

Teamwork in the Local Church
Lesson Two: Every Member Plays a Special Part
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Introduction: The Essential Parts of the Church.

- A. What is essential for a church to remain strong and function properly? (e.g., large church funds, a big fancy building, charismatic preacher???)
 - 1. The essential parts of the church are us! Every individual member or Christian using the gifts that God has given to him or her.
- B. Everyone is essential.
 - 1. There is a temptation to say: "I don't have any gifts" or "What little talent I have does not amount to much" yet *every* member is essential.
- C. When every member steps up to do his/her part to use whatever gift God has given them, much will be accomplished in the work of the Lord.

I. Unified and Effective Teamwork in the Church Values Every Member.

- A. Our membership in the body of Christ unites us together (**1 Cor. 12:12-13**).
 - 1. According to the text, only by the Spirit (*by His direction*), was one inspired to say "*Jesus is Lord*" rather than "*Jesus is accursed*" (**v. 3**).
 - 2. Similarly, all who are baptized into Christ's body does so because they were instructed "*by one Spirit*" (**v.13**) as revealed in the Scriptures.
 - a. Baptism is given in the name (authority) of the Spirit (**Mt 28:19**) and by His instruction- "*by the Spirit of our God*" (**1 Cor. 6:11**).
 - 3. Every Christian, *without exception*, has been baptized and added to His body (**Acts 2:47**), the "*one body*" (**1 Cor. 12:13**), the church (**Col. 1:18**).
- B. The body is not about just one member.
 - 1. The body is to be a united body *with respect to* its diversity in membership and gifts given from God (**1 Cor. 12:14**).
 - 2. It is not just the more public or prominent members that are important; every member is important, *including you!* (**1 Cor. 12:15-17**).
 - 3. No member, no matter how talented he/she may be, is to be elevated above "the team" in importance or significance (**1 Cor. 12:18-24**).
 - 4. Those "*which seem to be weaker*" are more needed than we realize!
- C. True leadership will encourage teamwork, esteeming each member as valuable.
 - 1. True leaders will not promote themselves, but will shepherd the church with an eagerness to achieve God's will *through* the church (**1 Pet. 5:1-4**).
 - 2. Evangelists will see the work of the church as teamwork, not solely his own to fulfill (**Eph. 4:11-12, 16**).
 - 3. Let us esteem leaders "*very highly in love*" yet work together as a team to accomplish the work God has given the church to do (**1 Thes. 5:12-14**).

II. One Body, Many Members, Different Gifts.

- A. Not every member has the same talent or "gift." (**Rom. 12:3-5**).
 - 1. This should go without saying, yet sometimes we create unnecessary pressure upon ourselves to exercise a gift we may not currently have.
 - 2. Every member is unique with their own set of abilities given by God.
 - 3. It is unfair and inappropriate for a church or her leadership to impose a work on a member that he or she may not be well suited to do.

B. Everyone has a gift (**Rom. 12:6-8**).

1. What is *your* gift? Every member is instructed to do some thinking as to what their gifts or talents might be (**Rom. 12:3**).
2. “Prophecy” has *ceased* (**1 Cor. 13:8-10**) (i.e., a message *directly* from God; different from teaching a doctrine already revealed).
3. “Teaches” (cf. **1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 4:11**): Not every member is to teach, but those who have the ability and knowledge to do so (cf. **James 3:1**).
4. God’s gifts are not limited to those used publicly before the assembly; there are many kinds of gifts. *Here are just a few other examples:*
5. “Service” (or ministry): All can and should serve (**Gal. 5:13b**), yet there are those who may be especially good at it (e.g., **Acts 6:3**).
6. “Exhorts” (encourages): Though teachers may encourage, it is a distinct gift, being able to stir up, challenge, motivate, and uplift others (**Ac. 4:36**).
7. “Gives” – All should give (**Mat. 25:35; 1 Cor. 16:2**), yet some may be especially blessed/ gifted to be able to give more than others (**Mt 27:57ff**).
8. “Leads” (ruleth): This may refer to overseers or elders; those who rule well may be considered gifted by God (cf. **1 Tim. 5:17**).
9. “Mercy” – All should be merciful (**Mat. 5:7; Luke 6:36**), yet certain members have a greater capacity to show compassion (e.g., **Acts 9:36**).

III. Every Member of “the Team” Must Use Their Gifts with the Right Attitude.

A. Use whatever gift you have (**Rom. 12:6-8**).

1. We are to be a good steward of the gifts God has given us by His grace, which means we must use them! (**1 Peter 4:10-11**).
2. The local church cannot work as a team to accomplish much when the talents of each member is not utilized (**Eph. 4:16**).
3. If we do not use the gifts we have for God’s purposes, we are to God like the “wicked lazy slave” who will be punished (**Mat. 25:24-30**).

B. Use your gift with the right attitude.

1. It is by God’s grace, wisdom, and strength that makes our gifts possible, so we are to give God the glory and depend on Him (**1 Pet. 4:10-11**).
2. We are to “*do all things without grumbling or disputing*”, including the use of our gifts (**Phil. 2:12; 1 Pet. 4:9ff**).
3. Whatever gift we may have, we are to use it enthusiastically and wholeheartedly with the right attitude or disposition (**Rom. 12:6-8**; cf. **2 Cor. 9:6-7; 1 Thes. 5:12; 1 Tim. 5:17; Luke 10:30-37**).

Conclusion: Are You Ready to Use Your Talents for the Lord?

- A. Place your confidence in God and His grace who has given a gift to each one.
- B. Through self-examination of God’s word, you can discover where your talents lie and what to build upon.
- C. We can encourage and help one another to develop our gifts for God’s service.
- D. Learn from your successes and failures, yet remember new gifts (or talents) may be discovered over time.
- E. Always maintain the priority of putting the Lord’s church first, putting aside desires for personal gain or vain glory.