



SOUTH COAST LIFE CHURCH

Spiritual Gifts policy

Adopted by the elders on 25 February 2020

We believe that the Spiritual gifts as described in Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12 & 14 are given to believers when they decide to follow Jesus. In God's sovereignty and grace, He gives different gifts to each of us (Rom 12:6-8). They are given to us for the purposes of building up the church (1 Corinthians 12:7) and serving others (1 Pet 4:10).

The Bible reveals a God who has, and continues to intervene into human history (John 3:16). It also teaches that we are called to communicate His good news to the world through word, sign and deed (Matthew 10:7-8). In order for us to communicate the gospel in all of its fullness (of love, power and truth), the spiritual gifts need to be employed. Paul calls us to 'eagerly desire' the spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12:31 & 14:1) so that the church may be built up. We believe that God is building us up as a church through many ways, including the spiritual gifts.

We do however recognise that the spiritual gifts are not always correctly administered, leaving individuals and churches degraded, rather than built up through their use. For this reason, we have outlined below some guidelines as to how they should be administered as part of South Coast Life Church. For all of the gifts we expect that people functioning in them will seek to be doing so in the context of accountable relationships and to take steps to grow in their understanding and effectiveness of their spiritual gifts. In order for someone to function in any of the gifts in a corporate setting (Sunday services) we require that they seek permission to do so by an elder or pastor.

Please find below a list of the spiritual gifts with a brief overview followed by what it looks like to correctly function in them as part of South Coast Life Church.

Prophecy – The Greek word translated “prophesying” or “prophecy” means to speak forth or declare the divine will, to interpret the purposes of God, or to make known in any way the truth of God which is designed to influence people.

Practice of Prophecy

We believe that when God speaks through us, He does so to encourage, comfort and strengthen (1 Corinthians 14:3) us. Any words of prophecy given will seek to do the same. If you believe you have a word that is outside of this, please consult one of the elders.

Before giving a word of prophecy, it is important that you ask permission of the person receiving the word and make sure that they understand that it should only be received if they believe it to be from God. When giving a word of prophecy to a child please have their parent present and/or someone their parents trust. This will correct any power imbalance and allow the child to better understand and remember the word and also be given permission to, if appropriate, reject the word.

Anyone prophesying in a service will have permission to do so from an elder or pastor.

Serving – Also referred to as “ministering,” the Greek word *diakonian*, from which we get the English “deacon,” means service of any kind, the broad application of practical help to those in need.

Practice of Serving

We believe that we are all called to serve. All gifts including the leadership gifts are gifts of service. Anyone wishing to serve in any ministry should contact the relevant ministry leader.

Teaching – This gift involves the analysis and proclamation of the Word of God, explaining the meaning, context and application to the hearer’s life. The gifted teacher is one who has the ability to clearly instruct and communicate knowledge, specifically the doctrines of the faith.

Practice of Teaching

We teach from the Bible. It is the starting point and the final authority of all that we teach.

Encouragement – Also called “exhortation,” this gift primarily aimed at

building up and calling out the identity that every person has as beloved children and ministers of Christ.

Practice of Encouragement

We will be an encouraging community. We will call out the gold that is in each of us on a regular basis.

Giving - Gifted givers are those who joyfully share what they have with others, whether it is financial, material or the giving of personal time and attention. The giver is concerned for the needs of others and seeks opportunities to share goods, money and time with them as needs arise.

Practice of Giving

We will live a lifestyle of generosity in regards to our finances, resources, time and homes. We encourage people to sow financially into the church, other people and organisations that seek to express the love of God into a broken world.

Leadership - Those gifted by God to humbly lead others and empower people into their God given calling. This is primarily a gift of service (Matthew 20:24-28).

Practice of Leadership

Those who show discernible gifting in leadership will be invited by a Pastor or Elder to consider leading in a ministry. They will be asked to engage in an accountable and growth orientated relationship with a mentor. As they prove to have both the character and ability to lead well, they will be asked to step up into greater positions of influence (Matthew 25:14-30). All leaders will seek to empower those they lead.

Mercy/Care - Closely linked with the gift of encouragement, the gift of mercy is obvious in those who are compassionate toward others who are in distress, showing sympathy and sensitivity. They are great at sitting with people who are in hard places and inviting the care of the ultimate comforter - the Holy Spirit - into their lives.

Practice of Mercy/Care

We are all called to show the love of God to people. This is especially true for connect group leaders and members of connect groups. The primary place of care is in the connect group. When situations are too much for a connect group to handle or people are not in a connect group, there is a team lead by the community care pastor who can provide extra assistance.

Word of Knowledge - Sometimes God reveals truths about people that we

come into contact with which in the natural world we would not be able to know. For example, a person gifted in this area might discern through the Holy Spirit that someone has a back injury and is in need of prayer.

Practice of Words of Knowledge

We believe words of knowledge are given so that people may experience the healing or supernatural touch of God into a specific area of need. Similar to prophecy, this gift is given to invite the presence of God into someone's life in a specific manner. It is not our job to call out sin in people's life (especially in a public forum). It is our job to pray for people. Words of knowledge should be communicated in an honouring, loving and safe manner (please refer to prophecy section).

As in the gift of prophecy if you receive a word of knowledge about someone that you understand to be critical or judgemental about a person please consult an elder before sharing it. These kind of words will never be shared in a public forum.

Faith - All believers possess faith in some measure because it is one of the gifts of the Spirit bestowed on all who come to Christ in faith (Romans 12:3) The spiritual gift of faith is exhibited by one with a strong and unshakeable confidence in God, His Word, His promises and the power of prayer to effect miracles.

Practice of Faith

We believe that God is unlimited in His love and power and will live and minister accordingly.

Healing - God can and does act to bring healing and wholeness into people's lives. Healing happens when faithful and gifted people pray and God intervenes into a place of relational, emotional, spiritual or physical ill health.

Practice of Healing

When people are experiencing any kind of ill health, we will invite the healing presence of Jesus into their life. We will not promise anything. We will not make excuses for why healing may or may not have happened in the way we expect. While we recognise that not everyone is healed through prayer, we will always expect it and believe for it.

Speaking in Tongues - or *glossolalia*, refers to a manifestation of the Holy Spirit whereby a person speaks syllables and words which neither they or anyone else understands. It can be understood as either the language of heaven or a supernatural prayer language. Not all Christians have the gift but many do.

Practice of Speaking in Tongues

At SCLC speaking in tongues is most often practised privately or in small group meetings. Only if a leader hears from God to do so should it be encouraged in one of our church services and then only when they have consulted a couple of the elders. If this happens there will be someone who is able to interpret the message (1 Corinthians 14:27-28).

Interpretation of Tongues - A person with the gift of interpreting tongues could understand what a tongues-speaker was saying even though he did not know the language that was being spoken. The tongues interpreter would then communicate the message of the tongues speaker to everyone else so all could understand.

Practice of Interpretation of Tongues

See practice of speaking in tongues. Any interpretation will follow the guidelines of prophetic words (i.e. it will be honouring, safe and for the encouragement, strengthening and comforting of the person receiving it).

Other Gifts

Other gifts mentioned in the New Testament are Discerning the Spirits, Words of Wisdom and Miraculous Powers. We understand them to be also present in our world today but at this stage we are either unsure of their place in our church or are unsure of how they differ to the gifts already mentioned.