

Blueprint for a Healthy Church

Romans 12:3-8

February 5, 2017

This passage presents three essential qualities of a healthy church.

1. Honest Evaluation
2. Faithful Cooperation
3. Individual Participation

I Honest Evaluation

We're not a totally healthy congregation, so we need to take action. Urgent action. Here are three possible courses of action:

1. Hospice
2. Life support
3. Lifestyle change

II Faithful Cooperation

As Christians, every one of us has three responsibilities:

1. As a Christian, you have a great responsibility for your own spiritual health.
2. We have to operate in coordination together.
3. Take church membership seriously

III Individual Participation

Here is the final essential quality of a healthy church: *It's a church where every believer is using his or her spiritual gifts for the good of the whole congregation.*

Take a look at each of these gifts listed below, then circle one or two of the gifts which you believe God may have given you. Think of some ways you can use your gift(s) and seek opportunities to put those gifts to good use.

Prophecy—the special ability to speak with insight and with relevance.

- Preaching
- Making relevant comments in Sunday School class or small group

Service—the special ability to get practical things done. They see what needs to be done, and they get those things done.

- Greeters
- Serving communion, offering
- Working in the nursery
- Organizing dinners
- Setting up tables, chairs
- Decorating the church

- Maintaining and repairing the building

Teaching—the special ability to help others grow in knowledge, character, and skills

John Stott: *“This is arguably the most needed gift in the worldwide church today, as hundreds of thousands of converts are pressing into the churches, but there are few teachers to nurture them in the faith.”*

- Sunday School—children, youth, adults
- Small groups
- One on one
- Can take place in the workplace as well as in the classroom

Exhortation/Encouraging—the special ability to bring strength and comfort to others (literally means to stand alongside)

- Preaching
- Writing (including words of encouragement through cards, email and text messages)
- Counseling, consolation, befriending the lonely, encouraging those who have lost heart.
- Your ministry will keep others in ministry.
- Barnabas, whose name means, “son of encouragement” is a great example in the New Testament of an exhorter/encourager.

Giving—the special ability to release what God has given you

- All Christians are expected to give to the work of God in the world, but some people have been given the ability to give in large measure.
- You don’t have to be wealthy to be a giver, just have the desire to give what you have.
- The widow who placed all she had (two copper coins) in the offering is a great example.

Leading—the special ability to blaze a trail toward a particular goal so that others will follow.

- We find James doing this in Acts 15.

Mercy—the special ability to help those who are powerless. Examples of powerless people:

- Sick
- Dying
- The poor
- Homeless
- Nursing home
- Prisoners