

Church Activities – Giving; Spiritual Gifts; Discipling

Background

As individuals within an assembly, there are different things we do. But even as an assembly (corporately) there are a variety of activities. Yet through these different activities there is a unity that binds us.

Giving

There are many different views on giving, including how much and how often. Let's focus on some broad principles.

ACTS 8:18-21 – When Simon saw that the Spirit was given at the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money and said, "Give me also this ability so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit."

Peter answered: "May your money perish with you, because you thought you could buy the gift of God with money! You have no part or share in this ministry, because your heart is not right before God."

Clearly there are some things money cannot buy! The amount of money we give is does not correlate to our salvation. It is important to separate the two. Note the importance of having the right *heart*.

2 CORINTHIANS 8:3-5 – For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints. And they did not do as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us in keeping with God's will.

For a collection for the saints, the Macedonian churches gave themselves first to the Lord. Of course, they also did give financially, but it wasn't the primary focus.

So, having placed giving in its appropriate context and importance, how do we give correctly?

2 CORINTHIANS 9:6-7 – Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

There appears to be two principles at play here:

- 1) There is an expectation of sowing generously. There are unspecified benefits that come proportionally with what we give.
- 2) It has been done with the right attitude. Giving with the wrong attitude (or by compulsion) is not the way forward.

Questions on Giving

- Do you attach importance to the amount of money you give? Are you interested in how you compare against others?
- Do you feel obligated to give? Are you giving cheerfully?
- Though we may conclude that if we aren't giving cheerfully, we shouldn't give; does this indicate anything about our character?

Spiritual Gifts

As with giving, there is a lot to say on Spiritual gifts. Again, we will focus on high level precepts.

1 Peter 4:10-11a – Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ.

God’s grace takes various forms. We all have gifts. We all should serve others. Our gifts used to serve is a manifestation of God’s grace. When done properly God is praised through Jesus.

1 CORINTHIANS 14:12b – Since you are eager to have spiritual gifts, try to excel in gifts that build up the church.

“Try to excel” implies that our gifts are not magically endowed in their fullest form. As with any skill, we must grow and learn. Additionally, the implication is that some gifts specifically build up the church. These should be considered of greater value.

Questions on Spiritual Gifts

- Everyone has a gift. What are some of yours?
- Which of your gifts specifically serve others or build up the church?
- What are you doing to excel in your gifts?

Discipling

Discipleship is the process we all go through as part of becoming more like Christ. When we aid others in their *discipleship*, that is *discipling*.

COLOSSIANS 3:16a – Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom ...

Using the word of Christ, we teach *one another*.

EPHESIANS 4:29 – Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.

People have different needs and the help we provide should be tailored to those needs. The aim is to build up.

JAMES 5:20 – Remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save him from death and cover over a multitude of sins.

Sometimes people are heading way off track. We don’t watch them go. We try and bring them back.

Hebrews 10:24-25 – And let us consider how we may spur one another on towards love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another – and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

Consider the best ways to help move people forward.

Each and everyone one of us has this responsibility. It is your personal ministry to the church.

Questions on Discipling

- When was the last time you sat with someone to teach them something from the Bible?
- Do you think about what will help others in their own process of discipleship? Do you know what people's needs are?
- Do you know anyone who is clearly going in the wrong direction? What can you do to turn them?