

Such a Quick Look at  
**Spiritual Gifts**  
that you will be out-of-breath at the end

1. A quick [warm-up] introduction
2. Breezing past Spiritual Gifts in Scripture
3. A Theology of Spiritual Gifts, in 10 steps
4. A couple of John Wesley's thoughts
5. Beginning to put Spiritual Gifts into ministry
6. Basics of congregational structure, according to The Book of Discipline
7. A few ideas on getting started, directed toward the Committee on Lay Leadership
8. Resource Suggestions [for cooling down]
9. Concluding Thoughts [to catch your breath]

## 10. Relaxing as couch potatoes – Questions, anyone?

In the New Testament letters,  
there is a big difference between

*pneumatikos*

= “spiritual matters”;  
spiritual “requirements,” or  
proving you’ve got what it takes

versus

*charismata*

= signs of grace; or  
expressions of the grace that is  
first offered to us by God  
by which we are  
prepared for ministry

Source: William J. Carter, Each One a Minister

Spiritual gifts  
are  
gifts for ministry

Source: William J. Carter, Each One a Minister

Spiritual Gifts for Ministry workshop, by Janice Japp  
Laity Convocation, March 2008

*1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 12: 12 – 31; 13:13* For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. ...

Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. ... If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? ... But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is, there are many members, yet one body. ... the members of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable ... But God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honor to the inferior member, that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it.

Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then deeds of power, then gifts of healing, forms of assistance, forms of leadership, various kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? But strive for the greater gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way.

... And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

Source: New Revised Standard Version

*Ephesians 4:11-12*

The gifts he gave  
were that  
some would be apostles,  
some prophets,  
some evangelists,  
some pastors & teachers,  
to equip the saints  
for the work of ministry,  
for building up  
the body of Christ

Source: New Revised Standard Version

# A theology of spiritual gifts

in ten steps:

1. *The gifts are a basic part of God's plan of salvation.* We are saved by grace and we are gifted by grace.
2. *The purpose of the gifts is to do ministry.* Gifts are not for personal enhancement. They are resources for doing God's work in the world.
3. *The gifts are not mysterious.* While the expression or results may be beyond expectations, the gifts are still a normal part of God's plan for the people who love and serve God.
4. *All the gifts are equal in value.* Each gift is dependent on all the others, in God's purposes.
5. *No single gift – or set of gifts – can be used as a test of Christian commitment.* All Christians are gifted; we are each a full minister of Christ who is a member of the Body.

Source: William J. Carter, [Each One a Minister](#)

6. *The call to use gifts in ministry may not be dramatic or difficult.* The call usually comes within normal Christian life. Often practicing a ministry happens before the gift is discovered.

7. *The discovery of our gifts will not always bring happiness.* God's call is sometimes painful or dangerous. Realization of the gifts *ultimately* brings contentment.

8. *We may never recognize the nature of our gifts.* We may never think that we fully know the will of God for our lives. God can use us anyway.

9. *The gifts are not limited to Biblical lists.* Peacemaking, caregiving, hospitality, prayer, and community are part of God's plan.

10. *The search for the gifts and listening for God's call are part of the journey.* It is not only the result of ministry that blesses, but seeking God's will is also valued. We are always people on "the Way," so the journey is valuable even without a destination fully realized. Source: Carter, Each One...

To discover the mission  
of a congregation,  
first discover gifts of members.  
*Ministry must be based on gifts,  
rather than  
the gifts forced to fit the ministry  
defined by denomination.*

We are not just volunteers  
in the program of the church;  
we are ministers  
who answer the call of God.  
Out of the response to these calls  
comes the mission of the church.

**Organization must follow  
mission.**

Source: William J. Carter, Each One a Minister

Outreach is considered “first,”  
only because it requires  
more intentional effort  
by most within  
the Christian community.

There are  
sufficient spiritual gifts  
in every congregation  
to do  
what God is calling them to do  
at this time.

This is true,  
no matter what is  
the congregation’s size.

Source: Brian K. Bauknight, “Team Building Through Spiritual Gifts,” [Equipping the Saints: Mobilizing Laity for Ministry](#).

What is the individual looking for when asked to participate in ministry?

T *know self and God in powerful ways*

T *live faithfully*

T *contribute to great, transcendent purpose*

T *connect meaningfully to others*

T *participate in an organization that is relevant to their lives ... and relevance will hold their interest and gain support*

What is the reality that the individual faces when the Committee on Lay Leadership asks for ministry among the congregation?

T Do we put most effort into filling our slots?

T Do we maintain the institution rather than focus on building up the Body of Christ?

Do congregational leaders focus primarily on  
what we want to have

or

what others have to give?

Source: Dan R. Dick and Barbara Miller, Equipped for Every Good Work Building a Gifts-Based Church.

## 4 Task Types

When groups are structured in ways we enjoy, we are happier and more effective.

1. *Project* – Most people want to join a ministry group that has a clearly defined purpose, where they participate start to finish: plan, organize, implement, evaluate.
2. *Fellowship* – Many want to accomplish group goals, but it is more important to be with other like-minded people.
3. *Work* – A small portion enjoy groups which focus on accomplish a specific task that require a short time frame and specialized skill.
4. *Process* – A few enjoy ongoing groups which plan, monitor, and maintain programs that already exist and continue afterward.

Source: Dan R. Dick and Barbara Miller, Equipped for Every Good Work

The basic organization  
of a local congregation  
shall provide for  
**six groups** to meet

1. Charge conference = *executive agency of a congregation*. May also be convened as a church conference
2. Church council. Alternative structures such as a combination of Administrative Board plus Council on Ministries
3. Committee on Pastor-Parish Relations
4. Board of trustees
5. Committee on finance
6. Committee on lay leadership, *formerly known as the Nominating Committee*

2004 Book of Discipline, para 244, 246, 248



The charge conference  
decides  
how to organize  
the congregation  
to provide for

Nurture

Outreach

Witness

Leadership training

Planning & administration of congregational life

2004 Book of Discipline, para 244

# Committee on Lay Leadership recommends these offices for election at the charge conference

[please note -- the nominations may also be provided from the floor of the conference. Other offices may also be elected, according to the structure provided by the charge conference]:

1. chairperson of the church council
2. members comprising the committee on lay leadership
3. committee on pastor-parish relations; chairperson for the PPR committee
4. chairperson and additional members for the committee on finance
5. financial secretary
6. church treasurer
7. trustees (divided into 3-year classes). *Notice that the charge conference does not elect the trustees' chairperson*
8. lay member(s) of Annual Conference
9. lay leader
10. recording secretary

2004 Book of Discipline, para 249

# The mission of Committee on Lay Leadership:

“to identify, develop, deploy, evaluate, and  
monitor Christian spiritual leadership  
for the congregation ...”

“In conducting its work, the committee shall  
engage in biblical and theological reflections on  
the mission of the church,  
the primary task,  
and ministries of the local church.

It shall provide a means of identifying the  
spiritual gifts and abilities of the membership.

The committee shall work  
with the church council ...  
to determine the diverse ministry tasks of the  
congregation  
*and*  
the skills needed for leadership.”

The Committee on Lay  
Leadership shall serve  
throughout the year to guide the  
church council ...  
on matters regarding the  
[volunteer, unpaid staff] of the  
congregation so as to:

- T Focus on mission and ministry as the context for service
- T Guide the development and training of spiritual leaders
- T Recruit, nurture, and support spiritual leaders
- T Assist the church council ... in assessing the changing leadership needs

The Discipline allows  
more flexibility  
in ministry practiced  
by the members of the Body.  
It is no longer necessary  
for members of teams  
to be elected  
by an official body.  
The Committee on  
Lay Leadership  
may help people find teams –  
and teams find people –  
at any time.

Source: William J. Carter, Each One a Minister

# Ideas for Committee on Lay Leadership

- T For the first meeting, prepare a workbook which includes
  - Description of the process of discernment
  - Pointers on prayers for discernment
  - A timeline for the work of the committee
  - Suggested reading (a helpful article, a suggested book)
  - Outline the way for group members to engage in prayerful discernment before the 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting, about spiritual gifts and ministries to be supported
- T Be explicit with the group that you need to ask the “God question” *“God, whom are you selecting at this time to lead in this church? Show us your choice....”*
- T Discuss the need to let go of natural desire to prevail.
- T Begin the selection process with this question: *If you could put the very best person you know into the Finance Committee, who would it be?*
- T Pray over the list of names that have surfaced
- T Committee leader contacts first name – summarize gifts recognized to fulfill the ministry, the expectations of the job, training to be given, etc.
- T Nominees invited to pray over responses for several days
- T Trust that nothing is wasted in God’s economy
- T Have a consecration Sunday
- T Provide regular words of encouragement

Source: Charles M. Olsen and Ellen Morseth, Selecting Church Leaders: A Practice in Spiritual Discernment. *and also*

Brian Kelley Bauknight, Body Building: Creating a Ministry Team Through Spiritual Gifts.

## **Committee on Lay (Spiritual) Leadership**

**Stephen Covey writes:** Leadership is not management. Management is the second creation ... but leadership has to come first. Management is a bottom line focus: How can I best accomplish certain things? Leadership deals with the top line: What are the things I want to accomplish? ....

Management is doing things right;

Leadership is doing the right things.

Management is efficiency in climbing the ladder of success;  
Leadership determines whether the ladder is leaning against the right wall.

Source: Stephen J. Covey, The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People

**Kenneth Leech writes:** Saint John of the Cross insists that it is only through some kind of spiritual crisis, in which we experience something of the desolation of Christ in Gethsemane and Calvary, that we can really grow in the Spirit. Through our wounds – or rather through Christ’s wounds shared – others will be healed . . . . The best [spiritual leaders] are often people who have known great pain and inner wounding in their lives, and through these experiences have grown very quickly. Breakdown becomes breakthrough. And this is very much the heart of the priesthood [of all believers], for priesthood has to do with sacrifice, with inner offering, with sharing inwardly the dying and rising of Christ. The most important ‘training’ for priesthood takes place in the deepest recesses of the heart, in the spiritual turmoil, in the war with evil, in the struggle for inner integrity. No ministry which avoids that struggle can be other than superficial.

Source: Kenneth R. Leech, Spirituality and Pastoral Care

# Some helpful resources for understanding and exploring spiritual gifts

1. Bauknight, Brian K. Body Building: Creating a Ministry Team Through Spiritual Gifts. By Brian Bauknight. Nashville: Abingdon, 1996. *Suggestions for continual promotion of spiritual gifts, identifying gifted persons for ministry, putting new forms of ministry in place.*
2. Bugbee, Bruce and Don Cousins, with Wendy Seidman. Network: The Right People, in the Right Places, for the Right Reasons, at the Right Time, revised. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005. *Complete instructions and material for leading a group through the discovery of spiritual gifts for meaningful service in a local church. Tools identify the three elements of “what” you are equipped to do in competent service; “how” you can best serve authentically; and “where” you are motivated to serve enthusiastically. Packet includes DVDs, leader’s guide, and participant’s guide for conducting a 6-hour workshop in multiple sessions (e.g., a 2-day retreat or 6 sessions during Christian*

*Education hour). Workshop originally developed for use at Willow Creek megachurch. Set of materials now available through the Conference's Resource Center.*

3. Carter, William J. Each One a Minister: Using God's Gifts for Ministry, revised and expanded. Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 2002. *Includes a 6-session study of Ephesians in seeking a Biblical understanding of the nature of the church, ministry, and spiritual gifts. Appropriate for either individual or group study.*
4. Carter, William J. Lay Speakers Discover Spiritual Gifts, advanced course. Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 2005. *Lesson plans to prepare a 5-session study of "gifts administration," intending that participants discover, develop, and deploy one's own spiritual gifts in ministry within the Church and wider world.*
5. Christensen, Michael J., editor, with Carl E. Savage. With a foreword by Leonard I. Sweet. Equipping the Saints: Mobilizing Laity for Ministry. Nashville: Abingdon, 2000. *7 short essays on how to move Christians into full participation in ministry. Includes a chapter on "Team Building through Spiritual Gifts," by Brian K. Bauknight.*

6. Dick, Dan R. and Barbara Miller. Equipped for Every Good Work: Building a Gifts-Based Church.

Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 2001. *Outlines an extended congregational retreat, with website available to download handouts and group process materials. Uses 4 tools for creating a “gifts-based” congregation:*

- a. *Spiritual Gifts Inventory – among 20 Biblical gifts, identify your “top two” gifts*
- b. *Leadership Interaction Styles – your style of behavior as a leader*
- c. *Spiritual Type Indicator – identify which is your preferred style of experiencing and approaching God*
- d. *Task Type Preferences – discover under what work settings you are most likely to thrive*

7. Olsen, Charles M. and Ellen Morseth. Selecting Church Leaders: A Practice in Spiritual Discernment.

Nashville: Upper Room Books, 2002. *Outlines a process for recognizing God’s work at the center of our identification of church leaders and ministries.*

*Includes several Biblical and modern case studies about seeking and discerning God’s call in various ways. Olsen and Morseth are Mentors with Worshipful-Work Center for Transforming Religious Leadership.*

# Concluding Thoughts

## To catch your breath

1. The Holy Spirit apportions the gifts to all believers, to do God's work in the world.
2. Discerning one's giftedness can be a lifelong process.
3. The spiritual gifts are *gifts for ministry*, and so your church's unique mission is rooted in the gifts God has given within the community.
4. A congregation should organize to best express its gifts for ministry. Mission comes first, organization follows.
5. When we emphasize the expression of spiritual gifts within the congregation, God can be trusted to help us "cover the bases."
6. Especially focus on outreach into the world, alongside the inreach of congregational support.
7. The UMC requires only a streamlined basic structure, with much flexibility in organizing for unique ministry in your setting.
8. The Committee on Lay Leadership should consider themselves to be spiritual leaders: they go first in emphasizing spiritual gifts within the congregation.
9. Discovering, mobilizing, and expressing spiritual gifts are activities for around-the-calendar.
10. The Way of Christ is a journey of discovery. God will use every one of our steps and mis-steps to ultimately show God's love and care for us.