

THE GIFT OF ADMINISTRATION

“Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, and those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues” (1 Cor. 12: 17, 28).

Forgive me for focusing on a spiritual gift so far down the list, but gifts of administration will still be the focus of this brief study. We know that all spiritual gifts are important or they would not have been given. Obviously, the Lord recognized the need for administrators, that’s why He gave the gift. Perhaps this lesson will be of help to you and the congregation where you worship. Please consider that without the gift of administration, the Body of Christ will be handicapped.

The importance of administrators is reflected to me by the quip: “For God so loved the world that He did not send a committee”. It has been my experience that committees are time wasting and inefficient. Yes! The Scriptures do teach that with the multitude of counselors there is safety (Prov. 11:14), but remember that these inspired words were written by Solomon. Solomon was not a committee member, he was a king. He had the authority to cut a baby in half without asking anybody (1 Ki. 3:25). Of course it is wise for a king with such power to receive counsel. Of course it is wise for an administrator to also receive counsel. It is not wise, however, to have a committee of kings or many administrators in charge of the same project.

The word translated as “administration” in our text is the Greek word “kubernesis”. It literally means “to steer”. It is translated as “governments” in the KJV. A variation of the word is used in Acts 27:11 to refer to the “pilot” of a ship. In Rev. 18:17 it is rendered “sea captain” in the NIV. Nothing needs to be “steered” however, if it is not moving. A committee can safely have long meetings on board a ship as long as the ship is not moving. When the ship starts moving, however, it needs to be “steered” by a pilot and not a committee.

Nothing needs to be steered, however, unless it is moving. You don’t need a steering wheel on a tree stump. Neither do you need a steering wheel on a car until it starts moving. As you know, when the car does start moving it cannot be steered by a committee. Having more than one steering wheel in a car is dangerous. Having no one steering a moving car is also dangerous. While airplanes have dual controls there can still be only one “pilot in command” at a time. Confusion about this can be fatal. Consider, for example, the crash of Eastern Airlines Flight # 401. This tragedy occurred at 11:42 p.m. December 29, 1972. There were 101 fatalities. On final approach the captain noted that a green light failed to come on indicating that the landing gear was down and locked. He declared a missed approach and put the airplane on auto-pilot. Then he, the co-pilot, and the flight engineer began a frantic search to find out what was wrong. Since no one was “pilot in command” no one was there to notice that the auto-pilot had become disconnected. That’s why flight # 401 crashed in the everglades and 101 people died.

Since Christ loves the church and gave Himself up for it, you can see why He wants someone in charge. Jesus once told a parable about a shepherd with 100 sheep (Lk. 15:3 - 7). When one sheep got lost someone needed to spring into action. In this instance it was the shepherd. To emphasize the importance of even one lost person Jesus said that the shepherd left the 99 and

searched for the lost sheep until he found it. He was so happy that he called his friends and neighbors together to rejoice with him. Jesus said: **“I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent” (Lk. 15:7)**

Since every soul is important to God gave spiritual gifts. One of these gifts is the gift of administration. Jeremiah 13:20 contains a haunting question: “Where is the flock that was entrusted to you?” If God entrusts someone with His sheep, He will expect someone to give an account.

Since the Bible does not give specific details on how the church is to be structured, we are free to adapt and innovate to find the most effective and efficient way of caring for God’s sheep. If we do a good job of caring for the flock, when the Chief Shepherd appears we will receive a crown of glory that will never fade away (1 Pet. 5:1 - 4) This is also why believers are to obey their spiritual leaders for they watch for our souls as they that must give an account (Heb. 13:17). Obedience in this regard makes leadership a joy and not a burden.

The Bible word for “gifts” in our text is “charismata”. Since the word “chara” means “joy” we can deduce that using your spiritual gift will bring a deep sense of joy and fulfillment.

Paul proceeds, as you know, to prove that love is the most excellent way. Without love no spiritual gift has meaning. So, if God has given you the gift of administration, remember that the goal of all God’s commandments is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith (1 Tim. 1:5).