

Pastor's Perspective: Exercising Our Spiritual Gifts

November 2019

As we enter the penultimate month of two thousand nineteen, I consider the last item on the list of six areas in which I intend to lead CCAM (see March 2018). It is my belief that just as the human body is many parts woven together to serve one head, the body of Christ is woven together by individuals who possess, by God's grace, spiritual gifts that are intended to be utilized in service to one head, Jesus.

Several places in the New Testament speak of the gifts given by the Holy Spirit to the Church and each encourages the reader to use well her/his particular gift. Paul tells the Corinthian believers in chapter 12 of his first letter to them that "a spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other." He draws out in some detail the analogy between the parts of the human body and the parts of Christ's body and then emphasizes that "All of you together are Christ's body and each of you is a part of it." Likewise, Peter teaches in his first epistle that "God has given each of you a gift from his variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another."

I want people of CCAM to discover, understand and exercise their gifts. I plan to help our members to focus their efforts in these areas rather than be so thinly spread into multiple areas. I will ask people to serve in teaching roles, serving roles and other ministry roles that are consistent with her/his gifts and willingness to use them. Therefore, you may hear me or another leader encourage some to step up to explore areas of ministry where they might fit while simultaneously asking others to step down to focus on one or possibly two main areas of service making room for others to serve. Each of us has a calling also to serve outside the Church so I desire to be mindful that CCAM as an organization does not pull so much of

people's time and energy away from the individual or family mission fields they are impacting.

Using our gifts in this way helps longevity of our impact and the raising up of the next generation who will take the disciple-making mantle Jesus laid upon His followers. When we exercise our gifts, we will all increase our learning of who we are as a local body, who God is, and who God has called us to become. And with these gifts employed, it furthers kingdom impact. Even guests, who may not yet believe, can gain a sense of belonging by exploring these gifts among a body seeking to function in such healthy ways.

Finally, friends, we are in a spiritual battle that requires the use of these spiritual gifts! Scripture teaches us that ours is not a fight "against flesh-and-blood enemies but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers of this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places" (Eph 6:12). If we are to continue the mission Jesus has given us, we need every member of CCAM to be taking her/his role seriously. CCAM is stronger and healthier when each member is functioning according to her/his design or, at a minimum, exploring what that design is.

Seek to explore, understand or exercise the spiritual gift God has given you (Rom 12, 1 Cor 12, Eph 4, 1 Pet 4) and stay tuned for the next issue of *The Pastor's Perspective*.