

## Addressing Gift Tension

1. One of the lingering questions that may have stuck with you over the course of this series is – what gift(s) have I been given? Knowing that we have all been given a gift out of Jesus' ministering abilities (Eph 4:7), and that the lists in the new testament are illustrative rather than exhaustive, what gift(s) do you believe you have been given?

*If it would help the most illustrative gifts lists in the New Testament are the following:*

*Romans 12:3-8*

<sup>3</sup> For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. <sup>4</sup> For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, <sup>5</sup> so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. <sup>6</sup> We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; <sup>7</sup> ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; <sup>8</sup> the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness.

*1 Corinthians 12:7-10*

<sup>7</sup> To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. <sup>8</sup> To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, <sup>9</sup> to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, <sup>10</sup> to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues.

*As a reminder Robert Clinton's gift categories are.*

*Love gifts manifest the love of God in practical ways.*

*Word gifts clarify the nature, action, and purposes of God.*

*Power gifts demonstrate the power, presence and purposes of God.*

Note: if specificity is lacking perhaps begin by expressing which of Clinton's gift categories you believe your gift may come from (love, word or power). Other members of the group are invited to affirm, encourage, and share how this resonates with their experience of you so that we might be helped to discern our gifts as a community.

## **Read 1 Corinthians 12:1-21**

2. In the Corinthian church certain gifts were being honoured above other gifts causing tension and division. Where do we see this gift tension in our midst brought on by honouring some gifts over other gifts?

*The following was an excerpt from the sermon reflecting on our situation as Tim sees it which may help spark conversation.*

*Little Trinity is a church that historically has been centered around word gifts right - we elevate teaching - encouragement - pastoring - leading and as a result we have built a church that has defined itself historically as holding forth the word of life - honoring the place of the preached word - the formation of children and youth - the discipleship that happens within small groups - it's fantastic - lots to celebrate - praise God for the word gifts in action in our midst over our history.*

*But when we elevate some gifts to the exclusion of others - perhaps not consciously - but unconsciously - we can create gift tension in our midst which if it is not addressed can be divisive.*

*I hear those in our midst with love gifts say - it is to our shame that we don't reach out more to those around us - the poor and the marginalized - to extend mercy and love and resources beyond our walls - what's wrong with us that we don't reach out in love more than we do.*

*I hear those with power gifts say - we are so proud of who we are as a church - but we are doing it in our own strength and not in God's power - he needs to be glorified not us - there is so much more we could do if we relied on the power of the Spirit rather than our intellect - we are quenching the work of the Spirit here.*

*I see those with word gifts at times roll their eyes at those with power gifts - thinking that worldview is somehow one brick short of a load - or I have seen in the word gifts a dismissal of the work of social justice within the church - guarding and rooting us in right belief is the true work of the church.*

3. What truths does Paul remind the Corinthians of to address this tension?

*(vs. 4) The same Spirit gives all the gifts. Which gift is given is not at all dependant upon us but upon the grace-filled activity of the Spirit. In this truth all of the gifts are supernatural – meaning we would not have them except if they had been given. In this truth there is no room for spiritual pride.*

*(vs. 7) They are given for the common good. They are meant to be utilized for the sake of others, not for self promotion or self service.*

*(vs. 13) We have been baptized in the Spirit into the one body – that dismantled the deep divisions and inequality between Jew and Gentile - slave and free – we are all equal in Christ – so let us not reintroduce inequality based on our honouring of some gifts over other gifts.*

*(vs. 14-21) Just as the human body needs all of it's faculties to live into the fullness of our humanity, we need all of the gifts to live into the fullness of who we were meant to be as the body of Christ, as the Church.*

4. How would being rooted in these truths impact the gift tension in our midst?
5. How practically could we as a community create space for all of the gifts that God has given us to be used so that we together grow to maturity in Christ, are built up in love, and become more the church we are called to be?

*Both of these questions are personal and group reflection questions which invite us to apply the truths Paul is reminding us of in the passage to our situation. As with last weeks small group discussion I would be eager to hear what your group comes up with as we seek to be open to the gifts being utilized so that we might live more fully into who we are as church.*