

## A BIBLICALLY FUNCTIONING CHURCH A Gift-Oriented Ministry

*(Available on CD)*

The New Testament teaches the importance of each believer, regardless of age, knowing and using their God-given spiritual gifts to serve Christ. Therefore, it is essential for the leadership of a church to continually emphasize and teach on the importance of each believer using his gifts.

It is necessary for all believers to understand that God has uniquely empowered them with one or more spiritual gifts for service in the body of Christ. Spiritual gifts enable a person to function in a particular way in the church. Churches which do not teach on spiritual gifts rob their members of the joy of effectively serving Christ and actually hinder their growth. Churches that ask people to serve where the person is not spiritually gifted limit the person's success and are not operating according to the Word of God.

*Biblical Teaching Made Relevant in Today's World  
Prepared and Presented By*

Rev. Dr. Arthur B. Stratton  
Community Congregational Church  
4592 N. Hurricane Road  
Franklin, IN 46131  
(317) 736-4281

### I. Spiritual Gifts

The Scriptures teach that spiritual gifts are given according to the measure of faith which God has assigned each believer. Spiritual gifts are given by the Holy Spirit. (Romans 12:3; 1 Corinthians 12:11; Ephesians 4:7)

Facts about the distribution of gifts:

- You have at least one spiritual gift.
- You may have more than one spiritual gift.
- You do not have all the gifts. (1 Corinthians 12:15-21)
- Your gift is essential to the efficient functioning of the church. (1 Corinthians 12:14-18)

Gifts are given for the benefit of others. 1 Corinthians 12:7 teaches that each believer is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. Gifts are not for self-edification but are for the building-up of others in the body of Christ.

Because spiritual gifts are given for the profit of believers:

- Failure to use one's gifts is resisting the Holy Spirit.

There are two extremes to avoid:

- Pride in having a spiritual gift.
- False humility denies what God has given us.

Spiritual gifts in Scripture:

Romans 12:6-8  
Ephesians 4:11  
1 Peter 4:11  
1 Corinthians 12:6-10  
1 Corinthians 2:28  
1 Corinthians 12:29  
1 Corinthians 7:7

## II. The Difference Between Spiritual Gifts and Talents

It is important to know the difference between a spiritual gift and a natural talent. Natural talents are from God through parents. They are from birth to benefit humankind. Natural talents must be recognized, developed and exercised. Spiritual gifts come from God independent of parents and are received at conversion. They are given by God to benefit mankind on a spiritual level and particularly to build-up a local church. They must be recognized, developed and exercised in order to glorify God and point people to him.

Do you know your spiritual gifts? Do you serve in our church using your spiritual gifts or do you serve because someone asked you to serve – regardless of your spiritual gifts?

Please do not misunderstand me. I'm not implying you can't serve in the church unless you are using your specific gifts. All of us are called from time to time to serve in a variety of ways. However, if you always serve not using your spiritual gifts, your joy in serving will be low and you will not be as effective as God designed you to be.

A gift-oriented approach to ministry requires a pastoral staff to regularly teach on spiritual gifts and for each person to serve where God has gifted them to serve. That means certain positions may not be filled. That also means certain ministries may need to be reevaluated if God doesn't provide the spiritually gifted people, and certain programs may be discontinued until the Holy Spirit raises up people who are willing and happy to serve based on their spiritual gifts, talents and interests.

## III. Some of the Spiritual Gifts

A spiritual gifts emphasis in a church will contribute to a church's growth and effectiveness. All too often when churches teach on spiritual gifts some are left out! But what about the gifts of:

Prophecy	Exhortation
Giving	Leadership
Wisdom	Knowledge
Faith	Healing
Miracles	Discerning of spirits
Tongues	Interpretation of tongues
Evangelist	Celibacy
Voluntary poverty	Martyrdom
Hospitality	Missionary
Intercession	Exorcism

## IV. How to Learn Your Spiritual Gift

- Read on the subject, determine your gift and use it.
- Take the trial and error approach which has been used through the centuries.

### SUMMARY AND APPLICATION FOR OUR LIVES

Do you know your spiritual gift? Praise the Lord if you do! If you don't, would you like to?

When a believer serves his brothers and sisters in the church by using his spiritual gifts, it changes his outlook in serving and reinvigorates him.

If you want to learn what your spiritual gift is, set aside a few hours to meet with me, and Lord willing, we will uncover how much God loves you and how he has "wired" you to serve him in this church.

Spiritual gifts are empowering! Using your spiritual gifts helps clarify your purpose in life.

Amen