**Empowered**

1 Corinthians 12:12-20, 27-31

Small Group Discussion

**Opening question**:

* Name one way God has gifted you. It could be a spiritual gift, personal skill, vocational competence, or personality strength, etc.
* Does it feel awkward to talk about how you are gifted? Why or why not?

**TAKE TURNS READING 1 Corinthians 12:12-20:**

12 The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. 13 For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body— whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free— and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. 14 Now the body is not made up of one part but of many. 15 If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. 16 And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. 17 If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? 18 But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. 19 If they were all one part, where would the body be? 20 As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

1. Pastor Josh mentioned that v13 is significant. What do we learn about the Spirit’s involvement in our lives from this verse? Why is this important?
2. In v12, Paul provides a summary statement on the Body of Christ (the church), and then in verses 14-20, explains the metaphor in more detail. How do these verses compare the Body of Christ to a human body?
3. Why are unity and diversity both important to a church body? (To answer, think of what it would look like having one without the other and then finally having neither.)
4. The word “For” in the beginning of v13 implies a connection with v12. What is the Holy Spirit’s role in creating the Body of Christ?
5. From Josh’s sermon:

“…The Spirit has also given us some radical gifts. Yet many of us continue to live thirsty lives, failing to drink deeply of the Spirit. Before we can go any further, I need to ask you to think about your life: *are you drinking deeply of the Holy Spirit?* Are you drawing your nourishment from his presence in you? The same God who created the entire universe, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you. Are you tapping into that source of life and power?” **On a scale of 1-10 with 10 being high, how deeply are you tapping into the Holy Spirit? Explain.**

1. Let’s get practical: What are some practices that might allow us to tap more deeply into the Holy Spirit?
2. The passage above makes a point about inferiority. Do you feel shy about using your gifts? Why do you think that is?
3. Josh made a statement about this (**Take turns reading**):

“Some of us have a tendency to think that our gifts or role in the church is unimportant because it is not very prominent or glamorous. We want to have or be what someone else has or is. And as a result: we don’t serve; we don’t exercise our gifts; we grumble about our station, or lack of visibility, or about the people who seem to be more prominent. Or most common of all, we sit back and let the professional ministers do everything, because they’re the ones who are really qualified! But remember the dominant feature of our new reality: Whatever the nature of our specific gifts, God has freely given us the same Holy Spirit, who empowers and equips us. However insignificant you may feel that your gifts are, or however unglamorous you may feel, because you have the HS living in you God has given you some gift or gifts that are vital to this church, this family, being what he wants it to be. In fact, *you are* a gift to his church, his family. If your gifts and your presence are not involved here, this church will not be all that God intends for it to be.”

* 1. What is your initial reaction to this statement? Encouraging? Challenging? Discouraging? Something else?
1. **Take turns reading vv27-31.** Which of the gifts listed is most curious to you and why?
2. What do you think is meant by “eagerly desire the greater gifts”? (Josh referenced this in his sermon.)
3. Pastor Josh gave 5 practical steps in order to clarify your spiritual gifts and your God-given role within the church. Have any of these been fruitful to you? Are there any that you could carry out together with your small group? What are the appropriate next steps for you in response to this discussion?
4. Pray. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you.
5. Experiment in various areas that interest you.
6. As you experiment with your gifts, observe how people react to you, what seems to bring you joy, what types of people you seem to have the most passion to serve, and in what areas of service do you seem to have a natural faith that God will bless your efforts.
7. Ask for feedback from trusted people. It may not be what you want it to be.
8. Attend our Thriving in Ministry class, which will start in January.

Fun question: Why do you think Paul put his classic Love Chapter (13) in between two chapters (12 and 14) on spiritual gifts, especially given that the Corinthian church was one of the best at corrupting every dimension of church life?

**Share and Pray:** Among our usual prayer requests, let’s pray that God will give us a passion to use our gifts to serve the church, give us clarification on what these gifts are, and give us more of His Holy Spirit in order to use our gifts with His power and character.