

How can there be apostles today when an apostle was one who witnessed the resurrected Jesus?

If we applied that rule in the same fashion to New Testament times, then Paul couldn't be an apostle either. He saw Jesus after the ascension. God's power is not so limited that people cannot have visions of the risen Jesus today, just as they could in Paul's day. The 2,000 years since the time of Paul have not weakened God's power.

Apostles are important to the church in that they direct and guide evangelistic efforts and exercise authority beyond our normal boundaries. The church would do well to try to recognize those who exercise apostolic authority and allow those people to operate across denominational boundaries.

What should characterize the way in which both the gifts and offices are used in the body?

Just as the gifts and offices are given by God, so they are

exercised under God's power. Don't use God's power contrary to God's will.

⁴ *There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but they all come from the same Spirit.* ⁵ *There are different ways to serve the same Lord,* ⁶ *and we can each do different things. Yet the same God works in all of us and helps us in everything we do.* – 1 Corinthians 14:4-6

There are many kinds of people, many kinds of gifts, and many offices. We come to the body of Christ from many different backgrounds and even for different reasons. Our calls are different.

The one thing that brings them all together is that they are all under the control of one Holy Spirit. When we operate under the authority of the one Spirit, we will act in unity despite our differences.

Christian unity can be defined as living by the gifts of the Spirit while we exercise the power of God. The fruit, the gifts and the power go together.

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Use good sense and measure yourself by the amount of faith that God has given you. A body is made up of many parts, and each of them has its own use.

Romans 12:3b-4



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What is the difference between the fruit of the Spirit, the gifts of the Spirit and the offices God has ordained for the church?

The fruit of the Spirit is the manifestation of the character of Jesus in your own life through the indwelling and power of the Holy Spirit. The gifts of the Spirit are the ways in which God empowers a believer through the Holy Spirit to carry out ministry. The offices are simply ways in which God's power is used in the church body.

What are the gifts of the Spirit?

There are a number of lists of gifts and offices in the Bible, including Romans 12:6-8, 1 Corinthians 12:7-11, and Ephesians 4:11-13. Many interpreters try to combine these lists to come up with a master list of the gifts, sometimes even deriving gifts from the offices. For example, the gift of "apostleship" is derived from the office of apostle.

The fact that the Bible provides different lists suggests that these lists are not intended to

Christ chose...so that his people would learn to serve and his body would grow strong. This will continue until we are united by our faith and by our understanding of the Son of God.

be exhaustive. In addition, the presence of God's Spirit accomplishes other things. For example, when the Spirit of God came on Samson, he killed a thousand of Israel's enemies (Judges 15).

So: A gift of the Spirit is any way in which God gives an individual power to carry out God's work.

They are:

- ✓ God's provision of an ability
- ✓ God's enabling for ministry
- ✓ God's manifestation of his power in the body of Christ

Because of this:

- ✓ Don't limit gifts to those listed in scripture; modern churches need gifts for handling the sound system, music, and construction, for example.
- ✓ Don't **eliminate** any gifts

What is an office?

The five offices listed in the Bible are apostles, prophet,

evangelist, pastor and teacher. These are often called the "five-fold" ministries of the church. Most churches only recognize the last three of these offices, and many recognize only pastor and teacher. Often this effectively gets reduced to just pastors.

As with the gifts, the people God has called into service do not always clearly fit one or another of these offices. Sometimes a person will combine aspects of more than one office in their ministry.

Some characteristics that identify a church office are:

- ✓ The way in which you use your gifts in the church
- ✓ Combinations of calling and gifts

Because of this:

- ✓ Many times a person's calling and gifts may not fit a single title
- ✓ Many times don't need a title—they just need to be done!
- ✓ Don't limit them to the named offices in scripture
- ✓ Don't **eliminate** any named offices

Doesn't 1 Corinthians 13:8-10 teach that certain supernatural gifts are no longer applicable in the church?

This passage tells us about the difference between our activity now under the guidance of the Spirit guided by the principle of love. Now we are always less than perfect. Our knowledge, even when we are inspired by God is incomplete. But a time will come when we will be with God in the kingdom of heaven and we will no longer need gifts of the Spirit. The time for ministry will be past. The "perfect" that Paul is speaking of in 1 Corinthians 13 is being in God's kingdom.

There is no statement in scripture that even suggests that any of the gifts of the Spirit are only temporary as long as we are in this world. **All** gifts are temporary to be replaced by God's presence when we are in God's eternal kingdom.