

✦ 1. The function of giving

The Bible says – Romans 12:4-8 (NKJV)

*“For as we are many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith: or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches in teaching; he who exhorts, in exhortation; **he who gives, with liberty**, he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.”*

God has given each believer a calling for a special purpose and has given us a set of gifts according to the task. What he has called us to he has also given us grace to accomplish.

One important function in the body is giving.

Every believer is called by God to be a generous giver. God counts on our financial engagement to accomplish his work.

- It is both a privilege and a responsibility.

But this bible text speaks about something more than just being a generous giver; it speaks about having it as a ministry, a special function in the body of Christ.

These people have the gift of giving. The gift of giving is a grace (*power, ability*) from God to **create** and **distribute wealth**, led by the Holy Spirit.

✦ The Body of Christ can't do what it is called to do if all the different functions are not in place, yielding themselves to their specific calling.

Even if we have divinely equipped pastors, evangelists and other ministry gifts in the church, but we are lacking the ones that in a special way are bestowed by God with financial resources to pay for the costs of ministry, the church will not be able to do all the things that God has called the church to do.

✦ *Who will pay for the expenses of the Church?*

Generally speaking, it is all the **ordinary believers** in the local church that are the main source for paying the cost for what is done in the church and not a handful of millionaires.

But there are those who in a special way have the financial capability and the joy to finance many initiatives that God leads others to take.

At different occasions they can quickly, and entirely, finance a certain initiative/project without the church struggling to gather the money over a longer period, wasting focus and time on money-talk instead of the main job of the church.

The people with the gift of giving can release the work of God to run more smoothly and pain free when they are in place in the Body of Christ.

They will not replace the responsibility for every church member to give and sacrifice, but they give an extra financial boost to the work.

✦ 2. Grace from God

The Bible says – Ephesians 4:7 (NKJV)

“But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ’s gift”

Grace means to have ability, power and favor from God to execute something specific.

For the person who has this gift there is an open heaven to deal with money in a way that it increases and is given to the right people at the right time.

They are equipped by God to channel financial resources where God wants to have them.

This grace attracts money miraculously to the person who has this calling and he/she spreads the financial prosperity of God to the people and ministries they are called to minister to.

- Abundance and provision is part of their anointing.

A person who is rich does not necessarily have this gift just because he has a lot of money. This gift doesn’t come when the bank account is growing. It is a calling that purely comes from God whether you have much money or not.

A person who has this gift can start with nothing but can feel the strong desire in their heart to make money for Jesus. Once they accept this calling the grace of God will start to show them how to make it.

A person with the gift of giving is easily recognized by the joy they have in giving. Just like the other functions in the body, they find their biggest satisfaction in practicing their calling, giving to where the need is.

The gift of giving doesn’t depend on how much money you have, but on how much you give in comparison to what you have.

A willing heart to give characterizes these people, and the more they give the more God blesses them and trusts them with bigger financial resources, so it really becomes an important ministry to the work of God.

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- These people **live for the purpose of giving**; this is Christ’s gift in them.

Some of them may not be so financially strong in the beginning, but they show a strong devotion to giving and over time God increases their resources and enlarge the affect they have.

✦ 3. People who had the gift of giving in the bible

The bible says – Luke 8:1-3 (NJKV)

“Now it came to pass afterwards that he went through every city and village, preaching and bringing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God. And the twelve were with him, and certain women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities – Mary called Magdalene, out of whom had come seven demons, and Johanna the wife of Chuza, Herod’s steward, and Susanna and many others who provided for him from their substance”

These women are good examples of people with the gift of giving. The main purpose of their ministry was to make it financially possible for Jesus and his team to travel around the land of Israel and preach the gospel.

Many were supporting Jesus, but these three are specially mentioned, because they made a big difference in the financial situation of Jesus and his ministry.

They probably felt a special responsibility to see that nothing was missing for Jesus or his followers; maybe they paid for all the costs that occurred in the big meetings Jesus had.

The responsibility that they took was a burden God put on their hearts, and it facilitated the ministry of Jesus so he could focus on serving the people and not taking time to arrange food and fill other material needs for his disciples.

When one person is doing his/her job it will release others to do theirs. The people with the gift of giving enable others to fulfill God’s calling; that’s why they are so important.

At the same time we must understand that Jesus never was dependent on these women. God was always his ultimate source.

If they were not available God would have arranged other sources of provision:

- Sometimes a young boy with a lunch bag
- A fish with a silver coin in its mouth
- An unknown man lending his donkey
- A newly converted crook who gave away half of his fortune
- Wise men from the east bringing gold, myrrh and incense.

We can’t put our trust or hope in certain people but in God alone, and he chooses how and through whom he will arrange the provision for his work, so he will get all the glory.

It is important that when the gift of giving is present in a church that the leaders or other church members don’t put an improper expectation on this person to give as soon as there is a need.

This gift should not make the pastors or the other church member lazy.

- The church leaders must have their trust in God and not in certain people.
- The church members must give with all their heart and not think that the people with more money will take care of the funding.

We must resist the temptation to put our trust in and manipulate certain people.

✦ *Some other examples from the Bible on people who had this gift:*

- **David** had this gift.

Not only was he the one that first got the vision from God to build the temple, but he was also its **first and biggest donor**. His gifts were worth billions of USD in today's value. His deep commitment to donate to the temple inspired the rest of the nation to give with an unprecedented generosity (1 Chr 22:14-16).

The people with the gift of giving inspire the rest of the body of Christ to give more generously. They set examples of enthusiastic giving and entuse others, which is part of their function.

- ✦ • **Solomon** definitely had the gift of giving.

He financed the rest of the temple building and under his rule Israel experienced a prosperity never known before or after his time (2 Chr 9:22-28).

Because of his and his Father's anointing to create wealth they could build a temple so beautiful and overwhelming that it became known all over the region. The temple could contain all the precious metals and gemstones that God required. The builders didn't have to compromise. When this gift is working we can have a high standard in our church and ministry.

- ✦ • **The woman from Shunem** took as her responsibility to always provide for Elisha when he came to town and even built him his own apartment on top of her roof (2 King 4:8-10).

God sometimes puts a burden on somebody's heart to make sure that a certain minister or ministry gets all their needs filled.

- ✦ • **Cornelius** was a Roman officer who devoted himself to prayer and giving. His prayer life and generous donations made such a strong impression in heaven that his family was the first Gentile family to be chosen to hear the gospel (Act 10:1-6).

There are numerous examples from the Bible and church history of people who made giving both a lifestyle and a purpose in their life.

From modern days there are many examples:

- Colgate, the toothpaste producer, gave regularly 90 % of his income to the work of God
- Rockefeller, the American oil magnet, provided much of the financing to the Southern Baptist movement in the United States during parts of the twentieth century.
- The widow of one of the founders of Mc Donald's bequeathed a billion dollars to the Salvation Army.

Discussion

✦ *Discussion*

1. How do you think the gift of giving should work in the Body of Christ?
2. What could be the pitfalls for the person with the gift of giving and for the church leaders?

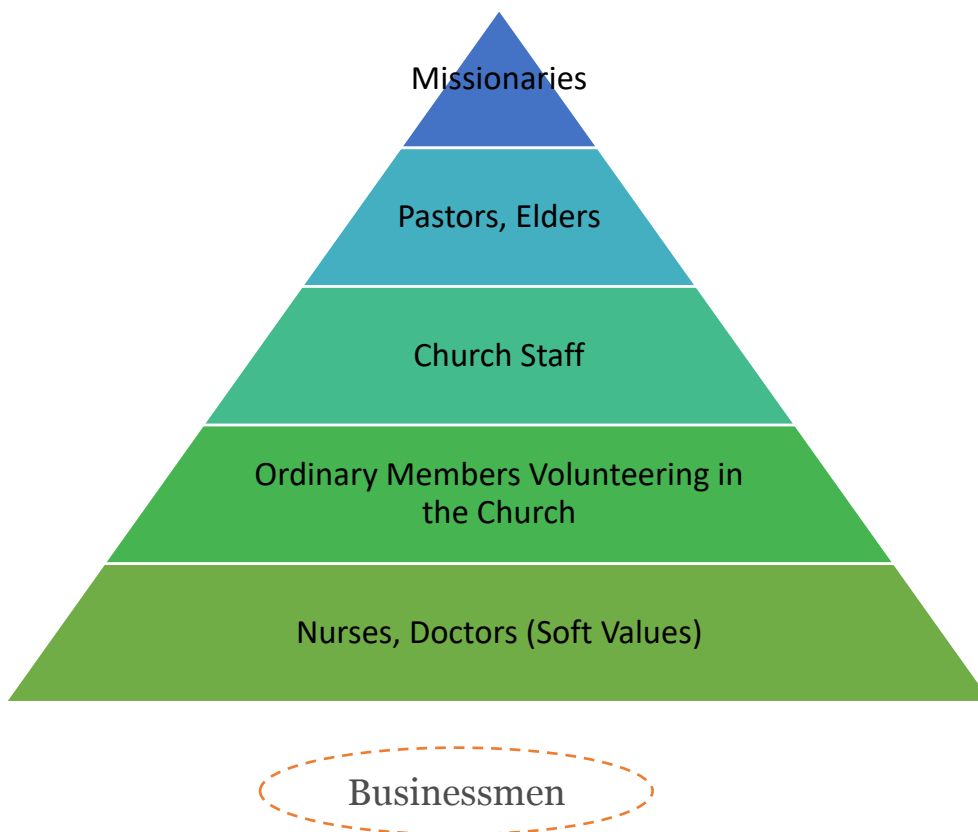
✦ 4. Recognize the gift

For this gift to work properly it needs to be recognized by the rest of the body of Christ.

Even if there are always some brave souls that will just go with their calling no matter what others say or think, the big release of this gift comes first when the rest of the Body of Christ recognizes them and allows them to function as they should.

One thing that hinders them from finding their place in the body of Christ is the spiritual pyramid we have built.

The Spiritual Pyramid



In the spiritual pyramid we value the ministry after a hierarchy where the full time ministers like missionaries, pastors and elders are at the top. Then it goes down the ladder to the less “special” ministries and functions.

In the spiritual pyramid the businessman isn’t even part of the game. He is not in any important ministry for the Lord. At the best he can be a good cash-cow and maybe do some volunteer work.

With this view the businessmen have not had any real importance for the kingdom. They are out there somewhere doing business in the “world” while the others are inside the spiritual borders of the church ministry.

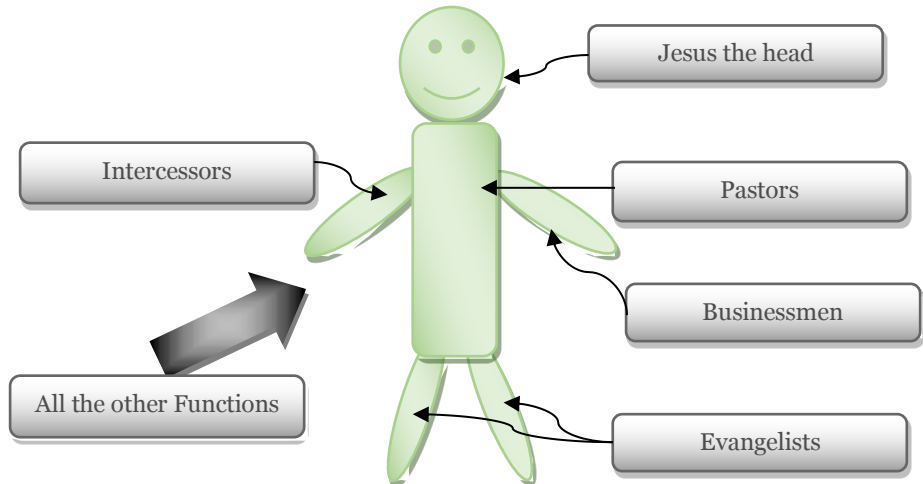
- The church is important and the prime instrument for Jesus to minister to the world

But we must tear down the pyramid mentality and replace it with a more biblical view on our different functions – The Body of Christ.



43. The ministry of giving

The Body of Christ



With this picture of the Body of Christ, instead of a pyramid, everybody becomes important and has a specific function to fill. We all become dependent on each other to fulfill our common calling and goal – to reach the world with the love of Christ.

There are vital ministries that the church can't live without, like spiritual leadership, just as there are vital organs in a body. But how miserable it would be if there are body parts missing in a body, or a body where only 10 % of the body parts are in active use. What kind of body would that be? A paralyzed body!

So when we recognize the businessmen as an important part of the broad ministry God wants to raise up, then we become stronger as a church.

✦ 5. We need this Gift today

In each time and each country these people need to come in to place so that the work of God will not experience lack and be restrained from functioning properly.

Some of these people are richer than others; some of them are just ordinary people with an extra ordinary love to give.

Many of them are business men/women and some of them are born or married into wealthy families. But no matter their financial status, their common trait is the concern they show to make sure that the Body of Christ has all the financial resources it needs to do the work of Christ.

Not all business men/women have this gift, but many who are business men/women became business owners because God put this calling on their lives to make money in the world, bless society and minister to the Body with the wealth they make.

So ask yourself if you are or are to become a business person:

- **What is your purpose in becoming/being one?**

The spiritual and the practical go hand in hand and are mutually dependent. If we are to see the kingdom of God spread in our nation we also need to conquer the financial freedom for the church, and that is our responsibility to make sure it happens.

✦✦ Homework

Prayer:

Mighty Lord Jesus
I make myself
available to you to
become a channel
for finances to do
your work.
Increase the level
of finances I have
and increase the
level of giving in
my life. What you
have given me and
what you will give
me is not for
myself but it is all
yours. Now use it
as you wish and
show me how and
where I should
minister to your
body with the
money you place
in my hands. I
don't live for
myself but I live
for your kingdom.

In Jesus name!

Amen!