

## S.H.A.P.E. S - Spiritual Gifts

A few years ago, I received a phone call from a pastor in Berea asking me if I wanted our church to join a church softball league... I said "Yes, absolutely!"

Then he proceeded to ask me if I thought I could fill one or two teams for the league... It was at that moment that I said, "You know, I'm going to have to get back to you on that. I'm not exactly sure what we will be able to do."

I had high hopes... but then reality set in! Because it really didn't matter what I wanted to do, if we were going to have a team(s) it would be completely dependent upon what the people of the church were willing & able to do...

The same is true when it comes to carrying out the ministries, missional endeavors, & everyday work of the church! I can have high hopes for what we might accomplish, but there is more needed than what I alone can provide!

No one expects one person, or 5 people, to fill a baseball team... neither should anyone expect the work of the church to be done by a select few either!

I remember our first softball practice... I asked questions like: "Who has ever played softball before?" "What position(s) are you most comfortable playing?" "Is there anywhere where I should not put you?" "What is your best asset?"

We had players who had played competitively for years, and some who had never played before... Players trying to hit a homerun at every at bat, and others just looking to get their first hit ever... We had a 14 year old and a 71 year old...

It was one of my favorite teams I have ever played on! We were a very diverse group, but what a joy to celebrate our victories (even the small ones) together!

That softball experience was in many ways a picture of how the church is supposed to function! We are a diverse group... but we get to celebrate together amazing victories... even eternal ones! There is no greater joy!

And if that motley crew that we had on the softball field led to a surprisingly successful season, how much more could this group, called BRC, accomplish exceedingly more when God is at work thru us... for His glory & divine purpose?

What if we, the church, took time to ask similar questions to what I asked on that softball field... So that we could do our best to be set up for success too?

S – "What are your SPIRITUAL GIFTS?"

H – "What is your HEART for ministry?"

A – "What natural, or acquired, ABILITIES have you been given to use?"

P – "How are you wired, & what benefits can your PERSONALITY bring?"

E – "What EXPERIENCES have shaped you that God may use to help others?"

This is where we're headed for the next 5 wks... What is your/my individual S.H.A.P.E. & how may God want to use us right where He has planted us?

The Kingdom of God needs us... This Church needs us... not because of how indispensable we are, but because God has created, called, & redeemed us for His glorious plan & redemptive purposes in this world!

If the church were a toy, I think it would look like this... 1 Corinthians 12:12-20  
When Scripture speaks of the Church, it uses the analogy of the human body...

Do you know what shape you represent? Do you know what part of the body you make up, & the place where you fit in the mission of the church?

Join me on this journey of discovering/rediscovers our S.H.A.P.E. so that we can be the team... the body... the church... God calls us to be!

Let's start with looking at the "S" - "Spiritual Gifts"! If you are a Christian, the Holy Spirit is in you, & with Him comes gifts of the Spirit! We all have them (at least one), & God intends for us to use them for the building up of the church!

There are gifts that reveal God's Truth (speaking gifts)  
- Teaching, Prophecy/Preaching, Wisdom, Evangelism

There are gifts that reflect God's compassion (serving gifts)  
- Mercy, Service, Helps/Hospitality, Giving/Generosity

There are gifts that strengthen God's Church (shepherding gifts)  
- Leadership, Administration, Pastoring, Discernment, Encouragement

There are gifts that display God's power (Extraordinary gifts)  
- Faith, Healing, Miracles, Tongues, Interpretation, Apostles

Do you know what Spiritual gift(s) best represent how God has SHAPED you? It's important to remember that these gifts are truly gifts of God...

- Gifts that are a gift of grace!
- Gifts that differ according to the wisdom of God!
- Gifts that are for the common good!
- Gifts that are meant to be used!

This is why it's important to not only know your spiritual gift(s), but to choose to use them because these gifts have a God-given purpose!

Ephesians 4:11-13, Corinthians 12:4-11, 27-30, Romans 12:3-13 QR code slide

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