



(Baptism & Membership Class)

1. Baptism and BELIEF

Whoever **believes** and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. Mark 16:16

- *Belief in Jesus, rather than baptism, is the avenue for salvation*

They replied, "**Believe in the Lord Jesus**, and you will be saved -- you and your household." Acts 16:31

Yet to all who received him, to those who **believed in his name**, he gave the right to become children of God -- John 1:12

- *Belief is a synonym for faith*

For it is by grace you have been **saved, through faith** -- and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God -- Ephesians 2:8

- *Obedience flows from and expresses our faith*

Through him and for his name's sake, we received grace and apostleship to call people from among all the Gentiles to the **obedience that comes from faith**. Romans 1:5

Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, men will praise God for the **obedience that accompanies your confession** of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else. 2 Corinthians 9:13

- *Belief leads to "new birth"*

. . . he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of **rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit** Titus 3:5

Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is **born of water and the Spirit**." John 3:5

- *Then they were baptised!*

At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; **then immediately he and all his family were baptized**. Acts 16:33

Think & dialogue....

- 1. What is the difference between saying, "I believe in God!" and believing in Jesus?
- 2. Why is it important to link belief & baptism?



ACTION: be not a thinker & talker only!

2. Baptism and IMMERSION

- *The New Testament was written initially in Greek, and the English words “baptise” and “baptism” are taken straight from the Greek words “baptizo” and “baptisma”. These were not “religious” words, although they were used in a religious context. In Greek, these words mean to immerse, dip, submerge or overwhelm; or the place in which the immersing & dipping took place.*

For example. . .

- a blacksmith would baptise red-hot iron in water
- ladies would baptise their hair in dye
- earthenware vessels were baptised to glaze them
- a ship which sank was baptised
- a baptiser is one who dips or dyes
- a baptistry is a bathing place or swimming bath

- a “baptism of fire” is an overwhelming experience

- *The founders of some of the great Christian movements agree that the original meaning of baptism meant immersion, and understood that the early Christians immersed converts.*

Martin Luther - “I would have those who are baptized to be entirely immersed, as the word imports and the mystery signifies.”

John Calvin - “The word “baptize” signifies to immerse. It is certain that immersion was the practice of the ancient Church.”

John Wesley - “Buried with Him, alludes to baptizing by immersion according to the custom of the first church.”
(The above quotes from Rick Warren)

- *Churches such as the Greek Orthodox christen infants by immersing them in water three times - in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit!*

Think & dialogue....

1. Some churches sprinkle water on a child, or a new believer, and hold this to be baptism. Do you agree? Why? Is it necessary to be immersed to be baptised?



ACTION: be not a thinker & talker only!

3. Baptism and REPENTANCE

And so John came, baptizing in the desert region and preaching a **baptism of repentance** for the forgiveness of sins. Mark 1:4

Peter replied, "**Repent and be baptized**, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Acts 2:38

- *To repent is to change one's mind or purpose. However, this is not a superficial change. The Bible usually uses the word to speak of turning away from sin, and links it with a deep sorrow.*

Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death. 2 Corinthians 7:10

- *The depth of the expected change, and the new focus that accompanies it is seen in Jesus radical call to deny self, die to self, and follow him.*

Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, he must **deny himself and take up his cross** and follow me. Matthew 16:24

- *Repentance is portrayed in baptism when we understand the baptistry as a grave. As we come to the grave we die, which is why we will ask you ask the question "Do you repent of your sin?" We are then buried or immersed together with Jesus, in his death, burial and resurrection. This is why you will be asked "Do you confess Jesus Christ as your Lord?"*

Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were **baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death** in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. Romans 6:3-4

. . . having been **buried with him in baptism** and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead. Colossians 2:12

- *Repentance is followed by a lifestyle of love and service*

First to those in Damascus, then to those in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and to the Gentiles also, I preached that they should repent and turn to God and **prove their repentance by their deeds**. Acts 26:20

Think & dialogue....

1. Does someone who has "always believed in God" have to repent? Why?
2. Why is it important to link repentance & baptism?



ACTION: be not a thinker & talker only!

4. Baptism and FORGIVENESS

And so John came, baptizing in the desert region and preaching a baptism of repentance **for the forgiveness of sins**. Mark 1:4

- *Forgiveness is ours for the asking!*

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:9

- *Our forgiveness is continuous and ongoing every moment of every day*

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, **(continuously) purifies** us from all sin. 1 John 1:7

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and **(continuously) purify** us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:9

- *Our forgiveness is total*

Then he adds: "Their sins and lawless acts **I will remember no more.**" Hebrews 10:17

And where these have been forgiven, there **is no longer any sacrifice for sin.** Hebrews 10:18

- *The blood of Jesus and the grace of God guarantee our forgiveness.*

In him **we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins**, in accordance with the riches of God's grace Ephesians 1:7

- *The resurrection of Jesus saves us and reminds us of our cleansing*

. . . and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also -- not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. **It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ** 1 Peter 3:21

Think & dialogue....

1. Can you confidently say "I know I am totally cleansed and forgiven?"



ACTION: be not a thinker & talker only!

6. Baptism and the ENCOUNTER WITH THE SPIRIT OF GOD

Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. **And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.** Acts 2:38

- *Jesus is our model*

As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment the heaven was opened and he saw **the Spirit of God, descending like a dove and lighting on him.** Matthew 3:16

- *Just as baptism does not create the new birth, baptism does not guarantee the gift of the Spirit. The Spirit of God brings the new birth and sets us into God's kingdom. Baptism expresses this reality*

. . . no one can enter the kingdom unless he is **born of water and the Spirit** John 3:5

- *The Spirit is the one who overwhelms us. But notice that this happens in a variety of ways, and is described with different terms. No one experience of God's Spirit can be the norm for the rest of us.*

For John baptized with water, but in a few days **you will be baptized** with the Holy Spirit. Acts 1:5

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit **comes on you**; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. Acts 1:8

All of them were **filled with** the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. Acts 2:4

Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they **received** the Holy Spirit. Acts 8:17

While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit **came on** all who heard the message. Acts 10:44

- *Being filled with the Spirit is not a once only event. Many who received the Spirit at Pentecost, were filled with the Spirit again at a later date*

After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And **they were all filled** with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly. Acts 4:31

- *We are taught to be filled with the Spirit on an ongoing basis*

. . . **be (continually) filled** with the Spirit. Ephesians 5:18

Think & dialogue....

1. Are you aware of the presence of God's Spirit in your life? How would you describe this?
2. How is your experience different from that of other Christians? Is this OK?



ACTION: be not a thinker & talker only!

Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. 1 Corinthians 12:7

- *Spiritual gifts are given according to the grace & sovereignty of God*

We have different gifts **according to the grace** given us. Romans 12:6

God also testified to it (the message of salvation) by signs, wonders and various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit **distributed according to his will**. Hebrews 2:4

- *The gifts we have are a “showing forth” of the Spirit of God, and his grace.*

Now to each one **the manifestation of the Spirit** is given for the common good. 1 Corinthians 12:7

Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering **God’s grace in its various forms**. 1 Peter 4:10

- *Our gifts are to be used for the corporate good over our personal gain*

Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given **for the common good**. 1 Corinthians 12:7

Each one should use whatever gift he has received **to serve others**, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms. 1 Peter 4:10

- *We are to relate to each other in love and seek after spiritual gifts*

Follow the way of love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy. 1 Corinthians 14:1

- *We are not to deny the opportunity to use gifts, nor look down upon those who appear less gifted*

The eye **cannot say** to the hand, “**I don’t need you!**” And the head **cannot say** to the feet, “**I don’t need you!**” 1 Corinthians 12:21

. . . be eager to prophesy, and **do not forbid the speaking of tongues**. 1 Corinthians 14:39

Think & dialogue....

1. Take time to affirm the gifts you see in others!



ACTION: be not a thinker & talker only!

Turn to page 18 and complete the gift analysis section

9. Members - MINISTERS AND PRIESTS

So then, putting away falsehood, let all of us speak the truth to our neighbors, for **we are all members of one another**. Ephesians 4:25

- *“Oneanotherness” is the main way that we express what it is to be a member. By “oneanotherness”, I mean understanding that we are spiritually connected to each other, in one body, and taking up the one another activities which follow. When we do this we live out the teaching that we are all priests.*

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must **love one another**. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you **love one another**." John 13:34-35

Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to **love one another**, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law. Romans 13:8

Now about brotherly love we do not need to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to **love each other**. 1 Thessalonians 4:9

Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God. Romans 15:7

Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, **bearing with one another** in love. Ephesians 4:2

Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. Colossians 3:13

Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ. Galatians 6:2

. . . so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have **equal concern for each other**. 1 Corinthians 12:25

Therefore **encourage each other** with these words. 1 Thessalonians 4:18

Therefore **encourage one another and build each other up**, just as in fact you are doing. 1 Thessalonians 5:11

Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. **Honor one another** above yourselves. Romans 12:10

Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. 1 Peter 4:9

Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. Ephesians 4:32

Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace to all of you who are in Christ. 1 Peter 5:14

Think & dialogue....

1. How does this influence your understanding of church?
2. How will you put this into practice?

ACTION: be not a thinker & talker only!

11. Members - MEET TOGETHER TO PRAY AND SEEK TO KNOW GOD'S WILL

Baptist churches have always considered members' meetings, and congregational government to be a vital part of our life together.

How this works out varies slightly from church to church. However, the following aspects of working together help us see some of the vital principles involved.

- *We have the opportunity to listen to what the Spirit is saying through each other*

In the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers . . . While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, **the Holy Spirit said**, 'Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them. Acts 13:1-2

- *We choose those who do the administration of the church*

Brothers, **chose** seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will **turn this responsibility over to them**. Acts 6:3

- *We set aside leaders of the church*

Three times a year all your men must appear before the LORD your God at the place he will choose: at the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Weeks and the Feast of Tabernacles. No man should appear before the LORD empty-handed: Each of you must bring a gift in proportion to the way the LORD your God has blessed you. **Appoint judges and officials** for each of your tribes in every town the LORD your God is giving you, and they shall judge the people fairly. Deuteronomy 16:16-18

- *We seek to understand and state relevant theological positions*

The apostles and elders **met to consider this question**. Acts 15:6

- *We make decisions about finances and administration*

What is more **he was chosen by the churches to accompany us as we carry the offering**, which we administer in order to honor the Lord himself and to show our eagerness to help. 2 Corinthians 16:19

- *We gather with other Baptist churches (Baptist Union of Western Australia) in Assembly, to worship, pray and conduct business as above, on a regular basis.*

Members' Meetings are generally held four times a year, and you are encouraged to make your involvement in these gatherings a priority. It is an opportunity to have significant input into the life of our church, and the decisions we make together.

Think & dialogue....

1. How important are Members' Meetings for a church that wishes to move ahead in unity?



ACTION: be not a thinker & talker only!

12. Members - SHARE THEIR WEALTH

Unity is maintained, for the most part, through strong, healthy relationships. However, dedicating ourselves to a common purpose, vision, and basis of faith is also an important part of living and moving in unity. As a member of South Perth you are asked to carefully consider, then dedicate yourselves to the following . . .

▪ **Our purpose**

. . . permeating society, transforming people into a community of mature followers of Jesus, (who are...)

▪ **Our values**

1. Jesus is Lord the head of the church, the supreme authority.
2. Jesus is the way to the Father, those not in relationship with him are estranged from God.
3. The Spirit converts and baptises us into a community of ministers.
4. The Bible is the guide and authority for our individual and corporate beliefs and lifestyles.
5. The Father speaks to us in the present by his Spirit, revealing his specific will.
6. The Lord sets apart leaders to oversee and guide his church.
7. Our response to God is to love him with our whole selves, the church as Christ loves us, and our community as ourselves.
8. We are a people on mission with God.

▪ **Our strategy**

- Gather together in relevant, contemporary celebration services
- Develop excellent and relevant celebrations of our corporate identity and common purpose
- Develop small groups dedicated to growth, and birthing new groups
- Pro-actively develop leaders
- Expect each disciple to be involved in disciple making
- Equip the church through quality education programmes
- Actively plant and renew churches and ministries, locally and overseas
- Develop strong and relevant social justice ministries

Think & dialogue....

1. Do I honestly and totally commit myself to the above?



ACTION: be not a thinker & talker only!

STATEMENT OF FAITH

- ***Baptists of Western Australia hold that:***

1. Jesus Christ alone is head of the Church.
2. The Church is the community called into being by God. In both its universal and local expressions, it consists of persons who have personally and knowingly accepted Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord, and have pledged themselves to worship, follow and serve him as a priestly community.
3. By his high-priestly ministry, Jesus Christ has opened the way for every believer to approach God the Father directly through him.
4. Jesus Christ is the supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct in the life of both churches and individuals.
5. He has given to all churches and to every individual the right and responsibility to understand and to do God's will. Therefore, being accountable to God, Christians are not to despise their fellow believers but to accept one another as Christ's servants, allowing each other freedom of conscience.

God has given to human governments the right and responsibility to promote what is just and good but not to coerce belief or practice contrary to conscience.

- ***In common with many other Christians, Baptists of Western Australia also hold that:***

6. There is only one God. He is infinitely good and great, and has revealed himself to be personal and triune in essential being, eternally existing as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
7. God speaks to us through the Bible, the sixty-six Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. Being God-breathed they are fully trustworthy and supremely authoritative in all matters of faith and conduct.
8. God created the heavens and the earth and all that exists in them. He continues to care for and govern his creation, working out his purposes for all he has made.
9. God created humans in his image, male and female, intending that we live in fellowship with him. However, tempted by Satan, God's adversary, the first man and woman disobeyed God. As a result we all sin, falling short in our responsibilities to love God and neighbour and to care for the world.
10. Despite our sin, which alienates us from God and rightly deserves his judgment, God, because of his grace and great love for all people, sent his Son into the world to save us.
The incarnate Son, Jesus of Nazareth, was conceived by the virgin Mary through the Holy Spirit. Fully human and fully divine, he lived on earth a sinless life of perfect obedience. He died on the cross as a sacrifice on our behalf and in our place, redeeming us from the penalty and power of sin and triumphing over Satan. He was raised bodily from the dead and ascended to his Father's presence where he lives forever as our great High Priest and reigns as Lord of all.
11. The Gospel, the good news concerning Jesus Christ and his reconciling work, is God's powerful way of bringing salvation. All who respond in repentance and faith God sets right with himself, forgiving and cleansing them from sin, giving them his Holy Spirit and eternal life, and incorporating them into his church.
12. The Holy Spirit gives new life to all believers and resides in them permanently. He makes them holy, and enables them to grow into the likeness of Christ. Through his Spirit God empowers all his people for life and witness, granting them various gifts for the well-being, functioning and mission of the church.
13. While all believers belong to the universal church, God gathers them into local churches which exist to worship and serve him. Jesus Christ, the head of the church, has established both baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Baptism is the immersion of believers on their profession of faith, an act of identification with the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. It involves commitment to a life of discipleship in fellowship with his people.

In the Lord's Supper, believers remember Christ's sacrificial death, share in fellowship with their risen Lord and with one another, and look forward to his return.

Understanding spiritual gifts.

Being human... God has designed us to know to him! This knowledge is more than a cognitive awareness of the existence of God, or a philosophical framework that acknowledges certain aspects of God's being. This knowledge is primarily spiritual and experiential in nature. Whilst we are to love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, we need to keep in mind that the focal point of our encounter with the Lord is beyond the mental and physical, and into the realm of the spirit. It is in this realm that we become aware of spiritual gifting, in all its various forms.

I say this because gifts & abilities tend to be "inexplicable". For example, who can explain the ability of an artist to paint, a pianist to play, a carpenter to turn wood? Some aspects of these talents are cognitive, but there is always the aspect of the spirit. In other words it comes from that which is an essential part of what it is to be human, but also that part of our being which is beyond us - connected, or seeking connection with the source of life, and each other. The "hard to explain" part of being human.

The story of the creation of humanity sets our forebears in paradise, a place of perfect communion with God, each other, and creation. The same story teaches us that the perfect communion has been distorted. When you were born again as a child of God, the avenue for that communion was restored. You are joined together with Christ, other believers, and have a fresh relationship with the whole of creation.

Part of the renewing process we go through when we come to faith, is the reception of gifts from Spirit, in areas that are beyond normal human talents. For example working of miracles, gifts of healings. These latter gifts are not entirely lost to all humanity; for example, the word of knowledge could be aligned to intuition. We also discover that the enemy of Christ is prepared to use miracles for his own cause, as we see with the magicians in the court of Pharaoh. However, in our new relationship with God through Christ we have the opportunity to use the gifts Spirit gives us for their true purpose... to build up others, and glorify the Lord.

Let's explore...!

Abilities & skills. . . . come in overwhelming diversity and variety. The Biblical understanding is that our skills and abilities are God's gifts to us, by his Spirit. The story of the building of the Tabernacle highlights this

"See, the LORD has chosen Bezalel. . . and he has filled him with the Spirit of God, with skill, ability and knowledge in all kinds of crafts -- to make artistic designs for work in gold, silver and bronze, to cut and set stones, to work in wood and to engage in all kinds of artistic craftsmanship. And he has given both him and Oholiab . . . the ability to teach others. He has filled them with skill to do all kinds of work as craftsmen, designers, embroiderers in blue, purple and scarlet yarn and fine linen, and weavers -- all of them master craftsmen and designers. Exodus 35:30- 35

You will also notice that some of the gifts mentioned in the New Testament can be listed as abilities and skills. For example...

. . . those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, . . . 1 Corinthians 12:28

One of the best ways to begin to understand your unique gifting is by listing areas where you perceive you have particular talents or abilities. As you do this keep in mind that you do not have to be an expert in the field, this is not a competition. It is an opportunity for you to discover some things that are unique about you. Keep in mind, also, that this is a diverse area, and ANYTHING you think is an ability or skill can be listed. See Exodus 35:30-35 (above), also...

We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully. Romans 12:6-8

To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines. 1 Corinthians 12:8-11

Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen. 1 Peter 4:10-11

I am gifted with the following abilities & skills...

-
-
-
-
-
-

Encounter gifts.. are beyond what we may think of as skills and abilities. We see Jesus using them in encounters with a person, or group, where he uses ability or knowledge that is a direct evidence of the power of God. Eg, he used the following gifts mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12

Word of knowledge...

The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true." "Sir," the woman said, "I can see that you are a prophet. John 4:18-20

Word of wisdom...

"Then he said to them, "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's." When they heard this, they were amazed. So they left him and went away. Matthew 22:21-22

Gifts of healing...

The blind and the lame came to him at the temple, and he healed them. Matthew 21:14

Jesus used encounter gifts operate mainly (but not always) in the area of evangelism. It is likely that we will know experience the same emphasis. When we are sharing our faith with people, we can find that the Spirit gives us insight into them, or wisdom to defend the faith, or brings healing as we pray for people. Because of this, they are not gifts that we can write on a list and say we "have them". However, we can acknowledge that the Lord enables us to use these particular gifts, and that we desire to grow in our use of them.

List the above gifts from 1 Corinthians 12 that you have experienced or desire to grow in.

-
-
-
-

Gifts for worship... All gifts are to be used for God's glory, and are for worship. However, certain gifts are used specifically in the context of worship. The gifts of tongues, prophecy, and interpretation of tongues fit this description. As with encounter gifts these are beyond "normal abilities", and as such are

often used by people to stir up controversy. Considering they are, along with all gifts, meant to build people up, the controversy is a sad indictment on the church.

The gift of tongues is that spiritual activity whereby we commune with the Spirit of God with our own spirit, beyond the cognitive, speaking prayers of thanksgiving to the Lord. It is primarily used to build up the person praying.

For anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God. Indeed, no one understands him, he utters mysteries with his spirit. . . . He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, . . . For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful. . . . If you are praising God with your spirit, how can one who finds himself among those who do not understand say 'Amen' to your thanksgiving, since he does not know what you are saying. 1 Corinthians 14:2,4,14,16

The gift of interpretation is the ability, often given to one who prays in tongues, and is to be used when one prays in tongues in a public meeting. This, further edifies the one praying, and enables those who do not pray in tongues to participate in the prayer.

. . . and to still another the interpretation of tongues . . . For this reason anyone who speaks in a tongue should pray that he may interpret what he says . . . If anyone speaks in a tongue, two - or at the most three - should speak, one at a time, and someone must interpret. If there is no interpreter, the speaker should keep quiet in the church and speak to himself and God. 1 Corinthians 12:10; 14:13,27,28

The gift of prophecy is the ability to speak a revelation from God that brings instruction, encouragement, comfort, and strength to the church, and can bring unbelievers to belief.

But everyone who prophesies speaks to men for their strengthening, encouragement and comfort . . . he who prophesies edifies the church. . . But if an unbeliever or someone who does not understand comes in while everybody is prophesying, he will be convinced by all that he is a sinner and will be judged by all, and the secrets of his heart will be laid bare. So he will fall down and worship God, exclaiming, 'God is really among you!' . . . 1 Corinthians 14:3,4,24,25

As God's people we are encouraged to seek after these gifts, and use them to build up the church. (1Corinthians 14:1,5,12,14) Keep in mind, however, that the Spirit of God distributes gifts according to his will (Hebrews 2:4), and not every one has the same gifts (Romans 12:6). If you are not sure how to go about exploring these gifts, ask a trusted friend to pray with you - and as with any other gift, explore the possibilities by practising. Sometimes we only know our gifting through "having a go".

If you do utilise these gifts, or wish to develop these gifts list them below.

-
-
-
-

Service... Whilst there are people who are specially gifted in the areas of helping others (1 Corinthians 12:28), or serving (Romans 12:7, 1 Peter 4:11), these areas of gifting are common to all people. Service and helping is required of all of us, and when we use our spiritual gifts, we are serving and helping in

differing ways. However, none of us is restricted solely to using our gifts, service, in the general sense, is required of us all

When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is the messenger greater than the one who sent him. John 13:12-16

The emphasis on service is so great that Paul reminds us that the work of leaders such as pastors is . . .

. . . to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up. Ephesians 4:12

Given this, it stands to reason that we are all gifted in ways that enable us to give ourselves in acts of general service and help. When we accept this, we begin to understand that the church is not a volunteer organisation, but a group of servants dedicated to serving and helping each other. We no longer view opportunities to help in the church, such as serve communion, clean buildings, wash dishes, encourage and pray for people, from the perspective of "I am not gifted in that area!", or "I don't enjoy that activity!" We cannot elevate ourselves above Jesus.

Doing a complete gift profile, then, requires that we contemplate ways we can serve, and give ourselves to the life of our small group, and church ministry. As Henry Blackaby observed "Watch to see where God is working, and join him." -- sometimes he is working in the kitchen.

Write the areas you can serve God in the space below...

-
-
-
-
-

Offices & Positions... Paul teaches us (Ephesians 4:11-12) that leaders such as Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors and Teachers are given as gifts to the church. Their task is to equip the church for service, so that the body is built up to maturity. In Acts, Timothy & Titus we read that Elders are responsible for leading, shepherding, and directing the church, teaching and preaching the word, and praying for the sick. In writing to Timothy Paul also mentions the attributes required for those who aspired to be deacons.

These offices and positions, along with those set apart to administer the distribution of food in the Jerusalem church (Acts 6:1-6) represent the more formal aspect of work within the body of Christ. Whilst we are all encouraged to use our gifts for the benefit of others (1 Peter 4:10), the church also needs people who are specifically gifted to take up positions of service and leadership.

At South Perth we tend not to use the titles noted above, but we do have offices and positions that cover the areas of leading, equipping, teaching, shepherding etc. For example, Small Group Leaders, Task Team Leaders, Ministry Directors, Pastors, Board Members. Because of the nature of these offices the church as a whole prayerfully and carefully appoints people in these areas. Consequently we have lines of accountability to be followed, training programmes to be involved in, and a process of election or affirmation from the church. One doesn't decide to be a Group Leader off one's own bat.....

However, the Bible does encourage ambition in these areas. (c/f 1 Timothy 3:1) **If you believe that the Lord is prompting you to take up responsibility in a specific area of service, take note of it below...**

You may also find it helpful to reflect on this in the context of your career. Do you have dreams of occupying certain positions, or fulfilling specific roles? Lest we fall into the trap of stereotyping, consider career in the broadest sense. If your ambition is built around home and family, then highlight that. **List some of your dreams and ambitions below.**

Some of us find it quite difficult to state specific ambitions and dreams, often to the point of feeling that it is selfish, and not spiritual. However, if we consider that Jesus' teaching is that we utilise that which the Father entrusts to us, then we are all in the business of doing and achieving. The person who has no drive or ambition for God and self can be the most selfish, simply because of the drive to protect the self. One of the helpful ways to break out of this is to reflect on dreams and ideas that sparked your imagination as a child. **If you do not have specific ambition, jot down a number of things that come under the heading "I always wanted to . . . "**

-
-
-
-

Discover what motivates you! The following are God-given motivations. Every one can be used in effective ministry. Don't be embarrassed to identify a motivation that does not seem spiritual. Almost every one of these can be identified in the ministry of the apostles.

I LOVE TO... (Circle as appropriate) You should be able to give examples of your choices.

DESIGN/DEVELOP - I love to make something out of nothing. I enjoy getting something started from scratch.

PIONEER - I love to test and try out new concepts. I am not afraid to risk failure.

ORGANISE - I love to bring order out of chaos. I enjoy organising something that is already started.

OPERATE/MAINTAIN - I love to efficiently maintain something that is already organised.

SERVE/HELP - I love to assist others in their responsibility. I enjoy helping others succeed.

ACQUIRE/POSSESS - I love to shop, collect or obtain things. I enjoy getting the highest quality for the best price.

EXCEL - I love to be the best and make my team the best. I enjoy setting and attaining the highest standard.

INFLUENCE - I love to convert people to my way of thinking. I enjoy shaping the attitudes and behaviour of others.

PERFORM - I love to be on stage and receive attention of other. I enjoy being in the limelight.

IMPROVE - I love to make things better. I enjoy taking something that someone else has designed or started and improve it.

REPAIR - I love to fix what is broken or change what is out of date.

LEAD/BE IN CHARGE - I love to lead the way, oversee and supervise. I enjoy determining how things will be done.

PERSEVERE - I love to see things to completion. I enjoy persisting at something until it is finished.

FOLLOW THE RULES - I love to operate on policies and procedures. I enjoy meeting the expectations of an organisation or boss.

PREVAIL - I love to fight for what is right and oppose what is wrong. I enjoy overcoming injustice..

(Adapted from Rick Warren Saddleback Community Church)

My personal gift profile

My abilities and skills are.....

-
-
-
-

-

I have used/desire to use these encounter gifts..

-
-
-
-
-

I use/desire to use these worship gifts...

-
-
-
-

I commit myself to serve in the following ways...

-
-
-
-
-

I aspire to the following office or position, have the following ambitions, have always dreamed of...

-
-
-
-
-

I am motivated by....

-
-
-
-
-

This is what I am doing about it....

-
-
-
-
-

Baptism / Membership Application

[] I have committed my life to Jesus Christ as Lord

I wish to be baptised and become a member of South Perth Baptist Church

I was baptised at _____ on / / and wish to become a member of South Perth Baptist Church

I wish to transfer my membership from _____

I dedicate myself to being involved in a Small Group

I willingly commit myself to minister at South Perth

I willingly submit myself to the discipline of the body, and the oversight of the leaders at South Perth

I take seriously the church's teaching on tithing, and resolve to contribute my tithe to the church.

I dedicate myself to the purpose, values and strategy of South Perth

I affirm my belief in the South Perth Baptist Statement of Faith

Name _____

Signed _____

Date / /