

The Gift of Administration (1)

A gifted story: The church school was in need of a new director, but it seemed as if everyone who knew anything about education had already been enlisted to teach. A whole lot of telephone calls had been made to try and find a good volunteer for the job, but it seemed that no one would come forth and give it a try. Then the pastor suggested that they try to find someone with the gift of administration, rather than looking for someone with the gift of teaching. Someone remembered that Sue was a person who was good at visualizing and implementing plans. Sue was asked, and she accepted immediately and gratefully-- this was something she felt she could do and do well.

Biblical references:

1 Cor. 12:28— *In the church God has put all in place: in the first place apostles, in the second place prophets, and in the third place teachers; then those who perform miracles, followed by those who are given the power to heal or to help others or to direct them or to speak in strange tongues.*

Acts 14:23— *In each church they appointed elders, and with prayers and fasting they commended them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust.*

Definition and comment:

The gift of Administration: the special ability that God gives for understanding clearly the immediate and long-range goals of a particular unit of the Body of Christ and the ability to devise and execute effective plans for the accomplishment of these goals. The ability to organize and guide human activities in such a way that Christ's program is carried out.

As a spiritual gift, administration has to do with guiding the affairs of the church and kingdom. The person with this gift has management ability. The administrator accepts the goals set by others and devises and executes plans to accomplish these goals. A sense for organization is evident. Often a person with this gift is characterized as able to direct and motivate people and coordinate their activities. Often, but not always, people with the gift of administration also have the gift of leadership.

A person with this gift will take an organized approach to most undertakings, and this attribute can be valuable in planning, coordinating, directing, supervising, or in committee work. Some would refer to this type of individual as a "how to" person. One might expect a person with this gift to enjoy preparing agendas and reports to help a committee become more productive. Expect that careful attention will be paid to even small details in planning an activity. Someone with the gift of administration is characterized as one who takes satisfaction in a well-run organization.

Affirm that you have this gift; questions to ask yourself:

Are you able to organize ideas, tasks, people, and time for Christian service?

Are you able to make effective plans to accomplish goals?

Do you have a sense for delegating important tasks to the right people at the right time?

If a group you are in lacks organization, do you have a desire to step in to help it to run more effectively?

Do you enjoy bearing responsibility for the success of a particular task within the church?

Are you able to analyze facts in order to plan for successful completion of a project?

Areas for study and personal growth:

Being an effective administrator requires attention to the basic quality at the core of this gift—that of directing. The Greek word for “administration” is *kubernesis* and it means “piloting or steering.” A good pilot is ever vigilant to steer his ship away from harm and catastrophe of Titanic proportions. Developing the means by which to watch over church affairs in areas of involvement is a matter of attention to detail, record-keeping, and keeping sight of chosen goals. Learn how to do these things more effectively.

It is the Lord who directs his church, and thus we want to follow his plan, not ours. To avoid the danger of drifting in the wrong direction, learn to rely on the power of the Holy Spirit and on prayer rather than your own devices. Learn to pray before acting.

People are more important than projects. They need love and support; they do not want to feel used. Learn how to be sensitive to the needs of all those with whom you are working, and put people first.

Avoid the danger of “over managing” or “taking over” in such a way to exclude the contributions, ideas, and concerns of others. Remember that the Holy Spirit works through us in community—we need each other to get the whole picture that God has in mind for us. Learn to listen for the “still, small voice of God” by allowing periods of silence so that those with less aggressive natures can make their contributions comfortably.

Read and meditate on Exodus 18: 13-27 to learn how Jethro understood the use of the gift of administration. Seek out other readings about good administrators to learn how they proceeded, methods they used, and initiatives they took to help build up the enterprise. Look for new approaches that will help make things work better, always striving for improvement.

General ways to use the gift of administration:

Personally: organize family devotions, help a friend develop a family budget, organize a Bible study at work

Within the church: superintend the Sunday school, direct a program, or chair a committee (see more specific church service opportunities in the Booklet *Channels for Using the Gifts*).

Within the wider community: organize fund-raising campaign, serve on board of home for the aged, organize a rally

For reflection:

The gift of administration is really needed in the Christian community. St. Paul spoke many times about the church as a body with many essential parts, each being necessary for the body to function wholly. People with the gift of administration may well hold the key to pulling all the various parts together in harmony. Being able to absorb detail, organize and

delegate are traits of this gift, and these qualities, when employed effectively, can be helpful in allowing the Holy Spirit's work in one committee to compliment, rather than conflict with, the work of another. The instincts for what comes first and what follows, who can plug in where, and how to arrange things so that everything fits into the schedule or that everything gets done are sorely needed in a busy church environment. This is a wonderful spiritual gift to have.

With this gift you can help the church get in order and stay in order. That orderliness surely pleases God for he ordered the whole world. The piece of God's image that he placed in you, which we here refer to as the gift of administration, is so like him. Marvel at the awesome detail God has attended to in creation—you like detail too, so you have a special propensity to feel his pleasure when attending to detail in carrying out your ministry. Your work in the church can help bring focus to what we undertake. You can assist us in seeing the way to get where we know we need to go. You have the gift that can help us manage our resources and be better stewards of our time and talent. We praise God for having given you this spiritual gift. May you be blessed as you use it for his glory and the building of his church.