

DAVID'S MEN

SEEKING THE HEART OF GOD



The Local Church

Church. Just reading this word usually produces an emotional, intellectual, and/or physical response. For some, this word brings warm memories of fellowship and spiritual growth. For others, it brings feelings of anger and pain. Regardless of our past, we must understand the local church is God's Plan A for spiritual community, fellowship, evangelism, and worship. The word *church* is translated from the Greek word *ekklesia* which is defined as "an assembly" or "called out ones" and focuses on the people gathering, not the physical space where they gather.

As believers, we are all part of the universal Church Paul describes in 1 Corinthians 12:13 - "*For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.*" As a member of this body, each of us is called to be part of a *local* church. Many of Paul's New Testament letters were written to members of *local* churches in Galatia, Corinth, Ephesus, Philippi, and Rome. John mentions local congregations in the first few chapters of Revelation as he calls out churches in Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. In each case the author references specific bodies of believers confined to a single geographical area; ie., local churches.

While church attendance does not make you a Christian, choosing to not be involved is not an acceptable option for those who belong to the Body of Christ. In recent decades the church has seemingly lost some of its importance in our culture--even with professing Christians. This comes as little surprise in a society busier than ever and less reliant on community. After all, it is much easier to stream church from home or listen to a biblical podcast in the car than attend church each week. However, as members of a local church, it is important we utilize our spiritual gifts to support the body of believers. God has gifted us for the "common good" (1 Corinthians 12:7).

So, what does it mean to be involved with a local body of believers? In Acts 2:42 - 47, Luke describes the early local church and their activities: "*And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers....And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.*" Find a local body of believers who are actively pursuing God in this way and join with them. Fellowship together. Serve together. Meet together. Eat together. Worship together. Do life together while ultimately expanding the Kingdom of God.

When we join a local church, we must remember it is under Jesus' authority (Ephesians 1:22 - 23). We are often quick to criticize the Bride of Christ due to our personal preferences (e.g., worship style, bible translation, children's programming), but we must not let our opinions on such issues hinder the primary message of the Gospel. As we focus this month on our individual roles within the local church it is important that we first understand God created the church so that He may be glorified and we may be sanctified. With this purpose in mind, let us be contributors and not just consumers of the local church...an army, not just an audience!

Imagine a local church whose men are fired up about what God is actively doing in their lives. Where the men come early to serve and volunteer, teach adults and children, generously give their money and time, worship passionately and authentically, and are eager to tell others about the Gospel. These thoughts should excite us, as we have an opportunity to be part of and contribute to such a local gathering of Christ-followers. Such a church is a movement impacting families, communities, and the world!

Current Month Assignments

- Read [*Gaining by Losing: Why the Future Belongs to Churches That Send*](#) by J. D. Greear and prepare a book summary to share with the group.
- Complete the *Discovering Your Spiritual Gifts* assessment included in this month's materials. If you've previously done this, compare these results with past results to check for alignment. At this month's DM meeting, be prepared to:
 - Share your results from this assessment.
 - Share how you are using your gift(s) to serve in your church. If you currently aren't using your gift(s), schedule an appointment with a church staff member to discuss opportunities to use them. Ask a DM in your group to hold you accountable for scheduling and following through.
- Memorize this month's verses. Review verses from previous months to ensure they are deeply rooted.
- Man-date: As usual, this would be a great opportunity to practice saying your verses.

Resources:

- [*Why Every Christian Should Belong to a Local Church*](#) (a 3-minute video from Pastor Matt Chandler of The Village Church)
- [*What is the Church?*](#) (an article by Robert Velarde)
- [*What is the "Church?"*](#) (a brief primer on the universal church and local churches by Justin Taylor)
- *Discovering Your Spiritual Gifts* assessment (follows this month's memory verses)

Memory Verses

Christian Community

Matthew 18:20 - For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.

Hebrews 10:24-25 - And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

Bear Fruit

Galatians 5:22-23 - But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

Galatians 6:9-10 - And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.

Matthew 5:16 - In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

REMINDER: The *Discovering Your Spiritual Gifts* assessment starts on the next page.

Discovering Your Spiritual Gifts

Instructions

This worksheet is designed to assist you in identifying your strengths as specifically related to ministry and service in the local church. Its primary purpose is to enable you to identify areas of ministry for which you are most likely gifted. It is not designed to be an exhaustive analysis of spiritual gifts, but rather to highlight areas of strength based on what you feel motivates you spiritually.

You will fill in a “score” on the worksheet in the box corresponding to the statement number based on the following scoring system:

Score	How This Statement Best Describes Me
0	I am seldom or never this way
1	I am usually not this way
2	I am this way some of the time
3	I am this way most or all of the time

Keep in mind when you score yourself that most of these are desirable traits for a Christian to have, and giving yourself a 0 or a 1 on a particular trait does not mean that you are unspiritual, but rather that it is not a primary motivating factor for you as an individual.

Add up your scores for each column at the bottom of the worksheet pages. Transfer these totals to the Gifts Analysis page for each associated column. Take note in particular of the columns having the higher scores. These are probably representative of areas in which you are most gifted or motivated.

The contents of this worksheet are for your information only. Therefore, be honest and open in evaluating yourself. Remember that while we should all have good qualities as Christians, there are differences in motives and in how we express the unique character that each of us has been gifted with by God.

As a member of the body of Christ, you are very crucial to the overall health and strength of the body. We will only function as effectively as God intends if each member is doing its part. That is why we have a strong conviction that each member have a place in active ministry, and we hope that this worksheet will be helpful in finding that place of service that God intends for you.

Spiritual Gifts Worksheet – Page 1

Place Scores in the Shaded Box Next to the Statement

1. I like to organize and plan.						
2. I want to spend time with unbelievers so I can share my faith.						
3. I enjoy being asked to share advice or being an encouragement to others.						
4. It is important to me that the money I give to the church is used as effectively as possible.						
5. I am more strongly motivated by the idea of meeting a need than performing the task.						
6. I prefer to be led by others.						
7. I enjoy setting goals and then making plans to meet those goals.						
8. I rapidly meet the needs of others for help.						
9. I have the ability to make strangers feel at ease.						
10. Teaching that can't be applied bothers me.						
11. I thrive on organizing people, ideas and resources to improve efficiency.						
12. I have an overwhelming desire to share the gospel with unbelievers.						
13. I like assisting others in resolving difficult questions in their lives.						
14. I notice when others have a material or financial need.						
15. I like having people visit my home.						
16. I enjoy meeting non-Christians, even total strangers.						
17. I trust that God will meet all of my needs so that I can give sacrificially a portion of all my income.						
18. I enjoy welcoming guests and making them feel comfortable.						
<i>Add Scores in Each Column and Log Here →</i>						
	A	B	C	D	E	F

Spiritual Gifts Worksheet – Page 2

Place Scores in the Shaded Box Next to the Statement

19. Those who are in distress seem drawn to me.						
20. I have a burden to disciple others so that they can help one another.						
21. Often, groups in which I am involved look to me to lead them.						
22. I am compelled to unmask sin in other people.						
23. I have the ability to make difficult passages of scripture understandable.						
24. I have the ability to make decisions rapidly and stand by them.						
25. I enjoy being used by God to teach and caution large groups of believers.						
26. I like projects that require a hands-on approach.						
27. I care more about relationships than tasks.						
28. I enjoy spending a lot of time studying the Bible so I can share these truths with others.						
29. I like doing special things for people who are sick or having difficulties.						
30. I consider myself a task-oriented person.						
31. I find contentment studying God’s Word and communicating my understanding with others.						
32. I have the ability of helping groups of all sizes in making decisions.						
33. I am greatly concerned with being a comfort to others.						
34. I want my instruction to cause others to see what God is saying and to respond.						
35. I prefer following rather than leading.						
36. I desire to care for the spiritual well-being of a group of Christians over an extended time.						
<i>Add Scores in Each Column and Log Here →</i>						
	G	H	I	J	K	L

Gifts Analysis

Compute totals by adding columns down from the previous pages and writing total scores in the boxes below. For example, the total for questions 1, 7 and 11 would be written in box "A" below.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L

- | | |
|------------------------|---------------------|
| A. ____ Administration | G. ____ Leadership |
| B. ____ Evangelism | H. ____ Mercy |
| C. ____ Exhortation | I. ____ Prophecy |
| D. ____ Giving | J. ____ Service |
| E. ____ Helps | K. ____ Shepherding |
| F. ____ Hospitality | L. ____ Teaching |

Below is a summary of each of the qualities that are identified by this worksheet. Along with giving you insight into your own motivations, these should be helpful in directing you toward areas of service that will utilize the strengths God has given you.

Summary of Spiritual Gifts

Administration: A goal and object-oriented individual who has strong organizational abilities that make it possible to coordinate resources in order to accomplish tasks as quickly as possible.

Evangelism: One with a strong desire to share the Gospel with unbelievers in every possible situation and through all possible means.

Exhortation: A special ability to encourage others in the body of Christ by giving them words of comfort, courage and counsel at times of need or crisis.

Giving: The ability to give material goods and financial resources with joy, so that the needs of the Lord's work are met.

Helps: One who is motivated by the desire to further the ministry by meeting genuine needs of another individual, usually someone in a leadership position.

Hospitality: The ability to make guests feel comfortable and "at home."

Leadership: The ability to lead others toward spiritual growth; a visionary with the ability to set goals and motivate others toward accomplishing these goals.

Mercy: One who has immediate compassion for those suffering physically, mentally or emotionally. This person derives great joy in meeting the needs of others.

Prophecy: The ability to proclaim God's truth without compromise. This person has strong convictions and is persuasive in defining right and wrong.

Service: The ability to perform any task with joy that benefits others and meets practical needs.

Shepherding: The unique ability to take responsibility for the long-term spiritual growth of a group of believers; assumes responsibility to guide, feed and protect the flock.

Teaching: The ability to research and explain God's truth so there is understanding and application in the lives of others.