

Part of being grafted into the body of Christ is the fact that the Lord establishes for you a function and calling to fulfil. This function fits in perfectly with the other callings already at work in the church and enable a more fuller expression of the ministry of Christ to be discharged in the church today. God's desire for your life is that not only would you have a sense of belonging to the people of God, but also that you would be a productive part of His body. This is why God establishes a calling for each one of us to fulfil.

Discuss - (In group / or small groups)

- Q1)** What do you think are the three different areas of life that make up a calling for the average person?
Q2) What do you think are the benefits of knowing what your area of calling is?
Q3) How do you think you can discern what your calling is ?

Point 1 – Every Christian has a function / a calling that is discharged in the body!

One of the truths that both Jesus and the early church taught was the fact we are all called to be active and involved in the business of our heavenly Father. Out of the perfect knowledge God has of each one of us, He calls everyone of us to a function within His church. This function / or calling is perfectly matched to who we are in Christ and with the power of the Holy Spirit is perfectly achievable for each one of us. No one person is called to every function of the body, BUT as we work together serving the Lord and one another, all the functions of the individual are knitted together to form a healthy and vibrant body that is fully effective in the ministry that God has established for it. 1 Corinthians 12 v 4 – 30, Ephesians 2 v 10, Romans 12 v 3 – 8

Point 2 – That function has to be discharged in love.

As with much of what is given us as Christians, the calling and gifts that are released in our lives have been given us to build the body of believers up, **NOT** undermine it. Paul in His great passages on callings and gifts teaches us that all that we do for the Lord has to be done in Love. Within the early church there was much division in the body because certain Christians thought they were better than others because of the calling and gifting that God had established in their lives. Paul makes it clear All that we have, has been given to us and empowered by the mind and power of God so that no-one can boast. If we become arrogant in our calling and discharge what we have out of selfish ambition, then God **WILL** remove His anointing from our lives. Godly love and a humble servant heart are key aspects of a life that will be anointed and empowered by God in the long term. 1 Cor. 13, Romans 12 v 9 – 16

Point 3 – As God calls you – He also equips you.

For many Christians in the church today there is real confusion about what is a calling and what are the gifts of the Spirit. The **calling** on your life **is** the **function** that God has given you as part of the body -eg teacher, administrator, encourager, evangelist etc . The **gifts of the Spirit**, are the **equipping processes** of God, if you like **the divine tools** that enable us to fulfil that which Jesus calls us to do. Eg Discernment of Spirits, healing, wisdom etc. The calling that God has given you does not change, but the gifts that you may discharge do, as you come into different situations that need a different type of breakthrough. We can be assured that when God calls us to His tasks, He also goes ahead of us releasing the provision and gifts that we need to succeed at the tasks He has given us. It needs to be understood in the church today that God has not ordained His church to failure or random acts of chance – When He establishes a course of action for our churches, He fully equips us to be successful. Ephesians 1 v 3 – 4, John 14 v 10 – 14, Ch 16 v 12 – 15

Point 4 – Gifts are not a sign of Christian maturity only availability

One of the problems that have put cautious Christians off the gifts is the sometimes abuse and showmanship that some who are used in the gifts discharge. Alongside of this is the “Christian” who seems to discharge all the gifts of the Spirit, yet within a year or two falls away from the faith altogether. This should not come as a surprise to us for Scripture makes it clear that the gifts of the Spirit do not give us any sense of Christian maturity at all. In fact Jesus seems to say in Matthew 7 that there will be those who prophecy and do miracles in His name, yet on the day of judgement He will declare, “I never knew you.” So as we can see it is possible to discharge gifts in a way that is mixed with flesh or selfish ambition, and if so we need to correct our brother or sister in the Lord recognising that gifts of the Spirit are **NOT** a sign of Christian maturity. It is most important that we do not let the superficial or immature in the faith

put us off the provision that has been given us by God so that the full ministry of His Son might be discharged in His church today .Matt 7 v 21 – 23, 1 Cor. 1 v 4 – 7 & 1 Cor. 3 v 1-3

Point 5 – Callings and gifts need to be tested and released as part of body ministry.

Within the practice and teaching of the early church we see that the local body of believers was very much part of the testing process of where the Lord was calling individuals. This was done by meeting together in prayer, often with fasting as a part of it, to examine the callings that individuals felt that God may have laid upon their lives. Alongside of this we see that the laying on of hands and the prayer of faith was the mechanism practised that released new gifts into the life of individuals. Acts 13 v 1– 4, 2 Timothy 1 v 6 –7

