

Adult Bible Study

Sunday, January 21, 2001

The Christian congregation nurtures growing servants

Read I Corinthians 12:1-13

The Epistle for today, I Cor. 12: 1-13, should be read in the larger context of chapters 12-14 which have been central to the charismatic movement. From a biblical perspective, why is every Christian a “charismatic?” What is the difference between gifts of the Spirit, and fruits of the Spirit, Gal. 5:22-23?

The discovery and exercise of spiritual gifts runs the risk of detachment from the Father’s grace toward sinners and the Son’s work of redemption. Please note:

- the introductory reminder of the Corinthians’ conversion to Jesus Christ. vv.1-3
 - In the original Greek, the word gifts (*charismata*) comes from the root word grace (*charis*). We are what we are and have what we have by the grace of God.
- 1 How does the above help to avoid feelings of inferiority and superiority discussed in vv. 14-26?
 - 2 In the church there is both unity and diversity. What is the difference between unity and conformity?

The diversity of gifts sent by the Father (Romans 12), the Son (Eph. 4), and the Spirit (I Cor. 12) may not be exhaustively listed in the Scriptures and may also be possessed by the individual in varying combinations. Therefore, it is not essential to know with certainty which specific gift one possesses. But the following process is helpful in discovering and practicing one’s giftedness.

- EXPLORE the various possibilities of gifts
- EXPERIMENT with as many gifts as possible.
- EXAMINE one’s feelings of satisfaction in using a particular gift.
- EVALUATE one’s effectiveness as gifts are used and experimented with.
- EXPECT confirmation from fellow Christians in regard to gift use.

- 3 Might this same process be used in discovering whether one is gifted for the office of the public ministry?
- 4 According to the pastoral letters what is the one single attribute that distinguishes a pastor from the laity? I Tim. 3:2, II Tim. 4:2, Titus 1:9
- 5 What is to be the content of the teaching implied in these verses? Rom. 1:16, I Cor. 1:17, I Cor. 2:2, II Cor. 4:5, II Cor. 5:20, I Tim. 4:13, I Tim. 5:17.
- 6 Discuss: Since the essence of the office of the public ministry is the communication of the Gospel, deep appreciation for one's own salvation is a major asset for communicating that Gospel effectively.
- 7 Is sincerity important to the unbelieving world?
- 8 Why is Gospel ministry both humbling and exalting?
- 9 What opportunities for Gospel communication within the congregation can be given to potential candidates for professional ministry? Is there a place for a properly prepared and pastorally supervised witness of the laity within the worship service? cf. Psalm 66:15, I Cor. 14:26-32
- 10 Does Paul anywhere in vv. 1-12 have the pastoral office in mind?
- 11 Do any of these gifts apply uniquely to the pastoral office?
- 12 What gift do many modern-day pastors seem to lack? One person suggested administration. Why is pastoral administration and leadership important in the light of Eph. 4:11-12, II Tim. 2:2?
- 13 What opportunities can a congregation give to a potential candidate for professional ministry to discover and grow in the gift of administration and leadership?
- 14 Pastors play a key role in recruiting candidates. (Remember Paul and Timothy.) How can a pastor encourage a candidate to prepare for professional ministry?
- 15 Can pastors do this effectively if they are discouraged, burnt-out, and lacking in job satisfaction? How can congregations help their pastors be confident, joyful, and enthusiastic in their ministry?

16 What is appealing about the office of the ministry? Assign values 1-5.

1. job security
2. leadership opportunity
3. preaching
4. teaching
5. saving souls
6. being held in esteem
7. helping the needy

What would you add to the list?

17 Rank the concerns of a prospective student in order of intensity.

1. Do I have the necessary gifts and ability?
2. Is this what God wants me to do?
3. Can I afford the education costs?
4. Will my spouse adapt to my new vocation?
5. Do I have enough faith and love to make the sacrifices?

What reassuring answers might you give to each of these questions?

18 True or false. Congregations with a service mentality are more likely to produce professional ministers (servants) for the church.

Read Matthew 9:37-38 and conclude with prayer.



Prepare for Action – RSVP 2001 is a recruitment initiative of Lutheran Church–Canada which asks members of congregations to identify men and women whom they believe have the gifts and talents for church work vocations.