

He came close to death for the work of Christ

/We are now ready to learn about our next gift: Service or ministry. \

Rom 12:6-8

*Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; 7 **if service, in his serving**; or he who teaches, in his teaching; 8 or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.*

This passage gives seven of the ten permanent spiritual gifts. 1 Cor 12 gives one other. Ephesians 4 provides the final two.

The spiritual gift of service is like the gift of helps, but there is an important distinction.

/The believer with the gift of **helps** is focused on specific **people**, whereas the believer with the gift of **service** is focused on **tasks** (projects, the work to be done).\

Today we are going to learn about the spiritual gift of service.

/The spiritual gift of service is an unusual ability to identify a need in the congregation and then to devote oneself to a ministry that meets that need. \

For example, People may need written material on a teaching. A member of the congregation spots this and has a great desire to serve in that area.

If there is no ministry of that kind yet, a person with the gift of service will start a publications ministry.

At some point, a person with the gift of administration will step in to organize that effort and provide leadership.

The pastor-teacher is ultimately in charge of this ministry since it requires accuracy with the word of God. He will set the priorities and standards for the ministry.

We begin with people who were singled out for praise for their service.

/One man in the New Testament who had this gift of service was Epaphroditus.\

Phil 2:25-30

25 But I thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger and minister to my need; 26 because he was longing for you all and was distressed because you had heard that he was sick. 27 For indeed he was sick to the point of death, but God had mercy on him, and not on him only but also on me, so that I would not have sorrow upon sorrow. 28 Therefore I have sent him all the more eagerly so that when you see him again you may rejoice and I may be less concerned about you. 29 Receive him then in the Lord with all joy, and hold men like him in high regard; 30 because he came close to death for the work of Christ, risking his life to complete what was deficient in your service to me.

How can we tell that Epaphroditus had the gift of service?

/First, he was a worker and a soldier.\ Workers and soldiers focus on the task they have been given. No soldier on active duty entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him.

Paul said some other things here about the Epaphroditus' gift of service to the church.

/Second, he was sent to accomplish a task. \ He was a messenger; he brought word from Paul to the Philippians. Messengers are emissaries. They have a job to do and will not rest until the task is completed. (Marathon)

/Third, Paul calls it a work of service.\ And notice the word “deficient”. The Philippians did not complete their work for Paul. It could have been a financial need.

/Fourth, something needed to be done about it. Epaphroditus said – send me. I’ll get it done. \

The gift of service is a supernatural ability to identify a pressing need for the congregation and then devote one’s life to the ministry that fulfills that need.

/Fifth, Epaphroditus was willing to lose his life to complete the task.\ He risked his very life .

Look at verse 30. Epaphroditus came close to death for the work of Christ

After all, he was a soldier. He suffered greatly. He had great love and dedication.

Recall that willingness to suffer and a great love for the people who will benefit are two indications that you have found your gift.

/Finally, Paul told the church to hold Epaphroditus in high regard.\
Paul certainly did.

Php 2:29

Receive him then in the Lord with all joy, and hold men like him in high regard;

/Both men and women can have this gift. Sometimes they serve as partners. \

/Priscilla (Prisca) was the wife of Aquila.\ In the New Testament, they always appear together. They were literally inseparable.

Turn to Romans 16:3.

Rom 16:3-5

3 Greet Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, 4 who for my life risked their own necks, to whom not only do I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles; 5 also greet the church that is in their house.

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There are three tell-tale signs that they had the gift of service.

/They were Paul's fellow workers in Christ Jesus.\

/They risked their own necks \

/The church met in their house in Rome.\

They also hosted a church earlier, when they lived in Ephesus. (1 Corinthians 16:19).

This is a work of service: providing a meeting place for the saints.

/In Romans 16, Paul mentions nine people who had the gift of service.\

Five of them were women.

Women performed vital services in the early church. As they do today.

Rom 16:6

*Greet **Mary**, who has worked hard for you.*

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Rom 16:9

*9 Greet **Urbanus**, our fellow worker in Christ, and **Stachys** my beloved.*

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Rom 16:12

*12 Greet **Tryphaena and Tryphosa**, workers in the Lord. Greet **Persis** the beloved, who has worked hard in the Lord.*

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Tryphaena and Tryphosa were female slaves. They may very well have been sisters. Persis was also a lady.

Rom 16:22-23

*I, **Tertius**, who write this letter, greet you in the Lord.*

/Tertius served as Paul's secretary. (The fancy word for that is amanuensis.) He recorded Paul's letters as Paul dictated them.\

23 **Gaius**, host to me and to the whole church, greets you. Erastus, the city treasurer greets you, and Quartus, the brother.

Gaius provided Paul and other missionaries places to stay when they were in Rome. He also provided rooms for the saints to gather together.

We finish today in Paul's letter to the Colossians. Paul wrote Colossians during his first Roman imprisonment.

Col 4:7-16

7 As to all my affairs, **Tychicus**, our beloved brother and faithful servant and fellow bond-servant in the Lord, will bring you information. 8 For I have sent him to you for this very purpose [he was an emissary for Paul], that you may know about our circumstances and that he may encourage your hearts; 9 and with him Onesimus, our faithful and beloved brother, who is one of your number. They will inform you about the whole situation here.

10 Aristarchus, my fellow prisoner, sends you his greetings; and also Barnabas's cousin Mark (about whom you received instructions; if he comes to you, welcome him);

*11 and also **Jesus who is called Justus**; these are the only fellow workers for the kingdom of God who are from the circumcision, and they have proved to be an encouragement to me. 12 **Epaphras**, who is one of your number, a bondslave of Jesus Christ, sends you his greetings, always laboring earnestly for you in his prayers [prayer can be a ministry “prayer warrior”], that you may stand perfect and fully assured in all the will of God. 13 For I testify for him that he has a deep concern for you and for those who are in Laodicea and Hierapolis. 14 Luke, the beloved physician, sends you his greetings, and also Demas. 15 Greet the brethren who are in Laodicea and also **Nympha** and the church that is in her house.*

/The works of service are a great encouragement to the church. \

We are told in Romans 12:1 to present our bodies a living and holy sacrifice. This is our spiritual service.

We do not have the same function. But we are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.

So let's present our bodies and serve one another!

Outreach. Missionary service. Team evangelism. Hospitality. Publications.

Gift of service in Burkina Faso. (read)

Next Sunday, we will wrap up our series on spiritual gifts.

We'll review the gifts, and the signs is operating in their gift.

Finally, we'll end as we began: gifts are for the common good. We serve one another. We work as a team.

1 Peter 4:10

10 As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

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