

Discovering Your Ministry Within The Kehilah: Living A Spirit-Filled Life Part 8-A

Discovering Your Spiritual Gifts¹

Notice that I have appended an alpha character on the Part identifier. Due to the amount of the material that I want to cover in "Discovering Your Spiritual Gifts" as well as the final part on "Exploring the Gifts of the Ruach," I have elected to do multi-parts to keep the length more manageable, while also giving you the information that you will need in Discovering Your Ministry Within the Kehilah.

Know Your Gift

Rabbi Sha'ul likens the gifts of the Ruach to various parts of the human body in 1 Corinthians 12:14-27. The body can function best when all the parts are functioning according to His design. He wrote, **"Now you together constitute the body of the Messiah, and individually you are parts of it."** (1 Corinthians 12:27)

The task of the Kehilah is too great for any one person to handle and too varied for the skill of any one person to accomplish. God has met this difficulty by dividing the task and giving to every Believer gifts that enable us to do our part. By distributing the work, He lightens the burden for all and makes possible the smooth carrying out of His purposes. That is undoubtedly the reason behind the gifts of the Spirit given to the various members of the Kehilah. Kefa wrote, **"As each one has received some spiritual gift, he should use it to serve others, like good managers of God's many-sided grace."** (1 Peter 4:10) The Ruach desires to take us, control us, and use us as instruments and organs through whom He can express Himself in the body of Messiah. The Spirit of God, His presence and His gifts are not simply desirable in the Kehilah; they are absolutely necessary.

What God Wants You to Be

Since Rabbi Sha'ul is the prime expositor on the issue of the spiritual gifts in the Brit Hadashah, it is necessary for us to understand his mindset. He says in Romans, **"For just as there are many parts that compose one body, but the parts don't all have the same function; so there are many of us, and in union with the Messiah we comprise one body, with each of us belonging to the others."** (Romans 12:4-5) In this posting, I want us to look at seven questions to help us lay a foundation for discovering our spiritual gifts.

1. What is the Body of Messiah?

I realize this may seem like a simple question for most of my readers, but I want to be sure we are all on the same page. The Bible says that as Believers we are all one Body in Messiah. We understand that to be a group of Believers gathered together to fulfill God's purpose on earth. In

¹ I am indebted to the Ruach and the Word of God for my knowledge and understanding of this whole issue of discovering the third Person of the Trinity, His ministry and His gifts. In addition, in my studies, I have also come to appreciate the work of C. Peter Wagner. Most of the material for this and subsequent postings in this series are from his book "Discovering Your Spiritual Gifts." I have also been heavily influenced by the writings of Catherine Marshal, especially her book "The Helper."

short, the Kehilah! God chose to make the Body of Messiah a living organism, Yeshua being the head and each member functioning with one or more spiritual gifts. Understanding spiritual gifts then is a foundational key to understanding the organization of the Kehilah. It cannot be mere coincidence that in all three of the explicit passages of spiritual gifts (Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 4) the gifts are explained in the context of the Body. If each of us knows what our particular function is in the Body, we are able to think soberly of ourselves and launch into doing the will of God.

2. Who has Spiritual Gifts?

Every Believer who is committed to Yeshua and is truly a member of His Body has at least one gift and quite possibly more. The Bible says that every Believer has received a gift (see 1 Kefa quote above) and that **"to each person is given the particular manifestation of the Spirit that will be for the common good."** (1 Corinthians 12:7) Possession of one or more spiritual gifts is a part of God's plan for every believer. Say this to yourself: *"It is awesome to be reminded that God knows me, He loves me and He considers me special enough to give me a personal gift so that I can serve Him."*

3. What are Gift-Mixes?

Many Believers are multi-gifted, we could call a "gift-mix" instead of a single gift. Given the variety of spiritual gifts, the degree of giftedness in each personal case and the multitude of ministries through which each gift can be exercised, the combination of these qualities that each one of us has been given may be the most important factor in determining our spiritual personalities. Most of us are used to the idea that each person has his or her own personality as we discussed in posting 7. Our individual identity is determined to a large extent by the gift-mix that God has given us. In order for you to be everything that God wants you to be, it's imperative that you discover your gift-mix and know for sure that you are equipped to **"know what God wants and will agree that what he wants is good, satisfying and able to succeed."** (Romans 12:2)

4. What is the relationship between God's Gifts and God's Calling?

Believers frequently speak of our calling. For me, I have discovered that my calling is what I refer to as "thawing the frozen chosen." In other words, I'm a discipler. I like to take newborn spiritual babies and train them up to become disciples and then disciplers themselves. A person's call should be closely associated with their gift-mix. God does not give you gifts that He does not "call" you to use, nor does He "call" you to do something for Him without equipping you with the necessary gift-mix to do it.

5. What is a Spiritual Gift?

According to C. Peter Wagner, "a spiritual gift is a special attribute given by the Holy Spirit to every member of the Body of Christ, according to God's grace, for use within the context of the Body."² Let's take a closer look at those last two phrases:

- "According to God's grace." The common Greek word for spiritual gift is *charisma*; the plural is *charismata*. Our term for the charismatic movement or charismatics is derived from this Greek word. But note something else; *charisma* comes from the root word *charis* which means *grace*. A close relationship exists between spiritual gifts and the grace of

² C. Peter Wagner, "Discovering Your Spiritual Gifts," page 15.

God.

- “For use within the context of the Body.” Even though he was my childhood hero and I still watch old re-runs, spiritual gifts are not designed for Lone Rangers. They are designed for members of the Body. Most of the things God does in the world today are done through Believers who are working together in community, complementing each other with their gifts in their local Kehilah. Let me note, however, that many gifts are designed to benefit those who are not yet members of the Body, i.e. non-believers.

6. What are the benefits of Spiritual Gifts?

First, you will be a better Believer and better able to allow God to make your life count for Him. Believers who know their spiritual gifts tend to develop healthy self-esteem.

Second, not only does knowing about spiritual gifts help you, it also helps the Kehilah as a whole. It helps the Body to gain ***"the standard of maturity set by the Messiah's perfection."*** (Ephesians 4:13)

Third and perhaps most importantly, knowing about spiritual gifts glorifies God. Kefa advises Believers to use their spiritual gifts and then adds why: ***"that in everything God may be glorified through Yeshua the Messiah - to Him be glory and power forever and ever. Amen."*** (1 Kefa 4:11)

7. Are you ready to discover, develop, and use your Gift(s)?

One of the primary spiritual exercises for any Believer is to discover, develop and use his or her spiritual gift. Notice the order here. Discover first and then develop and use. This is because spiritual gifts are *received*, not *achieved*. God gives the gifts at His discretion. God has not entrusted any human being with the ability to give spiritual gifts.

In Part 8-B, we will look at how many gifts are there and where are they in the Bible.