

***Spirit Filled Worship* Spiritual Gifts for Worship**

1 Corinthians 12:1-11

This week we are going to explore what Paul teaches us about spiritual gifts and to reflect on their use in worship.

Introduction

Think about the worship in your church. Think about the different elements in a typical worship service (e.g. song, sermon, testimony, prayer, communion, silence etc.)

Which bits of the worship do you find most uplifting and most helpful?

The passage

Read 1 Corinthians 12:1-11

Consider the following background:

“The Corinthians who had become Christians had received the power of the Spirit in their lives. They could do things they had not been able to do before. This was wonderful and in 1 Corinthians 1:4 Paul thanks God for it. But some of them began to say that only those who had special gifts, e.g. the power to do miracles or to speak in tongues (v10), had really received the Spirit. They said that the others were not truly Christians. As a result, the congregation was divided. Those with special gifts despised those without them; those without gifts envied those who had them.” *(John Hargreaves: A guide to 1 Corinthians)*

- How does Paul address this problem in the passage?
- Compare 1 Corinthians 12:7 with 1 Corinthians 10:23, 10:33, 14:12 and 14:26. What single truth did Paul declare in these verses?
- Paul refers to different ‘ministries’, i.e. ways in which Church members can give service, in the following four passages: 1 Cor 12:8-10; 1 Cor 12:28; Romans 12:6-8; Ephesians 4:11.
In which of the ways mentioned by Paul are members giving service in your own congregation?

Research

Do you think that the gifts of the Spirit mentioned by Paul are the only spiritual gifts, or are there others? What does Exodus 31:1-5 suggest? Make a list of all the various gifts which the Lord has given for use in church and especially in worship.

Issues

What is your understanding of the gift of “speaking in different kinds of tongues” (v10)? Is there a place for it in worship?

What is the gift of “distinguishing between spirits” (v10)?

A young woman, who was gifted in dance, became a Christian and offered to dance in her church. She said she felt it was a gift from God. Somebody challenged her and said that her dancing was not a gift of the Spirit, because she possessed that gift before she came to know Christ! How would you answer that challenge?

Somebody once likened church to an orchestra.



How does this image help us understand the various gifts the Spirit gives?

Tom Wright reflects on his experience when he joined an orchestra as a trombone player:

“I quickly discovered that there are class distinctions within an orchestra. The strings consider themselves superior to all others; they are the senior section; they carry the tune in many classical works. Within the strings, the violins consider themselves superior; ask anyone who plays the viola or double bass. But within the wind section, too, there are distinctions. The flutes and oboes consider themselves superior to the brass, and within the brass the trumpets definitely regard themselves as superior to the trombones. The only form of animal life lower than a trombone, it seemed to me then, was the tuba, the triangle and the timpani.”

Wright, Tom. Paul for Everyone: 1 Corinthians (New Testament for Everyone)

What might this have to say about church worship and church life?

What gift do you think the Holy Spirit has given to you “for the common good” (1 Cor 12:7)