

Name:

Email:



How can I serve?

The Plan

17 January (Church Meeting)	Introduction: 1 Peter 4v10-11 and outline plan
31 January (Students - 12 February)	Seminar 1: Romans 12v1-16, S.H.A.P.E and Spiritual Gifts
February	Individuals to fill out S.H.A.P.E questionnaire at home
28 February	Seminar 2: Review questionnaire answers together and Luke 10
March/April	121 meet ups with Elders, Staff or Small Group Leaders

We will only use this information to contact you about serving in Chalmers.

All bible quotations are from the English Standard Version (Anglicised)

How can I serve? - Seminar 1

1 Peter 4v10-11

¹⁰ As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: ¹¹ whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

We are aiming that God is glorified through Jesus Christ, by...

- #1 All church members faithfully and sacrificially serving in ministries they love and are gifted to do.
- #2 All church members being willing to faithfully and sacrificially serve in areas they don't love and aren't gifted to do.

Romans 12v1-16

I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.^[your rational service] ² Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

³ For by the grace given to me I say to every one among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgement, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned.

⁴ For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, ⁵ so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. ⁶ Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; ⁷ if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; ⁸ the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.

⁹ Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. ¹⁰ Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honour. ¹¹ Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. ¹² Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. ¹³ Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality. ¹⁴ Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. ¹⁵ Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. ¹⁶ Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight.

Four Key Principles

1. **Serving is Jesus shaped.** Our serving of others is to be sacrificial, but only in view of Christ first serving us through his death - the mercies of God. We are to be shaped like Christ.
2. **Humility is essential.** We must not over-estimate our abilities, but neither should we deny the work of grace by which God has equipped us with gifts. We must have sober judgment, to rightly view ourselves and be willing to listen to others.
3. **We are all different.** God has shaped each of us to serve him in a particular way, to serve him as different members of his body - with different gifts, passions, experience and availability.
4. **Godliness is more important than gifting.** It is possible to be very gifted, and very ungodly. A person like that is likely arrogant, self-serving, and divisive. The right motivation for service is love of the Lord and others. The right manner of service is zealous, cheerful and humble.

Discuss:

What has struck you from Romans 12? How has this passage helped you to think about serving?

What are the different contexts in which Christians can serve the Lord?

Serving in Chalmers

In any church, we would expect to find that people are at various points in regard to serving. You might...

1. Be already flourishing in one or two areas of service.
2. Be serving in way too many areas.
3. Be serving well in one or two areas, but could be better deployed elsewhere.
4. Be serving in areas you are just not gifted in and need to move.
5. Be in poor health, or in a life circumstance where a break from serving is necessary.
6. Have been serving at one stage but have now stopped for some reason.
7. Be wanting to serve, but have no idea what your gifts are or what the needs are.
8. Be reluctant or refuse to serve for various reasons.
9. Be new and not yet serving.

(Note: Some serving isn't 'formal ministry', it's not obvious or measurable - e.g. praying, exhorting, weeping)

Discuss:

Which of these do you think best describes your situation at the moment?

What are you hoping for out of these seminars?

Explaining S.H.A.P.E

We've seen that God has created us uniquely in order to serve him in a local church. People will often refer to Spiritual Gifts, as the way in which God equips us to serve him, and they are important. But we are complex people. We are gifted by God for certain things, there are things we love and are passionate about and things we aren't, our capacity limits us (and can change through life), we have different personality types, and we come with a range of experiences in life. We will look at each of these in turn, to help us see how God has equipped us to best serve him.

Spiritual Gifts

What has God gifted me to do?

Heart

What do I really care about or love to do?

Availability

What capacity do I have?

Personality

How does my personality affect my service?

Experience

How have my past experiences equipped me to serve?

Spiritual gifts

What has God gifted me to do?

1 Corinthians 12v1

"Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed."

- Some spiritual gifts are given to each individual Christian - 1 Cor. 12v7
- No single Christian has all the spiritual gifts - 1 Cor. 12v29-30
- Not every Christian has the same gifts (or to the same degree)- 1 Cor. 12v11
- They are given in order that the church is built up and strengthened (not for our glory) - 1 Cor. 12v7
- Not having a particular gift doesn't excuse us from doing the things we are supposed to do
- The range is broad and the lists are examples not exhaustive
- They are not all easy to define! (so, we shouldn't push too hard to work them out)
- There is debate about the continuation of the 'sign' gifts in the present church age
- They are hard to spot in ourselves (and we can deceive ourselves into thinking we have gifts we don't), so we need others to help us identify them

A simple definition: *A spiritual gift is any ability God has given you that you use to build up the church and strengthen the faith of others.*

Gifts specifically mentioned in the Scriptures

(Apostles and prophets were 'offices', not giftings as such, given in the past as the foundation of the church through the Word of God)

Exodus 28:3 Exodus 35:31-36:2 2 Chr.30:21-22	Romans 12:6-8	1 Cor. 12:8-10	1 Cor. 12:28	Ephesians 4:11	1 Peter 4:11
Artistic and Creative gifts (Garment weavers) (Bezalel) Technical gifts (Oholiab and others) Musical gifts? (Skilled Levites)	Prophecy Serving Teaching Encouraging Giving Leadership Mercy Hospitality	Word of wisdom Word of knowledge Faith Gifts of healing Miracles Prophecy Discernment Tongues Interpretation of tongues	Apostle Prophet Teacher Miracles Gifts of healing Helping Administration Tongues	Apostle Prophet Evangelist Pastor-Teacher	Speaking gifts Serving gifts

Some definitions

Some gifts are fairly obvious to define, others are more difficult. In addition, some gifts will be very obvious if you have them, others less so. Since the Bible simply names most of the gifts, and does not define them, we should be careful about being too certain of our definitions. However, here are some tentative attempts at the less obvious ones...

Prophecy

Spirit-revealed application of God's Word into real life, with love, to warn or encourage.

Word of wisdom

Ability to astutely apply the Bible to specific situations so that good decisions are made.

Word of knowledge

Having perceptive insights into the Bible which helps others to understand it correctly.

Discernment

Being able to use God's word to judge correctly between right and wrong; between truth and error; and between wise and foolish courses of action.

Evangelism

Ability to speak the gospel to non-Christian people in a clear and winsome way.

Tongues

Ability to speak another language, either a heavenly language or earthly ones.

Interpretation of tongues

Ability to understand and translate other languages, either a heavenly language or earthly ones.

Faith

A deep solid confidence in God and his promises that encourages others. Perhaps often accompanied by praying with boldness?

Mercy

Offering empathetic, compassionate care to those in need.

Helping

Ability to assist others in their ministries, either to improve their effectiveness or free others up to serve elsewhere.

Gifts I think God has given me

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Gifts I think God *might* have given me, but which have not really been tested

- 6.
- 7.

Discuss with someone who knows you well

How much would you agree that God has gifted me as above?

Can you give examples where you have seen these gifts used?

Are there any gifts you think I have that I haven't noticed? (with examples)

Is there anything the church can do that would help your gifts be sharpened?

Heart

What do I really care about or love to do?

Romans 1v11-12

"For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you—¹² that is, that we may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith, both yours and mine.

Alongside gifting, the Lord often places a longing in our hearts to serve in a particular way. We may love the idea of serving in certain ministries, and there are others we are not so enthusiastic about (even though we think they are important and we might even be good at them). Each of us will have different things in this area. Some of us may be passionate about a specific ministry the church is not currently doing.

We do need to be cautious about this, just because we want to do something, doesn't make it right or appropriate for us to do it. Equally, a church can't do everything and has to decide which of many valuable ministries it will put its resources into. As in life more generally, some things we'd love to do we just aren't able to at this time. Passion has to be married with wisdom, and our desires must be humbly submitted to what's best for the church and for others.

In addition, we sometimes struggle to serve in certain areas. Things we normally are enthusiastic about can become a challenge for us, often due to other circumstances in life. It may be appropriate sometimes to stop. However, if we really don't want to do something we are gifted in, we should examine our hearts to see if it is our attitude that is not right and needs to change. It is certainly true, that given prayer, time and effort, we can grow to love things we once struggled with!

What we have a passion for and love to do is just part of the picture. It is not everything, but it is important. In the long run, we will be far more committed and far more effective in ministries we are both gifted in and are passionate about.

Which of the current ministries you are involved in do you really care about?

Are there any areas of service that you are finding challenging? Why is this?

Having looked honestly, if you feel it might be your attitude that is the issue, what will change your heart?

Are there any of the church's ministries you would really love to serve in?

Is there anything you'd love to do for the gospel that the church is not currently doing?

Availability

What capacity do I have?

1 Corinthians 7v17

“Only let each person lead the life that the Lord has assigned to him, and to which God has called him. This is my rule in all the churches.

Paul recognises in 1 Corinthians 7, that the circumstances of the lives of believers differ greatly. And that means that their availability to serve the Lord differs too. Some lives are full of many different concerns, that take up much time and energy. Others are much freer, and there is far greater availability to serve. And of course, circumstances can change over time, with things such as age, work, family and health. It is very important that we do not judge others in this area, but recognise the differences we all have.

At the same time, we must make a careful and realistic assessment of ourselves. We are not to be lazy but are to serve the Lord sacrificially and wholeheartedly in the strength he provides. Yet at the same time, we are not to overwork and burn ourselves out, nor are we to make an idol out of serving - as if it all depends on us. Remember too, that not all serving is easily quantifiable. It's fairly easy to count how many hours I spend cleaning the church building or preparing a Bible talk, but much harder to judge how much encouraging, praying or evangelism I am doing, for example.

With all that in mind, the purpose of this section is to assess how much availability you have. To do that we will ask questions of ourselves.

Note: This is primarily for you to think about. You don't need to fill it in if you don't want to. We will ask for these forms to be handed in so that someone can meet with you to chat it through, but it won't be a problem if this section is blank. If you do fill it in, Jay and Naomi will see it, along with the elder, staff member or small group leader you meet with. Any information you share will be handled sensitively.

On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate your physical health at the moment?

(Please tick: 1 = Very poor 10 = Excellent)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate your mental/emotional condition at the moment?

(Please tick: 1 = I am really struggling 10 = On top of the world!)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

On a scale of 1-10, how are your energy levels at the moment?

(Please tick: 1 = I feel exhausted all the time 10 = I feel I can do anything!)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

On a scale of 1-10, what do you think your capacity for more serving is at the moment?

(Please tick: 1 = I am completely overloaded 10 = I have lots of free time)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

Have things recently changed and you feel you have more time or less?

Could you make some lifestyle changes to free up time to serve? *e.g. changing a work pattern, coming to a different Sunday service to serve, giving over Friday evenings to meeting evangelistic contacts etc.*

Where might you have more availability? On Saturdays? Sundays? Midweek? During the daytime or evening?

It is possible that as a result of this analysis, you may feel the time has come to step down from serving in a particular ministry. Sometimes that is appropriate, and sometimes it will be appropriate in, say, a couple of years' time. If you are starting to think this, please can you consider doing the following:

1. **Speak to your small group leader or an Elder about it.** Often, it's hard for us to discern when is the best time to make a change. We might just need some extra wisdom, and we may just be feeling weary and in need of some encouragement.
2. **Consider waiting.** Sometimes stepping out needs to happen immediately, but often it is better to wait for a bit. Perhaps because it gives you time to think through the decision, but also because it is helpful to give some notice so that someone can be found to replace you.
3. **Don't retire from serving!** It may be right to step down for a short period to recover strength, or to deal with something in your life, or to hand over responsibility to someone else. But the Scriptures teach that while we have breath, the Lord has some way in which we can serve him. It may be quite different from what we have done before, and it may use different gifts or take up different capacity. So, ask the Lord, "how would you have me serve in this next stage of life?"

Personality

How does my personality affect my service?

God didn't make us all with the same personality, and our personalities have been shaped by our upbringing and experiences too. Some are extroverted and love being around people most of the time, others prefer to work quietly in the background. Some are organised and work to a timetable, others are freer and leave everything to the last minute. Some people are tidy, some aren't. You might be the sort of person who is softly spoken and gentle, or you might be a bit on the upbeat and loud side. Heart on the sleeve or as cool as ice? Facts and figures or creative ideas? Detail or big picture? Each of us has a different makeup and it will affect how we work.

In particular, it will affect how we work in a team, and most ministries involve a team. There are some parts of my personality that others appreciate, or that make me hard to work with. There are strengths that I bring to any team, that others might not have, and strengths that others have that I am lacking. For example, someone may have a gift of evangelism, but they may also be quite introverted. Public speaking may be a real challenge, but put them in a one-to-one conversation and they flourish - their personality might mean their gifting is better suited to one context rather than another - even within the same ministry.

One final thought. Though God has made us different, we recognise that our personalities, like our passions, are not free from sin. We can use our personalities as an excuse to be selfish *"It's just the way I am! You just need to accept me!"* or judgmental *"I've got no time for people like that! Why can't they get their act together?"*. As with our passions, we must humbly submit ourselves to the Lord, and we must be conformed to the image of Christ.

So, our personalities inevitably affect our service. Below are some statements to help us think about what we are like, and how that affects us. They won't always be easy to answer, but try to place a cross on the line as a rough answer. Feel free to add clarifying comments!

I really enjoy meeting new people

Rarely

Sometimes

Always

I like to work on my own

Rarely

Sometimes

Always

I find big groups of people a challenge

Rarely

Sometimes

Always

I am organised with my time

Rarely

Sometimes

Always

I work better in the evenings

Rarely

Sometimes

Always

I work better in the mornings

Rarely

Sometimes

Always

I'd rather get one job finished before starting another

Rarely

Sometimes

Always

I come up with lots of new ideas

Rarely

Sometimes

Always

I like to analyse ideas and make them work in practice

Rarely

Sometimes

Always

I enjoy doing practical physical tasks

Rarely

Sometimes

Always

I find it easy to adapt to changes of plan

Rarely

Sometimes

Always

I like to drill down into the detail

Rarely

Sometimes

Always

I am good at standing back and seeing the big picture

Rarely

Sometimes

Always

Which aspects of my current ministries drain me?

Which aspects of my current ministries invigorate me?

Experience

How have my past experiences equipped me to serve?

2 Corinthians 1v3-4

³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, ⁴who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

The Bible is clear that the things we go through in life, especially the hard times, can grow us in Christian maturity, and make us useful for Christian service. The Lord often uses our past experiences in our present or future ministries. This includes the experiences we gained before we came to Christ, and that which we learn in our education, training, workplaces or in family life.

Again, this is just part of the picture to help us build a sense of where we might be useful to the Lord. If I am a teacher or a cleaner or an accountant in my workplace, it doesn't necessarily follow that this will become my ministry in church. It might do, but there may be other ways the Lord wants for me to serve him.

In the same way, if we have been through a particularly painful experience in life, that may well give us a unique perspective by which we can serve others, but we mustn't think it *has* to mean a particular ministry - or a ministry *right now*. It may be that some hurts are just too raw at this moment, even though we can recognise the Lord might use that experience in the future.

Look back at your life experiences and ask: what have I been through which God might now use in my service of him?

Education

What is my educational background?

Training

What skills have I acquired?

Work

What jobs have I done?

Ministry

Which ministries have I served in?

Spiritual

How was I converted? How have I grown in the Lord?

Painful

What has been hard in my life?

How can I serve? - Seminar 2

Discussion Questions (Leave these until seminar 2)

Go through each section with one or two others who know you well and discuss the below.

What have I learned about myself?

Do you agree with my assessment? Are there things you would add or change?

How have you been encouraged in your serving? How have you been challenged?

Are there further questions you have?

Are there any of the current needs that you think you could meet? (See separate sheet on table)

What would a good next step be? Would you like to meet with someone to talk it through?

A final word from Jesus

Luke 10v38-42

³⁸ Now as they went on their way, Jesus entered a village. And a woman named Martha welcomed him into her house. ³⁹ And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching. ⁴⁰ But Martha was distracted with much serving. And she went up to him and said, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me." ⁴¹ But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, ⁴² but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her."

Chalmers Church Edinburgh is incorporated as a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation, Registered Charity SC044674.