

Wheelersburg Baptist Church 4/24/94 PM  
Romans 12:6-8 "Spiritual Gifts: Leadership & Administration"

**Intro:** A couple of months ago, we began a topical study of Spiritual Gifts. Our approach has been to follow the order given in Romans 12, examining one speaking and one serving gift each week.

There are a couple of questions you may be asking. First, "Why study spiritual gifts? Is it necessary? Is it practical?"

To answer that, I remind you that II Timothy 3:16 tells us that all of God's Word is "profitable". For that reason alone we ought to study the "whole counsel" of God's Word.

But a second reason stands out. If WBC is going to be all that God desires for us to be, we need to grasp the marvelous potential God has infused right here into our midst. He has given us His Spirit. And His Spirit has distributed a variety of spiritual gifts to each of us, "dividing to every man severally as He will (I Cor 12:11). He has equipped all of us who know Christ as Savior and Lord, and expects us to perform a special ministry which no one else can do as efficiently and effectively as we can.

A second question, "How can I find out how God has gifted me?" That's a critical question. Let's probe that before we investigate two more gifts this evening.

Transp: "Directions for Unwrapping your spiritual gift"

Now let's take a look at two gifts that have to do with leadership in the church. These are gifts of Direction: the gift of Leadership (Rom 12:8), and the gift of administration (I Cor 12:28).

There's plenty of bad press about leadership today. The media ridicules and mocks all types of leaders, from political leaders to baseball managers to priests to televangelists. It's a favorite pastime of the American public to criticize the person in positions of authority--whether policemen, or school administrators, or plant managers.

Yet no one would question that leadership is essential. Especially in the church.

One of the classic books on leadership in the church is Spiritual Leadership, by J. Oswald Sanders. In it, this observation is made (180), "Often the crowd does not recognize a leader until he has gone, and then they build a monument for him with the stones they threw at him in life."

Leadership. For God's people to prosper, leadership is vital. In His Word, God has much to say about leadership in the Church--how leaders are to lead, and how the followers are to follow. We'll see that tonight.

God has given the church two gifts relating to direction. They are serving gifts. The first is mentioned in Romans 12:8, the gift of "ruling" (= leadership).

## **I. The Gift of Leadership (Romans 12:8)**

READ Rom 12:6-8

Spiritual gifts are actually "grace gifts" (6). Out of His grace, our wise God has given the Church exactly what it needs to function. One of these grace gifts has to do with "ruling" (8).

Paul has moved through the list of gifted individuals in the church. Those with the gift of prophecy was to proclaim the message of God. Those with the gift of service are to exercise their gift. As are those gifted as teachers, exhorters, and givers.

Next, Paul highlights those individuals gifted in the area of leadership.

One of my favorite sayings about leadership is a quote by D. E. Host, the former director of the China Inland Mission (in Sanders, Spiritual Leadership, 34). At a meeting where the topic of qualifications for leadership was being discussed, Host spoke up and said, "It occurs to me that perhaps the best test of whether one is a qualified leader, is to find out whether anyone is following him."

#### A. What is the gift of leadership?

The word translated "ruleth" in verse 8 (NIV--"leadership"; NKJV--"leads") is the greek term that means "to stand before others". A literal translation would be "standing before." In classical greek usage (Liddell, Scott), it was used of individuals who performed the activities of managing, overseeing, or governing.

What does Paul mean by this word? Let's do a little investigation to see how this word is used elsewhere in the NT:

I Thes 5:12 "...know them who labor among you, and are OVER YOU in the Lord"

I Timothy 3:4, 5, 12 "One that RULETH well his own house..."

In the list of qualifications for pastoral ministry in I Timothy 3:4, we're told that a bishop must be a man "who rules his own house well." Paul then states the obvious, "For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?"

Here's a great image of a true leader. Think of a household. What does the leader do in the household? He gives direction. He provides stability. He offers spiritual influence. He maintains order. Those qualities are transferable to the church.

Tit 3:8, 14

Notice the word "maintain." Leaders are "maintanence people" in the church. Their job is to make sure the church operates the way the Master Builder designed it to operate.

If you'll notice carefully, in Romans 12:8, Paul is describing an activity, not an office, nor an official position. "He that ruleth." One commentator suggests that the last three gifts Paul mentions in v 8 are related--Giving, Ruling, and Mercy. They all have to do with the church's benevolent ministries--caring for the poor and needy. The one with the ruling gift is responsible to organize, oversee, and administrate the compassion ministries of the local church.

That's possible. But I think Paul has more in mind than just compassion ministries here. There are a host of needs for leadership in a church. The church is not a one-man-show. There's a continual need for solid, godly leadership.

Challenge: The local church today ought to be grooming its leaders of tomorrow (Titus 2). More about this in a moment.

### B. How is the Gift of Leadership Used?

Paul qualifies the exercise of "leadership" with the phrase "with diligence". Diligence refers to "speed and haste". Who is a good leader? A good leader is one who recognizes a need and acts quickly to take care of the need. He leads "with diligence."

It is a serious thing to serve as a leader in a church, whether as a deacon, or youth leader, or trustee, or pastor. And listen. God's Word says those who lead are to do so with diligence, with zeal, with eagerness. Not just the first month after they're elected. Not just when it's convenient. Not just if they don't have anything else to do.

Remember what Peter wrote in I Pt 5:1-4? Take a look...

A good leader leads with diligence. But what does God expect those gifted as leaders to do? How is this gift to be used?

Key Texts:

Heb 13:17 "Obey them that have the rule over you..."

What does God expect of leaders in the church? What is it that God expects a leader to do? One, leaders are to "keep watch for your souls." Leaders are in the soul business. Church leaders are to devote their lives to matters which matter for eternity.

Problem: It's easy for leaders to get sidetracked by the beurocrisy of church management. Deciding the color of the carpet in the nursery. Figuring out what kind of gas to put in the van. Fixing the xerox machine. Making phone calls to the bug exterminator. Important items? Yes, but will they matter in light of eternity?

A leader is a person who possesses great insight and wisdom. He is able to see where the group needs to go. Theodore Roosevelt once said this about wisdom, "Wisdom is nine-tenths a matter of being wise in time." Most of us are "too often wise after the event." (Oswald Sanders, 82)

## **II. The Gift of Administration (I Corinthians 12:28)**

I Corinth 12:28 "And God hath set some in the church. . . governments"

Governments = administration (NIV; NKJV)

Administration is related to leadership, but distinct from it. Leadership is more definable by what a person is, and administration by what a person does.

Administration is synomous with management.

A person can be a leader without administering (the QB on a professional football team). And a person can be an administrator without leading (scores of employees in the federal beurocracy).

### A. What is the Gift of Administration?

The word "governments" has a unique meaning. Literally it means "to steer a ship". It refers to the skill of piloting a ship. Picture the one at the helm of a ship, the shipmaster, who charts the course. He knows the intended destination. His job is to keep the ship on course.

The greek word is *kubernesis* from which we get our English word "cybernetics". Cybernetics is a science that studies the brain relative to its governing of the body. It refers to ruling, to how the brain makes the body respond.

Definition: The person with this gift has the ability to see an objective, formalize it, mobilize a group of people, and then get them to reach that objective. It's not the ability to push paper around on a desk. The person who has the most pencils does not necessarily have this gift. The one who has the God-given ability to make decisions, and determine direction, and get the people to follow, does.

So God gives the gift of administration to those individuals He expects to steer the ship of the church. But remember this. The pastor does not own the ship! He is responsible for piloting the ship. But so are others.

Are the gifts of leadership and administration limited to pastors? Not at all. In fact, God in His wisdom often uses "lay leadership".

--Exodus 18 Moses >> appointed leaders (according to Jethro)

--Acts 6 Apostles >> appointed 7 men to care for widows

Illust: Needs for laymen to assume positions of leadership

#### B. How is the Gift of Administration used?

Certainly, with the realization Paul highlighted in I Cor 12:18, "But now hath God set the members, every one of them, in the body, as it has pleased Him."

A great leader is one who is marked by humility.

Oswald Sanders refers to a man named Samuel Brengle who was once introduced as "the great Dr. Brengle." In his diary, here's what Brengle wrote (90): "If I appear great in their eyes, the Lord is most graciously helping me to see how absolutely nothing I am without Him, and helping me to keep little in my own eyes. He does use me. But I am so concerned that HE uses me and that it is not of me that the work is done. The axe cannot boast of the trees it has cut down. It could do nothing but for the woodsman. He made it, he sharpened it, and he used it. The moment he throws it aside, it becomes only old iron. O that I may never lose sight of this."

Beloved, every gift must be marked by humility in its use. But especially the gifts pertaining to leadership.

Let me speak frankly about a problem. When it comes to leadership in local churches, we are tempted to enjoy the prestige of the position, rather than to use it to serve others.

Questions for Present Leaders in WBC:

Is the leadership of God's Church a priority in our lives, or are we merely filling positions? Are we leading with diligence? It's costly to lead. Leadership involves effort and sacrifice. It may involve taking criticism. But are we willing to lead the ship through the waters so that it goes where God wants it to go?

Leading is not easy. Listen to these words penned by Les Flynn (130), "In most organizations today, two groups are likely to be found side by side. One group wants

to keep on doing things as always, to conduct business as usual; the other strives to reach out to new ways, to attempt something different. One is preserving, the other prophetic. One, conservative, the other creative. One traditional, the other inventive... Whether piloting the church through unusual or routine maneuvers, the shipmaster must keep the church in balance, lest it stiffen into traditionalism or run riot."

### **Conclusion:**

God has given Spiritual Gifts to His Church. Speaking gifts. Serving gifts. He distributed each according to the sovereign purpose of His will. He gave each for a one purpose--to be developed and used so that the Church would be edified.

Permit me to be very upfront with you. The task of the local church is too great to be limited to the paid professional clergy. If we're going to accomplish our God-given task as a church of reaching this community, it will be through the dynamic involvement of all of us.

We need leaders. The church is ever changing. The need for leaders in the church is constant. Who is qualified to lead this church? Who should we look for?

Key: We don't pick leaders in the church the same way IBM does, or school boards do, or the way the army does.

In the church, the first criteria is a spiritual criteria. Look for spiritually gifted individuals. It doesn't matter how flashy a person is, how suave, how smooth with words, how impressive he is in an interview. Is he spiritually qualified?

Think about it. Who are the individuals in this church who have the following reputation? One, they are known for having a great love for God. And two, they are known for having a great love for people. That's the kind of person who can lead the church.

Some potential leaders love God. But if they don't exhibit a love for people, they can't lead in the church, for the church is people. Some potential leaders love people. Yet if their relationship with God is stagnant, they can't lead in the church, for the church belongs to Him.

### **Challenge:**

1. Pray that God will raise up leaders with these spiritual marks. Those who could serve as deacons, youth leaders, children's ministry leaders, rest home ministry leaders.
2. If you believe someone exhibits the spiritual marks of a leader, affirm them. Tell them you see God's hand at work in their lives.
3. If you see someone you believe has the potential to be a leader, encourage that person to get involved. Help them find a place to serve.