

Spiritual Gift Definitions* (Definitions and a Brief Overview)

Administration

Definition: The supernatural ability to provide organization for the goals of the body of Christ by designing and carrying out an efficient plan of action

Gift Characteristics:

1. Like the helmsman on a ship, they plot the course OR for an orchestra, they bring together all the different parts of music for the various musicians to play.
2. Carry vision into reality by putting the details into a plan of action.
3. Tend to be more task- and detail-centered than people-centered, often linear planners
4. Focus on the details of the vision, part-by-part, rather than the "big picture."

Apostleship

Definition: A supernatural "sentness" to serve as a pioneering voice, which tends to push the church community to explore new territory. They are creative and resourceful to come up with new and innovative ways to do kingdom work that often results in establishing new churches or ministries.

Gift Characteristics:

1. Like a business entrepreneur, the apostle envisions what has yet to come to pass.
2. Bring voice for others to what might be, or what might need to be done.
3. Frequently start new ministries without really thinking about it, as it flows from their lifestyle.
4. Able to sort through the flood of innovative ideas and offerings and develop the one(s) that fit the moment and context.

Discernment of Spirits

Definition: The supernatural ability to determine whether a certain action has its source in God, man, or Satan.

Gift Characteristics:

1. Able to discern the source of a message or special word as being from God or Satan.
2. Able to discern a person's spiritual motivation to be from God or Satan.
3. Have a profound sense of the spiritual realm, often sensing things in the spiritual realm that others simply do not experience.
4. Often able to help others discover the spiritual source of their problems.

Evangelism

Definition: The supernatural ability to share the Gospel with unbelievers in such a way that people respond and became followers of Jesus Christ.

Gift Characteristics:

1. Share the Gospel in such a way that people respond by accepting Christ.
2. Have an ongoing desire to share the Good News with many people.
3. Often most effective in one type of evangelistic effort and not necessarily others: i.e. one-to-one, open air preaching, small group settings, etc.
4. Want others to share their faith effectively and win the world for Jesus Christ.

Exhortation (Encouragement)

Definition: The supernatural ability to encourage, comfort, challenge or rebuke others to action in such a way that they respond.

Gift Characteristics:

1. Encourages and motivates others to practical application of specific Biblical truths.
2. Able to tell others the truth about them with great encouragement and understanding.
3. May take the form of rebuke, though people will still feel helped by such an approach.
4. Often more effective in short-term encouragement than long-term counseling or support.

Faith

Definition: The supernatural ability to trust God with extra-ordinary confidence, knowing that He will work out His purposes in every situation.

Gift Characteristics:

1. Able to trust God to work in supernatural ways, even when the situation seems impossible.
2. Willing to pursue God's will in the midst of enormous difficulties or barriers.
3. Willing to yield to God's will rather than question or waver because of circumstances.
4. Often move out in faith when others are unwilling.

Giving

Definition: The supernatural ability to give freely, cheerfully and sacrificially of one's money or possessions for the sake of Christ and His body.

Gift Characteristics:

1. Give freely out of whatever resources are available.
2. See money and possessions as tools to serve God and sets those resources aside for special use.
3. Their giving is often quiet and confidential -- no fanfare is desired.
4. Show strong interest and support in the people and causes they support.

Helps

Definition: The supernatural ability to unselfishly meet the needs of others, freeing them to exercise their spiritual gift(s). The helps gift focused on helping to free a person to use their gifts.

Gift Characteristics:

1. Sees what needs to be done in assisting others in specific ministries and desires to DO it.
2. Typically unselfish because of the strong desire to help.
3. Finds great joy in freeing others from responsibilities so that they can share their gifts.
4. Rejoices in the fruitfulness of others.

Knowledge/Word of Knowledge

Definition: The supernatural ability to receive and share revealed knowledge which was not otherwise known, or the ability to gather and clarify large quantities of biblical knowledge with unusual spiritual insight.

Gift Characteristics:

1. Have a clear sense of receiving messages from God of things that they did not know naturally.
2. May manifest itself by a sense of supernatural insight coming directly out of prayer.
3. Words, phrases or word pictures may commonly/spontaneously appear in their mind.
4. Some would see this gift as the ability to research and combine large amounts of Biblical knowledge in a short period of time, with phenomenal understanding.

Leadership

Definition: The supernatural ability to provide overall vision for the body of Christ and provide direction for others in such a way that they willingly follow and work together.

Gift Characteristics:

1. If an administrator puts the pieces of music together, then the leader is the conductor of the orchestra, involving each person meaningfully in the "music," the process.
2. Provide vision and direction for the overall process, the "big picture."
3. Shares vision effectively with others and is able to involve many people in completing the task; the primary fruit is that people follow.
4. Will appear in charge, even if not identified as the official leader.

Mercy

Definition: The supernatural ability to show great empathy and compassion for those who suffer physically, emotionally, or spiritually, and to assist them.

Gift Characteristics:

1. Show sincere kindness and compassion in their lifestyle.
2. Reveal significant "love in action" to those who are hurting, ill, downtrodden.
3. Often are drawn to those who may be outcasts or considered as outsiders.
4. Attempt to relieve the source of people's suffering.

Service

Definition: The supernatural ability to identify unmet needs in the body of Christ and beyond, and to use whatever resources necessary to practically meet those needs. This gift focuses on the acts of service and not the people involved, as with the gift of helps.

Gift Characteristics:

1. Resourceful in meeting needs and offering practical solutions.
2. Love to serve, often without receiving any public affirmation. Doing the task is enough.
3. Will often change their schedule to serve others.
4. Able to see needs arising before others see them.

Pastoring

Definition: The supernatural ability to care for, feed, and protect the long-term spiritual needs of individuals or groups in the body of Christ.

Gift Characteristics:

1. Able to provide care, spiritual nourishment, and protection for people over an extended period.
2. More person-centered than task-centered.
3. Derive great strength from encouraging and verbally supporting others.
4. Usually counsel and guide many people, whether or not they have had training to do such.

Prophet

Definition: The supernatural ability to proclaim God's present and future truth in such a way that the hearers are moved to respond.

Gift Characteristics:

1. Can be prophetic in either sense: may challenge people by speaking about a future event or may speak forthrightly about present situations (foretelling and forthtelling).
2. Proclaim timely and urgent messages from God with authority, calling people to decision.
3. Fruit may include repentance, strengthening, comfort or encouragement.
4. Role is often to plead the cause of God to His people and/or the world and call out change.

Teaching

Definition: The supernatural ability to clearly and accurately communicate the truths of the Bible in such a way that people learn.

Gift Characteristics:

1. Have a deep conviction to communicate Biblical truth.
2. Able to powerfully instruct, reprove, correct and train using the Bible.
3. Able to pull scriptural insights together in a clear and insightful way.
4. Communicate truth in such a way that people understand what was conveyed from God's Word.

Wisdom/Word of Wisdom

Definition: The supernatural ability to offer pertinent spiritual counsel immediately in situations where such guidance is needed.

Gift Characteristics:

1. Able to apply spiritual knowledge in practical ways.
2. Have a supernatural understanding of situations in which they have no previous knowledge.
3. Offer practical, helpful solutions to problems -- i.e. wise counsel.
4. When such gifted people speak, people learn to listen because of the consistently accurate and wise spiritual counsel offered.

* The above list does not include every identified gift.