

Bible Studies for Life: August 9

By Clay Anthony

We Support One Another • Ephesians 4:1-7, 11-16



Anthony

In 1623, British poet John Donne wrote, “No man is an island.” The idea is that we are all connected in our humanity. With every birth or death, we as humans are affected. The point is simple: We need each other. Church life is no different than the rest of our experiences. The Apostle Paul desired that his readers understood this point. Faith families are made up of people with different personalities and talents. All are to work together for the betterment of the church as a whole and as a witness for the Gospel. The believer in the year 2020 must understand that upon salvation, each of us were gifted certain capabilities to use in the context of our local church. We refer to these capabilities as spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 12-14). Each believer is gifted in some manner or another but all are expected to exercise their gifts. In fact, using our gifts for the church is a calling.

Called to Care. The word *call* is used three times within in the first few verses for good reason. No Christian ever has the right to work against the unity of the body with a wrong attitude. Our calling is clear. Humble, gentle spirits who are wrapped in patience are needed at the forefront of

service to the church. In doing so, we bear (carry) each other in love with an eagerness to maintain (keep going) unity provided by the Holy Spirit and do so with patience (v. 3). The more connectedness we understand, the more we care about those sitting in the pews of our church.

Called to Follow. Our spiritual gifts are not the only gifts mentioned by Paul. Each church is gifted as well. It is quite an impressive gift list that God has bestowed upon His church (v. 11). Four offices are named and each is specific to the needs of church leadership. All the teaching and encouraging that comes from God comes to us through the conduits of His undershepherds He has given to aid in our spiritual walk. The ministry of these offices has clear outcomes. Just as we saw earlier, these gifts are given for the purpose of unity as well (v. 12). This unity is coupled with a knowledge of Jesus which in turn leads to the maturing of our faith (v. 13).

Called to Grow. Individual gifts plus the gifts given to churches equal growth from childlike faith to a more substantive faith that is sure of itself (v. 14) Such a faith guarantees growth towards more Christlikeness (v. 15). Imagine church members expressing the gifts that God has given each of them, in the setting of a local church that expresses those same gifts in growing all persons into a more Christlike mold. Does that not sound attractive? We need each member of the body and each local church to do their part in order to see this come to fruition.

Live It Out. Verses four through six contain seven mentions of the word *one*. Our gifts are to be used with laser-like focus on this word. We are not to become distracted by peripheral issues that stunt growth in ourselves or our church. Are you working towards these singular targets such as our hope, baptism, and Lord? What are your spiritual gifts? Note the web address below sent from LifeWay. You will find a printable document that can be taken and graded to discover how God has

gifted you to serve others. It is a great survey that will help your small group discover the many ways that God can use you to better grow and serve your faith family. Share the findings with your pastor and begin today to work towards growing yourself and those around you to be more like Jesus.

<https://goexplorethebible.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/DOC-Spiritual-Gifts-Survey.pdf>

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