

EPHESIANS – FACT SHEET 6



Ephesians – Its Message:

Up to now we have seen the Apostle remind us that everything we have, are and hope to be – starts with God. He loved us and chose us ‘in Him’ before the foundation of the world. Our efforts and activities now can only ever be in response to what He has already done. Chapters 1-3 have been the *doctrinal* section of the letter – telling us what ‘God has done’, through Christ.

If the first three chapters tell us what God has done, chapters 4-6 now detail what, in response, *we should do!* We move from ‘doctrine’ to ‘duty’, from ‘exposition’ to ‘exhortation’.

Chapter 4:1-16

Paul starts our practical considerations by talking about *unity* – as he starts with this – so should we. The Apostles initial exhortation is to ‘live a life worthy of the calling’ we have received (vs 1). He then details this out, stating that unity, initially starts with the individual, who is to be humble, gentle, patient, forbearing of others, all in an attitude of love. Paul tells us to ‘make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace’ (Eph 4:3). There is urgency about the Apostles exhortation – “do it – get on with it!” he could be saying.

To highlight the unity that should be found within Christ’s representative body on earth – Paul emphasises the unity of the Godhead (vs 3-6). Seven times Paul mentions the word “one” – one body, Spirit, hope, Lord, faith, baptism & God & Father of all. Just as God in His Trinitarian glory is ‘one’ and can never be separated – so the Church is to demonstrate this. The spiritual truth of the matter is that God’s true Church (those who have trusted Christ, through faith alone) is one – yet the ‘visible’ church needs to step up and demonstrate this to a watching world.

Rather than our diversity and differences being barriers to unity – they are to be celebrated as each of us is gifted differently, as apportioned by Christ (7). The Apostle likens Christ’s allocation of such within the same mood as Psalm 68 (used in the Jewish celebration of Pentecost to celebrate the giving of the Law to Moses). Christ too has been exalted and has given gifts to His people.

The Apostle, speaking about the foundational, essential unity of the Church, emphasises the ‘teaching’ gifts in this section (Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors & teachers) – upon which any growing church must be founded (see also Eph 2:20). It is upon this foundation that the church, ‘..is prepared for works of service’ (Eph 4:12).

This list is one of four lists found within the NT (see *further study*) – collectively revealing some 20 allocated gifts. Whatever gifts each of us has (and we each have one – vs 16) – they are to be used, not for our own selfish edification, but for the greater good of Christ's Church, so that we may be, '...built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God, and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ' (Eph 4:13).

Such a church will not be characterised by 'infant', childlike behaviour, but will grow into maturity as we speak the TRUTH in LOVE, all with Christ at the head (vs 13-15).

The Apostle finishes this section as he started, with CHRIST & LOVE - verses 1,2,15 & 16.

As a local church of God's people, we will do well to 'make every effort' to strive for unity; that being found in:

- Individual **HUMILITY** – 1-2
- Agreement in the **ONE GODHEAD** – 3-6
- Celebrating our **DIVERSITY** – 7-12
- Growing into **MATURITY** – 13-16

Further Study:

I found this useful online summary:

Gifts mentioned in Scripture:

What are the gifts for?

To build up the church — and to accomplish God's work.

Are some gifts 'greater' than others?

Yes— this is in [1 Corinthians 12:31](#). But it is not completely clear which ones are greatest. The clearest passage is 1 Corinthians 12:28-30, where Paul gives an order: (1) apostles, (2) prophets, (3) teachers, (4) workers of miracles, (5) gifts of healing, (6) helping others, (7) administration and (8) tongues. But it's not one hundred percent clear that Paul means that those at the top of the list are the most important — he could also mean that in a new church fellowship, God brings along the apostles (or missionaries) first, then the prophets, then the teachers, and so on.

Are they different from natural abilities?

Most Christians would say yes they are different, but this is not in the New Testament. Clearly some of the gifts — miraculous powers, healing — are not natural in any sense of the word. Other gifts — evangelism, prophecy, faith — only make sense if you are a Christian.

But we could equally well ask "why did God give a person natural abilities if they weren't a preparation for spiritual gifts?" We don't have the answer to that in the Bible.

Are there counterfeit gifts?

[2 Thessalonians 2:9](#) makes it clear that there will be counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders. We also read about false teachers and false apostles, although the New Testament does not suggest that these people have been given a counterfeit special ability, merely that they claim to be true teachers and true apostles when they are not. False prophets are an enduring problem in the Old Testament, some (such as Balaam) showing supernatural abilities. We never hear about false faith, false evangelism, false mercy or false encouragement, though that does not mean they do not exist.

Does every Christian have a spiritual gift?

[1 Corinthians 12:7](#) says yes — whether you choose to call it spiritual gift, or some other name (and the New Testament uses several different words), the Holy Spirit is still at work in you, if you belong to God.

How do I find out my spiritual gift?

As a general rule, the church will discover these things in you before you see them yourself. But you could ask yourself some questions which might help you to understand:

- *What excites me and what do I long for?* Very often a spiritual gift will first become apparent in things of God which capture your interest most.
- *What irritates you most when it is done badly or not at all?* The flip-side of this is that if God is preparing you for a particular gift, then you will be particularly irritated by (for example) poor evangelism, missionaries not sent out, teaching that lacks conviction and authority, and so on.
- *What comes easy to you as a Christian?* If you find it hard to explain passages of the Bible in a way that makes sense to other Christians, you probably aren't a teacher, but if you find it very easy to make the Bible and Jesus Christ relevant to non-Christians, and you can't stop talking about it, then you are probably an evangelist!
- *What do other Christians keep asking you to do?* If you keep being asked to do particular things, this can point to a gift developing (be careful – it can also point to someone else's gift of leadership and ability to delegate to you, and it can also point out a tendency of poor leaders to dump the tasks they don't like on the willing).
- *What have you experienced remarkable success in?* If you've been a Christian a while, and you've been seeking to serve God, chances are that you have had at least one or two remarkable experiences. These don't have to be miraculous. If you go to a church that doesn't see many visitors, and you invited five people on different days of the week,

and they all came the next Sunday, then chances are that you are an evangelist. If you felt it important (for no reason you could think of) to share a particular Scripture or encouragement with someone, and it turned out afterwards that this was absolutely the right thing they needed to hear at that particular moment, you may well be a ‘prophet’ in that sense.

What are the gifts?

There are a number of lists of spiritual gifts in the New Testament. The most important are in [Romans 12:6-8](#), [1 Corinthians 12](#), [Ephesians 4:8-13](#). The lists do not all contain the same items. Many people believe that this means that the lists are not meant to be exhaustive, and that there are probably other gifts than those listed in the New Testament. An alternative view is that the lists go into more or less detail, but are essentially talking about the same gifts.

Romans 12	1 Corinthians 12:8-10	1 Corinthians 12:28-30	Ephesians 4
Prophecy		Prophets	Prophets
Serving		Helping others	
Mercy			
Contributing to needs of others			
Teaching	Message of Wisdom	Teachers	Teachers
Encouraging	Message of Knowledge		
Leadership		Administration	Pastors
		Apostles	Apostle
			Evangelist
	healing	healing	
	miraculous powers	miraculous powers	
	different tongues (or languages)	different tongues (or languages)	
	interpretation of tongues	interpretation of tongues	
	faith		
	distinguishing spirits		

“Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your Word Psalm 119:18