

The word *careful* here means *full of anxiety*. Jesus was, in essence, telling Martha to calm down and to set her priorities straight. As one with the gift of Service, Martha may have found it hard to drop everything and to spend her time sitting and listening to Jesus. It is easy for those with the gift of Service to become so busy that they neglect those things that are truly important like their own personal prayer and Bible reading times.

Remember, these church members do not necessarily crave public acclaim, but they do desire and expect personal appreciation for their service. These folks are often driven by the satisfaction of helping others, and look for “thank you” to validate the need for their service.



As a group, discuss what you think Jesus meant in verse 42.

Appreciating the Gift of Service

1. How might the teaching and preaching in our church be affected if we did not have members who displayed the gift of Service?
2. What ministries might cease to operate if we did not have members who displayed the gift of Service?
3. Can you think of some ways that you have benefited from someone who displayed the gift of Service?
4. What are some ways that we can show our appreciation toward those who have exercised the gift of Service on our behalf?
5. List below areas that you think the gift of Service can be put to good use.

The Gift of Service

Last week we examined the Spiritual Gift of prophecy. Men with this gift are often out front in public ministry, they can sometimes receive public praise and public rebuke as they carry out their God-gifted work. In this study we will examine a low-key and oft overlooked gift – the gift of Service.

Understanding the Gift of Service

We find a couple of different words used for the gift of Service, look first at 1 Corinthians 12:28:

1 Corinthians 12:28 And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, _____, governments, diversities of tongues.



The word “helps” is not a very descriptive word, what type of characteristics do you think of when you hear this word?

The word translated “helps” in this passage is found nowhere else in scripture. It simply means *relief* and can be applied to any number of areas of ministry. Just like the word, those who possess this gift can be found applying their abilities in many different areas, wherever they can focus on *practical needs* which provide *relief* for other church members.

Romans 12:6,7. Verse 7 features another name for the gift of Service. Here it is called M_____.

This word brings with it the idea of *service* and *relief* and is, in fact, translated “relief” in Acts 11:29 where the church at Jerusalem determined to send monetary *relief* to the church in Judaea.



The Gift of Service – Helping the Church Grow

In Acts 6 we see a tremendous example of the gift of service in action. Alternate reading Acts 6:1-7.

1. What was the matter being “murmured” about in these verses?
2. The widows were being neglected in the D_____ M_____.

3. What did the Apostles tell the “multitude of disciples” concerning the *daily ministration*? v2
4. By appointing others to take care of the daily needs, what did it free the Apostles to do? v3,4
5. What 3 benefits did this decision help to create? v7

The Apostles found themselves bogged down with the practical needs of the church. These needs were very real and very important, but they were not to be the Apostle’s main focus. As a result, the church sought out men who could oversee and perform the *daily ministration*, that is, the practical daily needs of the church. This provided relief for the Apostles and allowed them to focus on *spiritual* matters.

6. What three qualities did they look for in these servants? v3
 - a. Why might this tell us about the gift of Service and the tasks which these servants performed?

We should never sell short the gift of Service. Those with this gift often operate behind the scenes, and are the “unsung” servants in the church. But that does not negate the importance of their ministry. Whenever a practical need is met in the church, whether it be cleaning, visiting, constructing, cooking, moving, babysitting, yard work, etc., it relieves those who possess other gifts (especially those with gifts that revolve around the ministry of the word) to focus on their calling.

Characteristics of the Gift of Service

The following is a list of characteristics devised by Bill Gothard in his material on spiritual gifts. Each of these characterizes the Christian who possesses the gift of Service. Indicate in the space provided, how well each of these describe you. Use a scale of 1-5, 5=a lot like you, 1=not at all like you.

1. An ability to see practical needs and a desire to meet them.
2. A joy in serving when it frees others to do more important things, not just to keep busy.
3. A tendency to disregard personal health and comfort in serving others.

4. A difficulty saying “no” resulting in a variety of involvements and a tendency to get sidetracked.
5. A special enjoyment in providing for physical needs and comforts. An ability to remember likes and dislikes.
6. A need for appreciation to confirm that service is necessary and satisfactory. A desire for clear instructions.
7. A strong desire to be with others, thus providing more serving opportunities.
8. An enjoyment of short-range projects and a tendency to become frustrated with long-range responsibilities.
9. A tendency to feel inadequate and unqualified for spiritual leadership.

Martha – Server in Chief

In Luke 10, we read about a woman named Martha. Martha is probably the clearest example of a person with the gift of Service that we find in scripture. Alternate reading about Martha in Luke 10:38-42.

In this passage we see that as a servant Martha was *hospitable* (v38 ...a certain woman named Martha received him into her house.) and that she was busy tending to practical needs (v 40 But Martha was cumbered about much serving), but we also see some ways in which Martha misused her gift of service:

1. We read that Martha was *cumbered* about much serving. This word means to be *hindered, weighed down, burdened or distracted*. One with the gift of service can become imbalanced and find themselves physically, emotionally and spiritually hindered.
2. Notice that Martha confronted Jesus regarding her sisters lack of service. Those that possess the gift of service may find themselves becoming bitter toward those that do not meet their level of service.

Q. What was Mary doing while Martha served? v39

3. Martha had become imbalanced in her priorities and demanded that Mary help her. Instead of using her gift to further the ministry of the word, she could have unwittingly hindered it.

Q. How did Jesus respond to Martha?