

This Church of Ours August 19, 2018

I am going to list a variety of topics that I might preach on today and I want you to be aware of your reaction.....Which ones get your attention? And which ones make you groan? When I read a title, in your head, say yes or no as to what topic you want to hear me speak on.

Ministry to People in Developing Countries

Prayer

Reaching out to the community around us

The Finances of the church

How the Bible came into being

The 10 Commandments

The Parables of Jesus

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission

Ministry to victims of Human trafficking

The sacraments of the church

The Ministry of Music

God and the Environment

Transforming Lives in Malawi

The Plight of the Refugee

Diversity in our Church

Ministry of Hospitality

Ministry to Elders

Grief and its many Paths

Spiritual Growth

Many of these topics are addressed in the most recent edition of Presbyterian Connection. Copies are on the back table for you.\

When I read these titles, you had had an openness, an interest, a curiosity, or a familiarity, or, you were not the least bit interested in hearing about some of these topics.

We feel drawn to things for which we have at least some interest.

Usually, we also have some identified or unidentified giftedness. If I am neither interested or gifted when it comes to numbers and finance, I will not feel drawn to ministry that involves these things nor would I be helpful in these ministries.

When we are interested in and gifted in an area, we will have success and satisfaction when we engage there.

The Spiritual Gifts as listed in both Romans and Corinthians, really cover all areas of ministry. The words they use might not be particularly helpful, but all ministries of the church, I believe are within this list.

Years ago, we had a retreat for members of session at our cottage.

During the first part of the day, we each did a Spiritual Gifts

Assessment. A Spiritual Gifts Inventory or Assessment will have statements such as:

I am people centered and I like to help others.

I enjoy performing routine tasks in the church.

I spend a great deal of time praying for others.

You would respond, strongly agree or strongly disagree, or something in between.

Scores are then tabulated. The scores indicate spiritual strengths and in what areas of ministry our gifts lay.

We did this as a session. One of our members had taken on an administrative role on our session. She did a very good job in administration, but her area of giftedness according to the Spiritual Gifts Assessment was prayer. She was shocked. We immediately got her out of her administrative duties and she has gone on to develop and lead an incredible prayer ministry ever since!

Prophecy, Serving, Teaching, Encouraging, Giving, Leadership, Mercy, Word of wisdom, word of knowledge, faith, healing, miraculous powers, discerning spirits, speaking in tongues, interpreting tongues, helps. These are the Biblical names of Spiritual Gifts some other time.

Now clearly these gifts are not exclusive to one ministry or another.

For example, Mission Work in the local community might be where your heart is. This might include volunteering at the Food Bank, or at a woman's shelter, serving a meal at the Mission, volunteering at

Shepherds of Good Hope, helping the blind so they can continue to live at home. Local Mission work can take many different forms. As far as spiritual gifts are concerned, people with gifts of mercy, serving, giving, encouraging, and or leadership would have the most success in these kinds of ministries. Employment of a variety of spiritual gifts are needed in any ministry.

I spent a bit of time going through Presbyterian Connection on Monday. The array of various ministries was amazing. There is a place for everyone to engage in ministry somewhere in the exhaustive expanse of ministry within the Presbyterian Church in Canada.

For some of us, what we need from church is just a place to go and worship on Sunday morning. For others, it is a place to go and connect with other people of faith. For some, it is a place to belong. For some, it is a place to engage in ministry of one sort or another.

There are any number of ways to grow in your faith. Engaging in ministry of some sort or another is essential. But before you take the

plunge, or even put your toe in the water, find out where your spiritual giftedness lies!

Sometimes asking those who know you best what they think your gifts might be –

Serving, Helping, Teaching, Praying, Encouraging, Leadership

These gifts might equip us for Teaching Sunday School, Working with our Youth, becoming a member of our Facilities Team, becoming part of the Music ministry or Hospitality Team

Engaging your gifts in the mission of the church is a wonderful way to grow in your relationship with God. It is fertile soil. It will enrich your life.

May God bless you as you come to know more about yourself so that you might come to know and experience more of God.

Amen