabbath morning and giving them a warm greeting, it will be impossible for biblical fellowship to happen.

The gifts of the Spirit will function in a very practical manner in blessing those in fellowship. For example, the gift of teacher in the New Testament is one who instructs in God's Word. It is readily understood how vital it is to have this gift in a fellowship group. The group's goal is not to become primarily a study group. There is a place for intensive Bible study; however, the main focus of a Christian fellowship group is worship and healing fellowship. The gift of teaching that fits into this purpose will be a great blessing to all who attend. The lessons will be generally short ones from Scripture rather than a long teaching session. The emphasis will be placed on the practical application of Scripture to the individual issues that arise in the group setting.

Another example is the gift of exhortation. When this gift is present, God will use it to speak words of encouragement, comfort, and hope, especially to group participants who are hurting and dealing with some serious issue in their lives. The manifestation of this gift brings practical, uplifting biblical counsel to the group members. Such spiritual gifts being manifested in a Christian fellowship group will enable the Spirit to minister to all participants.

## **Personal Reflection and Discussion**

What must each fellowship participant have so that the gifts of the Spirit are present?

List several gifts of the Spirit and describe how each one will be used by God to minister to those in the fellowship group.

Have you seen God manifest spiritual gifts through you to minister to others? If yes, which gifts?

From *40 Days: Prayers and Devotions to Prepare for the Second Coming* by Dennis Smith, 2009. Reprinted with permission.

---

Ethan Temple Seventh-day Adventist Church  
4000 Shiloh Springs Road, Clayton, Ohio 45315