

HANDOUT ROMANS CHAPTER 12

Paul lists 7 gifts and 7 functions or effects of the gift in Romans 12:6-8:

GIFT	SERVICE
1. prophecy	Inspired preaching to build up faith within the community
2. practical service	In the exercise of necessary services/ ministries that promote the Church
3. teaching	To provide the faithful with right teaching to understand the faith
4. encouraging or exhortation	To promote ethical teaching and practice within the community
5. almsgiving	Generously given to support the Church and her ministries
6. position of authority	To conscientiously and humbly provide resources and leadership in serve to the faith community
7. acts of mercy	Bringing relief to the unfortunate with a cheerfulness of spirit that relieves the recipient of embarrassment through understanding that performing the service on their behalf is a privilege of love.

1. Prophecy: Paul lists “prophecy” as the first of the gifts. He is probably not referring to the gift of predicting the future but rather to the first mission of the prophet which is to speak the words of God to the people, inspiring them to live in fellowship with God [see 1 Corinthians 12:10, 28; 13:2; 14:1, 3-6, 24, 39; and 1 Timothy 4:14]. According to the literal translation this gift is to be used in “*according to the analogy of faith*”. The Greek word *analogia* means “right relationship, proportion”. In other words, all inspired preaching must agree with the teachings of Christ and His earthly representative, the Church. If certain preaching does not agree, it is not inspired by the Holy Spirit.

2. Practical Service: Paul uses the Greek word *diakonia*, meaning “service”. It is the word from which comes our English word “deacon”. Paul may be referring to those who serve in a specific ministry, as our deacons serve today, or he may have in mind all ministries that serve to build up the faith community. Paul applied this same term to his own ministry in Romans 11:13 and used the term in the same way in 1 Corinthians 12:5; 2 Corinthians 4:1; 11:8; Colossians 4:17; and Ephesians 4:12.

3. Teaching: In the Greek a *ho didaskon* is “the one who gives instruction”. Paul uses this term for one who gives instruction in the interpretation of sacred Scripture or in catechesis [see 1 Corinthians 14:19 and Galatians 6:6].

4. Exhortation: Paul is using the Greek word *paraklesis* and is probably referring to one who guides the members of the Church in their communal life by encouraging or teaching ethical behavior or is living in the example of ethical behavior [see 1 Thessalonians 5:11; Philippians 2:1; and Hebrews 13:22].

5. Almsgiving: The Greek word *metadidonai* describes one who contributes to charity, sharing from his private wealth [see Luke 3:11; Ephesians 4:28]. Such a person, when giving from the heart without hope of recognition or thanks, gives motivated by the Holy Spirit and contributes to the well being of individuals in need within the Church and to the Church as a whole. Such a person judges genuine “wealth” in spiritual terms and not in monetary terms.

6. Authority: The literal Greek word used in the 6th charism is *ho proistamenos*, which

means “the one standing at the head”, or a leader who presides or directs. This person would be one to whom the Spirit has given the gift of wisdom and leadership to guide the community in its various ministries and functions.

7. Mercy: The seventh position is *ho eleon*, in the Greek, “the one who performs acts of mercy”. Paul probably intends this gift to include all acts of mercy including caring for the sick, burying the dead, etc. However, he cautions that this gift should be accompanied by cheerfulness. If this gift doesn’t come from a heart of love which receives joy from serving God through serving brothers and sisters who are in need of God’s mercy then the charism is not genuine.

In all these gifts, the spirit in which the gifts are carried out is as important as the acts themselves.

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