

**different gifts to various people** in the church **“as he wills.”** See here that God, according to **His own wisdom** and **plan**, has gifted all the members with gifts that differ, yet it is He who is **“6 the same God who works all things in all persons.”**

**1 Corinthians 12:27-31** - 27 Now you are Christ's body, and individually members of it. 28 And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues. 29 All are not apostles, are they? All are not prophets, are they? All are not teachers, are they? All are not workers of miracles, are they? 30 All do not have gifts of healings, do they? All do not speak with tongues, do they? All do not interpret, do they? 31 But earnestly desire the greater gifts. And I show you a still more excellent way. NASB

The text in **1 Corinthians 12:12-26** provides much needed **instruction** for the **Corinthians** who needed to **learn** how to **use the gifts** in a **loving manner** for the **building up** of **one another**, and never for **prideful** or **selfish uses**. The main message in **12:12-26** is that **God** had **placed all the members** of the body into **One functioning body** of **believers**, and that we should have the **same honor** and care for **one another**, regardless of **our gifting** or **function** within the body. The gifts that God has given to **each individual** are very **diverse** and **varied**, but all **function** for the **one body collectively**, which is why he uses the **body motif**. As with a hand, foot, ear or eye, **all the members** are **vital** for the **functioning** of the **body**. In fact, we should give **more honor** to the **less honorable parts** as a means of **expressing** the **same love** and **care** for **one another**. See here the **proper loving** and **self-sacrificial attitude** we should possess toward one another in the body of Christ.

In **12:27-31** Paul will show with **more diverse** and **various gifts** how the body **functions together** with the **vital use** and **effort** of **everyone's gifting**. Here he summarizes the **main points** of **chapter 12**;

- God **sovereignly distributes** the gifts according to His will, for the benefit of the whole body, in much **diversity** yet for the **unity** of all
- We should **desire they gifts to function** among us with great **effectiveness**
- We should **receive** and **employ** or **use the gifts** we have received as an **act of love** toward all the members of the body.

**27 Now you are Christ's body, and individually members of it.** – Here he shifts his thoughts from 12:12-26 that there are many diverse parts of a body and its unity as one functioning body, to see how the gifts function in a similar way. **“27 Now you are Christ's body, and individually members of it.”** Even though you are **one** body, you **each** play a role, like a **hand**, or **foot**, or **eye** or **ear** for the service and **function** of the body as a whole, even though we are **diverse “individual members”** of the **one body**. Therefore, his point **emphasizes** the **vital role** we **each play** in using **our gifts** for the **benefit** of the **whole body**.

**28 And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues. 29 All are not apostles, are they? All are not prophets, are they? All are not teachers, are they? All are not workers of miracles, are they? 30 All do not have gifts of healings, do they? All do not speak with tongues, do they? All do not interpret, do they?** – Here Paul will emphasize God’s sovereign plan in equipping the body, just as He wills (v-12:11), by showing from the most **fundamental** and **important gifts**, down to the most **common gifts** we possess in the body, and how the obvious **divine design** in appointing the gifts to each one of us, **“God has appointed in the church.”** See here from the **most important gift** of **apostle**, to the **least** of the gifts, tongues, God has appointed them to each member with **meaning** and **purpose** in His plan.

The **apostles** and **prophets** were first in the **body** as they laid the **foundation** of the church.

**Ephesians 2:19-22** - 19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, **20 having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, 21 in whom the whole building, being fitted together is growing into a holy temple in the Lord; 22 in whom you also are being built together** into a dwelling of God in the Spirit. NASB

The **gift** of **Apostle**, whom God appointed, first the **12 disciples** appointed by **Christ**, (Judas was replaced by Matthias at Pentecost), and **Paul** who was set apart uniquely by Christ as the **Apostle** to the **Gentiles** (Gal 1:11-17). These men equipped the church in the most fundamental way by the **revelatory Word** of **Holy Scripture**, the **New Testament**, which they brought forth **by the Spirit**, which laid the foundation of the church **in Word** and **practice**. They gave us the **written**

**Word** AND an **example** of the **Christian life** lived out through the **local churches** which they **established**. The written **Word** that came forth from them was witnessed by God with the **confirmatory gifts** of **signs** and **wonders** wrought by their own hands.

**2 Corinthians 12:12** - 12 The **signs of a true apostle were performed among you with all perseverance, by signs and wonders and miracles**. NASU

**Hebrews 2:3-4** – 3 how will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? After it was at the **first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard** [the apostles], 4 **God also testifying with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit** according to His own will. NASU

These Apostles, were “**first**” in Paul’s list of **gifts** here. There were of course **other men** gifted as **apostles**, such as **Barnabas, Silas, James, Titus** and **Timothy**, but these were not **appointed** to the **office** of **Apostle** or recognized as the 12, plus Paul, by the church throughout **church history**. Nevertheless, they are called **apostles** and were **close associates** and **fellow workers** together with the 13 Apostles. These men at times also performed **confirmatory gifts** of signs and wonders, and were generally considered **messengers** of the **churches** (2 Cor 8:23). The term translated as messengers (in Greek *apostoloi*), means “**one who is sent,**” and these played many **varied roles** among the churches (Acts 14:4, Rom 16:7, Phil 2:25, 1 Thes 2:26).

Then states Paul, “**second prophets.**” Here he obviously refers to the New Testament prophets saying “**God has appointed in the church,**” such men as Agabus (Acts 11:28), Simeon, Lucius, yet at times even Barnabas, Silas, and Paul are called **prophets**. These men were **teachers** and **preachers** who served to **encourage** and **strengthen** the early church as they edified and exhorted the church with teaching and preaching.

**Acts 13:1** - 1 Now there were at Antioch, **in the church that was there, prophets and teachers: Barnabas, and Simeon who was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul**. NASB

**Acts 15:32-35** - 32 And **Judas and Silas, also being prophets themselves, encouraged and strengthened the brethren** with a lengthy message. 33 And after they had spent time there, they were sent away from the brethren in peace to those who had sent them out. 34 [But it seemed good to Silas to remain there.] 35 But **Paul and Barnabas stayed in Antioch,**

**teaching and preaching, with many others also, the word of the Lord.**

NASB

See here the **vital role** the **prophets** played in the **formation** and **foundation** of the **church** as it was in its **stages** of **infancy**. These **prophets** were profoundly **gifted** by **God**, **preaching** and **teaching** before there was a New Testament, and they functioned both in **foretelling** (future events) and also in **forthtelling** the already **written Word** of **God** from the **Old Testament**. It was very **common** for them to **proclaim Christ** from the **Old Testament** text saying that He was the **Messiah** who was promised by God in the **Scriptures**.

Paul continues with a list of **diverse** gifts, **“28 third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues.”** The diversity listed here is part of his **point**, that even though we are **individually gifted** people, yet God has appointed us in the church to use our **own gifts** for the service and **edification** of the **whole body**. Therefore, it is vital for us to **know, understand** and use our **gifts** for that purpose. As he names each gift, we can clearly see how **vital** the role of **each one** is.

He says **“third teachers,”** obviously showing this **gift** as another **major priority** next to **apostles** and **prophets**. It appears he simply **refers** to the **person** with the **gift of teaching**, whether pastor-teacher (Eph 4:11), or otherwise a teacher in the church, either male or female. Surely the **role** of **teacher** is very important given the **didactic nature** of the **Christian Faith**, with the **whole body** of **Christian Doctrine** which must be **taught** and **learned** by **every** member, that all may grow in the **grace** and **knowledge** of the **Lord**, by which we participate in the divine nature and become like Christ. Certainly, **teachers** play a **vital role** in the church.

But so did **“miracles, then gifts of healings,”** which served to **confirm** the **message** of the **Apostles**, as they gave to us the **Gospel accounts** and the entire **written corpus** of the **New Testament**. As we stated, the main role of miracles and healings were **confirmatory gifts** of the messages given by those who performed these gifts, the Apostles and prophets. Surely it was recognized as a **great sign** when **Jesus** or an Apostle healed someone, and this is in fact a **confirmatory gift** whereby **God bears witness** to the **testimony** of those chosen by Him to bring the **Gospel message** and the Epistles, and to **establish** the **Church** in the world, laying its foundation.

Yet even the gifts of **“helps and administrations,”** which are serving gifts and not speaking gifts, God has appointed to play a **vital role** in the **ongoing functioning** of the body of Christ. Obviously **“helps”** is one of the **most prevalent** yet **important** gifts, as there are **many varied tasks** that need to be attended to in order for the church to **function effectively**. MacArthur comments, *“The gift of helps is a gift for service in the broadest sense of helping and supporting others in day by day, often unnoticed, ways. It is the same gift as that of serving in Romans 12:7. Helps is an especially beautiful word, (Greek antilempsis) meaning to take the burden off someone else and place it on oneself. The gift doubtlessly is one of the most widely distributed of any, and it is a gift that is immeasurably important in supporting those who minister other gifts. The gift of helps is not glamorous or showy and, as in the Corinthian church, often is not highly prized or appreciated. But it is God’s gift, and its faithful ministry is highly prized by Him, and by any leader, who knows the value of supporting people behind the scenes.”* **End quote.** Let us **recognize** those who **serve** in this way among us and **highly esteem** and **appreciate** them in love.

**“Administrations”** is another obvious and **important gift** that is vital for the church to function effectively. This is the **God empowered** ability to **organize** and **lead effectively**. This is especially important as a **local church grows** and becomes more **complex** in its ministries creating the **need** for **organization, direction** and **communication**. People with this gift play a **vital role** in helping the church run **smoothly**. All elders are called to **lead**, but not all are especially gifted to do so with much **effectiveness**, whereas some elders are **very organized** and good at **communication**, and possess **God empowered wisdom** to lead in an **orderly** way. Other men and women in the body are also empowered by God in various ways to **administrate** and help things run **smoothly**, avoiding the pain and frustration of disorganization.

Lastly here Paul mentions **“various kinds of tongues.”** This is why some see **tongues** as the **least** of the **gifts**. Whether or not Paul means it like that, he surely does speak of **tongues** in a way that **limits** and **controls** its use in the **corporate gathering**, or else relegates its use to be **private**, **“28 but if there is no interpreter, let him keep silent in the church; and let him speak to himself and to God”** (14:28).