

### 13. Building Relationships and the Gift of Serving

In our last topic, we shared how those who have the first gift mentioned in Romans 12:6-8, the gift of prophecy, use that gift to build relationships for the purpose of sharing the Gospel. Today, we will be sharing how to use the second gift, the gift of serving, to build relationships for the purpose of sharing the Gospel. Those of you who have this particular gift will see some ways that God can use your gift in evangelism. Those of you who do not have this particular gift will recognize why other Christians do not build relationships for evangelism in the same way that you build them.

We might use the following definition for the gift of serving: “To serve the saints by helping, by serving, by sharing and by devoting our time to the ministry of the saints” - Romans 16:1-2; 1 Corinthians 16:15; 2 Corinthians 8:1-4. This gift will often involve manual projects and short-term goals. The Christian who has the gift of serving will usually emphasize practical ways to help others. This will involve many different kinds of ministry but the purpose will be to serve others.

In this definition, we are reminded that all spiritual gifts are primarily given to us to minister to other Christians. However, we can also use our gifts to minister to those who are not yet Christians to build relationships with them for the purpose of sharing the Gospel with them. As Galatians 6:10 tells us, “Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.” Here, we see that we are not to limit our ministry just to the saints. Instead, God has given us the gifts and abilities that we have to do good to all. We will find that the gift of serving is very helpful in building relationships with non-Christians for the purpose of evangelism.

We will look at several ways that the person with the gift of serving will often build relationships with those who are not yet Christians. Some key principles for one with the gift of serving as they build relationships and show love to non-Christians include:

1. Helping others - 1 Corinthians 16:15. In this verse, we see that Stephanus, and his entire household, had devoted themselves to the ministry of the saints. They were continually looking for ways to help others. The person with the gift of serving will notice many ways to help both those who are Christians and those who are not yet Christians. As we help those who are not yet Christians, we pray that the Lord will open a door for us to share the Gospel with them - 1 Peter 3:15. As we serve, we are to serve with the ability that God has given us - 1 Peter 4:11.

2. Providing meals - Acts 6:1-6. In these verses, we see that certain of the disciples were chosen to distribute food to the needy widows. They knew who the needy widows were and they looked for ways to be of help to them. Part of that help involved bringing food to them. Sometimes, the widows, and the elderly, need help with doing their shopping or running other errands because of physical problems. People who have the gift of serving will often notice those needs and make themselves available to help meet such needs. This service will cause many non-Christians to become open to the Gospel.

3. Meeting needs - Acts 9:36-39. In these verses, we see that Dorcas was a Christian who was known for her good works for others and for sharing with the needy especially the widows and their children. She saw opportunities to make coats and other articles of clothing for the needy. A person with the gift of serving is quick to notice ways to help others. As a result, the person with the gift of serving will often be doing things for others when other people have not even noticed a need. Meeting needs can be a key way to build relationships with those who are not Christians for the purpose of evangelism.