

Equipped 10 – Knowing and using our gifts- Romans 12:1-8

27th June 2021

Introduction

Reasons people give for not serving, or not serving in a particular area:

What we'll see today: "Offering ourselves as living sacrifices in response to God's mercy – for the sake of the body – we're to devotedly exercise our gifts."

Offering ourselves as living sacrifices in response to God's mercy... (Romans 12:1-2)

- > God's mercy: Chapters 1-11 - What God's already d____. Eg:
 - Justified (3:21-26)
 - N____ identity (chapter 6 – eg 6:2-4)
 - S_____ of adoption (chapter 8 – eg 8:12-17)

> "Offer your bodies as living sacrifices" - ongoing, never-ending sacrifices.

Why?

> How do we know what it looks like? As our m_____ are renewed (Verse 2).

...For the sake of the body... (Romans 12:3-6a)

- > A right view of o_____ (verse 3)
 - "Don't think of yourselves too highly"
- > A right view of the b_____ (verses 4-6a)

...Devotedly exercising our gifts. (Romans 12:6-8)

- > Every Christian has at least one gift (verse 6a)
- > Gift - Charisma - "any gift or ability that God has given you that enables you to serve the body of Christ in the power of the Spirit."
- > If God has given you a gift, use it devotedly for the building up of the body.

Thinking it through / Applying to ourselves

> How can I know what my gifts are / how to serve in the church?

- Thinking on your own: SHAPE

Spiritual Gifts – How has God gifted you?

Heart – What are you passionate about?

Abilities – What abilities do you have?

Personality – What kind of person has God made you

to be?

Experience – What experience do you have?

- Ask others.

- Talk it through with someone.

> What if someone else is already doing it? I don't want to step on anyone's toes.

> What if I think I'm not good enough / don't know enough?

- It's all by g_____

- Devotedly exercise your gift!

> I'm overcommitted already / feeling dry

> I'm worried that if I offer to do something I'll be left to do it on my own

> I can't do anything because of my stage of life

> What might God be asking you to do?

> Remember grace! "In view of God's mercies..." Still justified; still a child of God; still have the Spirit of adoption.

Taking it further

Books / Handouts

“Your Shape for God's service” worksheet

Growing leaders – James Lawrence

Sermons

Listen at www.anlabychurches.org.uk Go to Resources / Listen again:

1 Corinthians 12 - 16th June 2019

1 Corinthians 14 – Prophecy - 30th June, 7th July 2019

To reflect on / think about

> Work through the SHAPE worksheet.

> “In view of God's mercies” - What mercies has God shown to you?
How does this help you to offer yourself as a living sacrifice?

> Are you using your gifts devotedly for the building up of the body?

> Pray about these things.

Questions

What are the gifts Paul refers to here?

Prophesying – See my sermons on 1 Corinthians 14! One definition: “Speaking merely human words to report something God brings to mind.” (Wayne Grudem)

Serving – practical service to those in need.

Teaching – teaching the truth of the gospel in accordance with the teaching received from the apostles

Encouraging – Encouraging others in their faith

Giving – sharing one's own property / resources

Leading – Leadership of the church, or in the charitable work of the congregation

Showing mercy – tending the sick, elderly and poor.

Note that this isn't a complete list of gifts. We see other lists of gifts in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, 28; and 1 Peter 4:7-11. And even these lists together aren't complete. Notice also that Paul mentions “administration / governing” (1 Corinthians 12:28) – and in our current cultural situation that covers a huge amount of church organisation!

Are our “natural” abilities (including education, job etc) included in what Paul means by spiritual gifts?

The definition for gifts that I've used leaves a place for natural abilities. We need to be wary of two extremes: On the one hand, thinking that only our “natural” abilities count: in which case we're in danger of serving in our own strength, and we're not leaving room for the Spirit to give supernatural gifts. On the other hand, thinking that only “supernatural” gifts count – in which case we exclude the person whose gifting is more related to “natural” abilities.

How important is passion?

Should we serve in areas we're passionate about? Like the other areas, this isn't completely straightforward to answer. Firstly, we're all different. Some people get passionate about certain things; others don't. For those who do get passionate: Our passion often goes with our gifting. But not always. And even if we're passionate about an area of ministry, there'll be certain things within the area that we're not passionate about at all. So – if we enjoy and are passionate about the area of ministry we're involved in – praise God. And passion may be an indicator of where we should be involved. But not the only one.

What about “calling”?

Some people find it helpful to talk about “calling.” James Lawrence (Growing Leaders page 89) differentiates between primary and secondary calling. “Our primary calling as human beings is to respond to God's call...to faith and discipleship from which we are called to grow and know Jesus and to the work of the gospel.... Our secondary calling is to respond to God's particular purpose for our life.” Others find this way of thinking unhelpful (and it's not something that the New Testament talks about very much), so please don't be put off by it!