

Selwyn Hughes: 5 Insights to discovering your place in the Body of Christ

CWR 2001

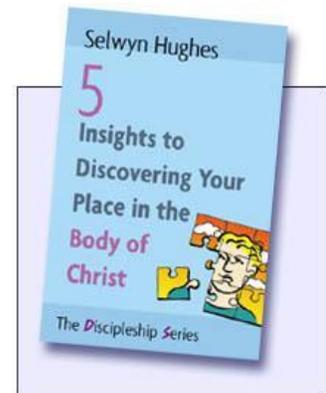
Notes by Alison Morgan Feb 2004

Short, helpful summary of the biblical teaching.

1. What is the Church?

It is my conviction that Christians who discover and develop their basic spiritual gift will function in the Body of Christ with *maximum effectiveness* and *minimum weariness*. If they fail to discover the place God wants them to fulfil and try to undertake a task for which they are not divinely fitted, then they will function in that role with *minimum effectiveness* and *maximum weariness*.

What is the Church? – ‘A local church exists whenever a company of believers meet together around the Word of God, submit to its authority and are organised under the leadership of a properly constituted governing body that exercises Spiritual disciplines and control to the end of bringing Christians to maturity and non-Christians into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ’. P15



2. Basic gifts – gifts we have

There are 3 streams of gifts in the NT, listed in Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 4. He believes that the Ephesians gifts are gifts of Christ, given by him to the Church; that the Corinthians gifts are under the control and administration of the Holy Spirit; and that the Romans 12 gifts can be assumed to be distributed by the Father. These in Romans are the ‘basic gifts’ – a spiritual motivation or inward drive which is implanted in our personalities. Not the same as a natural talent, which is an ability to do something well.

1. Preaching : the Gk word is *propheteia*, which means public exposition or presenting truth with force, clarity and conviction. Not the same as the gift of prophecy in 1 Cor or the office of prophet in Eph 4. It is the God-given ability to present truth in such a way that it touches the conscience of the hearers and exposes unrighteous motives.
2. Serving : concern to help others in practical ways so they may be freed for more effective ministry
3. Teaching : clarification of biblical truth. This person has a deep desire to search out and validate truth.
4. Stimulating faith : personal counselling; ability to minister to a struggling believer so as to help them resolve their problems
5. Giving
6. Wielding authority – distinguishing and clarifying objectives so as to coordinate the labour and activities of others
7. Sympathy

We each have one or more of these. If we fail to discover and develop them there are various consequences:

- ✚ We become jealous/envious of the ministry of others
- ✚ We become anxious and insecure
- ✚ We become critical and judgemental in our attitudes

The Romans gifts are implanted. The Corinthians gifts are to be sought. The Ephesians gifts are gifts we do not receive but become (but not all of us).

3. A practical help to gain insight into your basic gift

Questionnaire on Romans 12.

4. The Gifts of the Holy Spirit – gifts we seek

The word in Romans is *charismata* – results of grace.

The word in Corinthians is *pneumatikoi* – ‘spirituals’ or ‘spiritual things’ (vs 1), *charismata* (vs 31).

1. Word of wisdom – a supernatural impartation of a fragment of God’s wisdom conveyed to the mind of a believer in a crisis situation
2. Word of knowledge – fragment of knowledge given for a temporary and specific purpose, eg Ananias and Sapphira
3. Faith – divinely imparted ability to believe God in a difficult and dangerous situation
4. Gifts (pl) of healing – suggests some have gift for some kinds of healing, others for others (prob inc inner healing)
5. Working of miracles – ability to perform miraculous feats in a particular situation
6. Prophecy – supernatural ability to speak spontaneously and without premeditation a special message from God (ie a specific word, not the gift of inspired preaching as in Romans)
7. Discerning of spirits, eg Acts 16 the slave girl
8. Tongues
9. Interpretation of tongues

Selwyn’s own experience of moving from exhausting pastoral ministry to one in which he was freed to use his gifts of preaching, teaching and stimulating faith; and the discovery that when he was exercising these gifts, the Holy Spirit poured the spiritual gifts into him as required.

5. The Gifts of Christ – gifts some become

Ephesians 4. [The Gk word is different again, the ordinary word for giving, from which eg our word dowry comes from].

Five gifts; these are gifted people who are taken by Christ and placed in his Church to accomplish specific tasks and purposes:

1. Apostle : means ‘sent’. Person gifted to establish a group of believers and assist them in laying a strong scriptural foundation.
2. Prophet : ministry of elevating the spiritual vision of the Church, to keep it up to date and to enable God’s people to focus on the goals that currently God has for them. This word appears in all three streams. In Romans it means an inner motivation towards preaching. In Corinthians it means a supernatural endowment of the Spirit by which he enables a person to speak out an unprepared word. Here it is the taking hold of certain individuals and fitting them into his Church; it is a ministry wider than the local church. A prophet ideally should be moving through the whole Christian community in sharing his vision, focussing the eyes of the Body of Christ in his area/nation on the goals that God has for his people at that time. Usually the word lies in him for some time before it is given; and during that period it becomes ‘flesh’ in him; he does not just speak it, but experiences it in his emotions as well as his mind. He speaks the feeling of God.
3. Evangelist : not listed in the other two because directed outside the church – ability to bring large numbers of people to faith.
4. Pastor – spiritual shepherd.
5. Teacher – person gifted with the ability to make profound truths simple, and having the experience to apply the principles of effective Christian living within the lives of God’s people.

6. But the greatest thing...

is love. 1 Corinthians 13, faith, hope, love. Jesus : the greatest commandment is to love, God, your neighbour.

Dr Menninger, psychiatrist, ordered staff to make every contact a loving one, even when changing light bulb in a patient’s room. Tried it for 6m – length of time patients spent in hospital was halved.

Bertrand Russell: ‘I see no remedy for the world’s ills – except love.’

Can we be commanded to love? Yes, because it is in receiving love that we find it grow within us; and we receive it from God. Instead of telling yourself, ‘I must love’, tell yourself, ‘I am loved’.