

The Operation of the Spiritual Gifts at Quail Lakes Baptist Church

We believe that one of the ways in which God works to accomplish His will is by empowering His people with spiritual gifts. The question before us is how are we to understand and define these gifts and how are we to incorporate the gifts in the ministry of the church? This last question becomes particularly important as we reference the more miraculous gifts.

To answer these questions we need to consider a range of theological issues that pertain to the topic.

1. What is a Spiritual Gift?

We define a spiritual gift as an ability, given by the Holy Spirit, to a believer in Jesus Christ to be used for the common good of the church and its mission.

1 Corinthians 12:7

“Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.”
NIV

2. When do we receive the spiritual gifts?

We believe that at the point of placing saving faith in the work of Jesus Christ the new believer crosses over in to new birth through the convicting and regenerative work of the Holy Spirit. (1 Cor. 12:13, Titus 3:5) At this moment the believer is initially gifted. Therefore, we do not agree with the teaching that says that the believer should seek a secondary spiritual experience where the Holy Spirit enters and indwells the believer and at which the gifts are delivered. There may be subsequent times of greater surrender to the Spirit in the believer's life and those points of surrender are called being “filled” with the Spirit. This filling is ideally to be an ongoing growth relationship between the believer and the Lord.

Ephesians 5:18

“Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit.”
NIV

3. Are the spiritual gifts still relevant?

The New Testament does not teach the cessation of the Spiritual gifts in general nor the miraculous spiritual gifts in particular. We believe that God is still gifting His people for ministry. Paul's comment that regards the ceasing of tongues when the “perfection” comes does not tie the cessation of this and other miraculous gifts to the formulation of the Bible. The context is clear that these statements refer to the second coming of Christ.

1 Corinthians 13:8-11

“Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. 9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part, 10 but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears.”

NIV

God does not change and He remains all powerful. Our position is that God can do what He wants when He wants. It is clear that He used the miraculous gifts and signs in the apostolic age as a foundational element to the church age, but that does not mean that He has ceased gifting people in these ways today.

However, the scripture is clear that there are preeminent gifts. The preeminent gifts are the gifts that communicate understandable truth from the Word. Thus, while we see miraculous gifts in operation in the apostolic church, the dominant emphasis was placed on preaching and teaching the word of God in known and understandable languages.

1 Corinthians 14:1-4

14:1 Follow the way of love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy. 2 For anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God. Indeed, no one understands Him; He utters mysteries with his spirit. 3 But everyone who prophesies speaks to men for their strengthening, encouragement and comfort.

NIV

4. Why do some churches see the demonstration of the more “miraculous” gifts in their programs and some do not?

The Spirit is sovereign in His distribution of the gifts and He is keenly aware of the need for a variety of styles of worship experience within the larger universal church so that the Gospel will be able to penetrate the wide varieties of personalities and stylistic preferences represented in the world. Just as individual Christians each have a unique “divine design” which is the blend of their passion, personality, spiritual gifts and experiences, so too each church has a divine design. This “ministry divine design” takes into consideration the particular church’s history, doctrine, membership makeup and mission in the community. Just as each Christian person will not have all the gifts operative at any one time, so to each church will not necessarily have all the gifts operative, but each church will have what it needs to accomplish its unique mission.

5. What kind of a church is Quail?

Here at Quail we believe that God has designed and called us to operate in a non-charismatic way while calling us to avoid being anti-charismatic. While we believe that God does work miraculously in terms of answered prayer, we do not see the legitimate use of the more miraculous gifts (tongues, and miraculous word of knowledge) within our church programming. We know the Holy Spirit is considerate and He comprehends that to insert the manifestation of these gifts into our church program would not be a gift but rather a distraction.

6. What about Quail's cooperation and fellowship with Charismatic churches?

We happily fellowship with, and cooperate in ministry with, Charismatic believers and ministries. We are saddened at the disunity that occurs when we attach levels of spirituality based on the gifts exhibited. Therefore, a teaching that says a certain gift is an indicator of greater spiritual growth than another gift is an inappropriate approach, just as it is inappropriate for those who do not practice the miraculous spiritual gifts to imply or teach that those who do are deceived or in error. Understanding and discussion among those of goodwill who differ in this regard will do much to dissolve judgmentalism, misinformation and disunity in the church at large. However, in practice each church must adopt a ministry format that they will feel comfortable with and which will not sow the seeds of confusion among the people.

From time to time, as we participate in inter-congregational events which include more charismatic congregations, there may be those who exhibit the Charismatic gifts. While this is not the pattern of the ongoing program of Quail, we value these inter-congregational experiences enough to understand and permit this possibility whether the program takes place within the facilities of Q.L.B.C. or in another location.

7. What does this mean for members at Quail who have the gifts of tongues (for instance)?

While we operate the programs at Quail in a non-Charismatic way, that does not mean that an individual believer is restricted from exhibiting the full range of his/her spiritual gift mix privately or in other ministry settings. Our non-charismatic ministry design applies to only those programs and ministry opportunities that are sponsored by Quail Lakes Baptist Church.