



Using Spiritual Gifts:

You Can Go for it

Or Run from it!

By Jim Poitras

“...And grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word,

By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus.

And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness” (Acts 4:29-31).

It is time for us to wake up to the need of Spiritual Gifts and ask, “Why can’t I have them? Why can’t I have them now?”

In the Word of God the church is often compared to the natural body. We are the “Body of Christ.” Gifts are as essential to the Body of Christ as our natural members are essential to our bodies. If we are going to live and work for God, we must move with and in the Spirit.

The Early Church was designed for total participation. Participation in church meetings was the responsibility of everyone present. Persecution weeded out all who were not strong and serious. Today there is not a lot of participation in the church. We listen quietly, sing when we are told, and follow others as they dance before the Lord. We say “Amen” to someone else’s praying and respond with an occasional “Preach It!” when someone is preaching. We need to return to being more active in the church.

“Throughout Christendom in the Fourth Century, we professionalized the local church and turned over our Sunday services to the professionals, leaving them to do almost everything while we sat and watched. Laymen found themselves stripped of initiative and power, like newly captured slaves. Laywomen were quietly relieved of what little responsibility and leadership they had. All the laity suddenly found Sunday worship to be more distant from their personal lives and concerns. They fell into Spectator Christianity, where loneliness doesn’t end at church--it starts there” (James H. Rutz, the Rebirth of the Church, page 3).

If you always do what you have always done you will always get what you have always gotten.

The church in Acts 2 had total participation. Paul in 1 Corinthians 14 admonished us all to participate when we meet together for church so everyone can be encouraged. I am suggesting that an “every member ministry” is the Biblical mandate for the church.

We can:

1. Lead in praises and worship.
2. Be used in the Gifts of the Spirit.
3. Pray for those in need of the Holy Ghost.
4. Be friendly to visitors.
5. Testify of God’s goodness.

6. Be sensitive to the Spirit.
7. Be a Prayer Warrior.
8. Lay hands on people.

The church in the Book of Acts could be defined as a close association of friends, ministering to the needs of each other, and interacting as a body.

When you become active in the local assembly you become part of the action. As you are led by the Holy Spirit, you experience the power of God and the great joy of watching the body at work.

God has given the fivefold ministry (apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers) to perfect (equip) the members for the work of the ministry (Ephesians 4:11-12). This is to build up the Body of Christ. The ministers were called to enable us to be settled in the truth of God's Word; become spiritually established, and matured in Christian attitude.

The Early Church existed for 300 years without a church building; yet they turned their world upside down. 3,000 people were added to the church over night and they were taken care of by meeting house to house. For about 1,700 years pastors have been doing all the church work. This is not the way it was in the Book of Acts. It is as if all the responsibility of world evangelism is upon the pastor. This should not be the case. We too should share in the work load as God planned. If we do not become active in the church it is easy to backslide or become bored with church. We must be trained to do something for God. We need to be right in the center of what God wants to do in the Church. We must break through our tradition and return to the body ministry.

We are a sick body without the Gifts of the Spirit because we will not be working properly. Gifts of the Spirit in correct operation denote a healthy church. Gifts should not be the exception but the rule; the order of the day. It is the natural consequence of the Spirit moving through and in the church. It means all the members are moving correctly. Paul shows us this through the analogy of the body.

We should be excited when we see the body in operation. When one member is working the other members of the body do not get jealous. They perform their function. When one member is glorified then the whole body rejoices.

The Gifts help us to see the things of God, and perceive the power of the devil and spiritual wickedness in high places. It is time for us to allow the Head of the Body to control the Body. Will you allow Him to move? We can cripple Him by our reluctance. Every member can have at least one gift. We all have a work to do. We need to work according to the way we have been placed in the Body. If we are able to reach the place of obeying the supernatural world then the supernatural world will obey us.

The prerequisite to be used in the Gifts of the Spirit is the obedience to Gospel plan of Salvation. That is repentance, baptism in Jesus' name, and Holy Ghost baptism. Once you have done this, you are in a position to do something for the world. The salvation plan is designed to straighten your life out. After that you can turn the world upside down.

God will not come to you or your church unless He is given the opportunity to do something. Jesus was always going places and doing things. God is spontaneous and moves quickly.

When God speaks to you to do something for Him you must act quickly and according to what He has told you. Do not add to or take away from what God says.

God wants you to find your place in the Body Ministry. It is time for a lot of little people to do great things (Daniel 11:32). When God gives you a ministry, you should stay in it, let it grow and expand. Step out in faith.

We need to develop our gift/ministry. Use it. Exercise It. Perfect It. Gifts are given for the growth of the church. You can go for it or run from it!

Study Questions

1. Describe how the Early Church was designed for total participation. _____

2. What are some of the things members can do within the church service? _____

3. How can the church in the Book of Acts be defined? _____

4. Who is included in the fivefold ministry of the Church? _____

5. What is the purpose of the fivefold ministry? _____

6. What is the responsibility of the ministry according to Ephesians 4? _____

7. When did the Early Church start using church buildings? _____

8. Why are Gifts given to the Church? _____

9. What do the Gifts help us see and perceive? _____

10. What is the prerequisite for being used in the Gifts of the Spirit? _____

11. What is meant by “every member ministry”? _____

12. When God speaks to us what should we do and what should we not do? _____
