The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

STUDY 1 Don’t be ignorant about spiritual gifts

\*1 read 1 Corinthians 12:1-31

\*2 what is your ‘first impression’ of this passage? What words & phrases jump out at you that would be good to explore as a group?

\*3 what teaching have you had over the years (in various churches) on the gifts of the Holy Spirit? What are they? Who are they for? How should they be exercised?

\*4 what (natural, God-given) gifts & talents do you consider you have? Please share with the whole group. How do you use them for God’s glory? (Or do you consider they are just for you to ‘enjoy’ and keep to yourself?)

\*5 are you aware of having any (supernatural, spiritual) gifts? If so, what are they? How do you use them for ‘the common good’ v7....... of the church &/or of wider society?

\*6 Paul lists some spiritual gifts in v8-10....the message of wisdom; the message of knowledge; faith; gifts of healing; miraculous powers; prophecy; distinguishing between spirits; speaking in tongues; interpreting these tongues. Do you have any of these gifts? Please share your experiences.

\*7 have you been in churches or meetings when these gifts have been used? Take time as a group to talk about what you experienced and how you reacted. Has your view on this developed as you have matured in Christ?

\*8 how can we better become the Body of Christ at St Pauls, v12-27? What do we need to change to more become the church that Paul describes in this passage?

\*9 what does Paul mean by v22 & 23? How can we ensure the weaker ‘indispensable’ parts of the body v22 can play their full role in the church community?

STUDY 2 To prepare God’s people

\*1 What advice would you give someone who asks how they can grow as a Christian?

\*2 read Ephesians 4:1-16

\*3 Now that we have been united to Christ and made into a new community Paul sets out the responsibilities we are to have toward one another. Looking at verse 1-6 what are those responsibilities?

\*4 How are we doing with these responsibilities, as a community (home group/church) and personally as a follower of Christ? Are there areas where you can see the Spirit has been at work in your life, transforming you? What area(s) do you feel the Spirit prompting you to be working on next?

\*5 Unity is key. How do we go about pursuing and preserving unity?

To go a little deeper: We are told to endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit but the New Testament also teaches that we must stand against false teachers. Look at the following passages and discuss how we can discern those with whom we should not unite.

Matthew 7:15-23 Galatians 1:8-9 1 Timothy 6.3-5 1 John 2.18-19

\*6 Re read verse 7-16

\*7 God equips us when he calls us. From this passage, where do the gifts come from? What is significant about them being gifts of grace?

To go deeper: What point is Paul making about Christ ascending and descending (7-10).\*\*

\*8 Christ gives gifts to his people, what is the goal of giving us gifts and how will we know when the goal has been reached? (12-14)

\*9 What are the gifts Christ gives in this chapter. What is your understanding of each and the purpose of these gifts?

\*10 As followers of Jesus we are all called to witness, teach, pastor, speak God’s word… Do you feel all disciples of Jesus have these gifts? If not, what is the difference between those who are ‘gifted’ and those who are not?

\*11 What are you doing to build up the church? How can we make sure we are prepared and equipped for service? What is our role in keeping the unity of the Spirit?

*\*\* In verse 8 Paul seems to misquote Psalm 68:18 giving it the opposite meaning. The footnote that accompanies Psalm 68:18 points out that the Hebrew could be translated ‘for people’. Paul knew scriptures very well and believed that the context of Psalm 68 gave it that translation. Commentators point out that when a king like David received gifts or plundered other nations then his subjects also benefited and received gifts and donations on their return from victory. So the king receiving gifts also meant he gave gifts.*

STUDY 3 ‘Eagerly desire’ spiritual gifts

\*1 read 1 Corinthians 14:1-40

\*2 what does Paul mean by the phrase ‘follow the way of love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts’ v1? If you are honest, do you eagerly desire God’s special gifts or are you apprehensive, indifferent or ill-informed about them?

\*3 have you experiences (to share with the group) of words of prophecy being shared in public worship or a Christian gathering? How did they make you feel?

\*4 have you ever had an experience of wanting to say something which God has laid on your heart? Have you shared a prophetic word with someone?

\*5 have you ever heard a prophetic word which resulted in the exposure of sin and the transformation of the sinner? Have you ever heard or read a prophetic word which protested against oppression in the Church or in the world?

\*6 do you think every Christian should have the gift of tongues? What are the benefits of this gift in our lives?

\*7 what is the ‘interpretation of tongues’? Why does Paul commend it in this passage? Would it worry you if a tongue was not interpreted, if so, why?

\*8 if you have time (as it is not primarily about spiritual gifts).......please read 1 Corinthians 14:33-34 & consider the verses around 1 Corinthians 11:5..... what do you understand Paul to be saying about women speaking in church? How should we interpret this today?

\*9 Paul writes about spiritual gifts......love, prophecy & tongues......he seems to want us all to exercise these gifts for the building up of the body.....how can we do so and ensure that ‘everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way’ v40?

STUDY 4 We have different gifts

\*1 read Romans 12:1-21

\*2 do you consider yourself more practical or theoretical in your approach to faith?

\*3 using verses 1-2 describe in your own words an appropriate response to God’s mercy. How can we best renew our minds?

\*4 in what way is a group of Christians like a single body...compare the word *body* in verses 1, 4 & 5.

\*5 studying the list of gifts in verses 6-8, what can you know about their source, purpose and variety? How might knowing that these gifts come from God keep you from either arrogance or belittling yourself?

\*6 *‘Love must be sincere.’* What wouldthe people at St Paul’s church say about how easy or difficult it is to show you love?

\*7 looking at verses 9-16, which of these expressions of love need to be more apparent in our church life?

\*8 which is your favourite verse (or sentence) in Romans 12? Why?

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