

Notes for the Ekklēsia Meeting

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Utilizing Our Gifts For Growth in the Body

By Dan Trygg

"But having gifts differing according to the grace given (at a point in time) to us, whether prophecy according to the right-relation/proportion of the faith [he/she has been given], whether service in the service, whether the (one) teaching in the teaching, whether the (one) coming-alongside-to-help in the coming-alongside-to-help; the (one) giving in simplicity/singleness, the (one) standing-before in earnestness, the (one) expressing-mercy with joyfulness."
Romans 12:6-8

"But truthing in love (agapē) we might grow/cause to increase the all things into/toward Him,
Who is the head (metaphorically -- source, origin, one who brings to completion),
Christ,
out from Whom all the Body
...being-fitted-together-with/(for itself) co-joining or
fitting-(itself)-together-with
...and
...being-knitted-together-with/(for itself) co-knitting
by means of every ligament of the full/abundant supply
according to the in-working/operation/energeian in measure of each
single/one part/limb
it (i.e., the Body)(for itself) makes the growth/increase of the Body
unto/toward up-building/edification of itself in love (agapē)."

Ephesians 4:15,16

From Romans 12:

"...having gifts differing according to the grace given (at a point in time) to us..."

1. We all have different gifts, expressions of different kinds of grace from God given to us at some previous point of time. The Greek underlying this verse clearly communicates that someone else (God) gave us the grace at a previous point in time. The grace itself is differing, hence the particular grace-gifts which are expressions of it vary. We should not *expect* to be like other people, or even like other congregations, because the grace and the gifts are not exactly the same.

"...whether prophecy according to the right-relation/proportion of the faith [he/she has been given]..."

2. Function the way *you* uniquely function. Do not try to be like someone else.

The phrase, "according to the right relation of the faith", probably is referring to the "measure of faith" mentioned in verse 3. What Paul is saying is that our gifts are an expression of the grace of God activated by the unique measure of faith or trust which He has given us. This allows for *great variety* of experiences and expressions within the kinds of gifts described.

"...whether service in the service, whether the (one) teaching in the teaching, whether the (one) coming-alongside-to-help in the coming-alongside-to-help..."

3. Your unique expression will become evident in the "doing" of your gift.

"...the (one) giving in simplicity/singleness, the (one) standing-before in earnestness, the (one) expressing-mercy with joyfulness."

4. Give yourself to the free, positive expression of your gift. Do not allow mixed motives to "color" the service of your gift.

From Ephesians 4:

"out from [Christ] all *the Body*
...according to the in-working/operation/energeian in measure of each single/one part/limb
... (*for itself*) *makes the growth*/increase of the Body unto/toward
up-building/edification of itself in love (agapē)."

5. The Body causes itself to grow in proportion to the proper, active functioning of the individual parts. It is very clear in the Greek that "all the Body" is the subject of this sentence, "does, makes, produces" is the verb, and "the growth of the Body" is the object, further defined as "unto the building-up of itself in agape love". We are in this together. It is our job, and our responsibility.

***** One of the distinctives of Ekklēsia *****

We believe that the primary mission God has given to the Church is that we help one another mature and find our God-given roles in ministry in the Body.

When you read the letters of Paul, it is interesting to note that **the overwhelming majority of the practical teaching they contain are about relationships *within* the Body of Christ.** There is very little taught about "evangelizing your neighbor", yet within most modern churches *that* has become the primary thrust of most strategies for growth.

The focus of most conservative Protestant groups has been the *proclamation* of the Good News. This sounds good and right on the surface, and it certainly is *part* of what a healthy church will do. Too often, however, our evangelistic efforts "put the cart before the horse". We set ourselves up for failure with the unbelieving world because we "talk the talk" without really learning how to "walk the walk" ...and we "turn people off" by what they perceive as hypocrisy. **What is our "corporate witness"?**

A fundamental principle which we can observe to be operating in the world around us continually is:
"Growth and reproduction are natural by-products of health."

If we do what it takes to learn to be a healthy, functioning organism, we will find that growth and reproduction will happen quite naturally. It will not need to be manipulated or "forced". Ephesians 2:10 says that we have been created and fashioned by God for good works, which He has prepared for us to do. **He has prepared us for the job, and He has prepared the job for us.** If we are faithful to develop a healthy, maturing walk with Christ, God will bring opportunities for service to us. As we serve, we will discover more of how God works in us, and others will benefit from His grace poured out through us into *their* lives. It is the "God in us" who stirs us, and is outwardly expressed through us to others. **As we do this, people see God in us.**