

RIVERS CROSSING COMMUNITY CHURCH

Community Group Discussion Guide
November 22, 2015



Ghost Stories – Week #5

INTRODUCTION:

1. What's the one thing that you can do better than anyone else in your group? Is it a spiritual gift, a natural talent, or an acquired skill? What's the difference?

DIVE IN:

1. Jesus said that one day Christians would do even greater ministry than He did (John 14:12). While this does not mean that Christians are greater than Jesus, it does mean that Christians who are also gifted and empowered by the Holy Spirit can minister to more people than Jesus because there are billions of Christians today spread across the earth. Therefore, as we begin our study of spiritual gifts it is paramount that we see that our personal ministry is the continuation of Jesus' ministry. Or, to summarize, the gifts of God are dispensed through the Spirit of God so that the church of God, can minister like the Son of God.

Take a few minutes as a group to discuss the Holy Spirit's role in continuing the ministry of Jesus. How does He do it? What did Jesus do that continues now? Is there anything that Jesus did that no longer continues through the church?

2. It is important to understand the position of Rivers Crossing Community Church in comparison to other churches and theologies. Considering the size of our church, we likely have members of each group in attendance in a given Sunday, but the official position of the church is a charismatic view.

Cessationist	Charismatic	Charismaniac	Pentecostal
Supernatural gifts (e.g., tongues and prophecy) functioned only in the early church and are not to be practiced today.	Supernatural gifts are given to every generation and should be practiced today according to the limits of Scripture.	Supernatural gifts are given to every generation. Contemporary revelations are, in effect, equal to Scripture.	Essentially the same as the charismatic position, but only Christians who speak in tongues have the Holy Spirit.

Take a few minutes as a group to discuss your experience with the theological positions mentioned above. If you have a church background, which view do you come from? How has the Ghost Stories series helped you to get a more balanced understanding of the Holy Spirit to understand the church's position?

3. Spiritual Gifts and the role of the Holy Spirit can be one of the most divisive topics in Christianity. That which was given to develop unity and wholeness to the body of Christ can be easily misunderstood, abused, or ignored. That's why Paul writes, "*Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed* (1 Corinthians 12:1)." Sadly, it seems ignorance about spiritual

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gifts persists in our day. It is important to clarify some of the most debatable aspects of the spiritual gifts. Take the time to discuss the following characteristics of spiritual gifts.

- The Spiritual gifts differ from natural talents (e.g., musical ability, creativity, athletic prowess, computer skills) in that one is given at new birth (salvation) and the other is given at natural birth.
 - Since no list of spiritual gifts in the New Testament seems altogether complete, compiling all of the lists together still may not result in a complete list. Take the time to read through these scriptures as a group to see the lists of gifts that scripture provides: 1 Corinthians 12:8-10; 12:28; Ephesians 4:11; and 1 Peter 4:11.
 - We are each given different portions of a gift.
 - We must be open to serving outside our area of gifting. There is a difference between our gifts and our call.
 - God will also give us passions and opportunities in addition to natural talents and spiritual gifts.
 - Discovering our gift(s) is a combination of desire, joy, and effectiveness.
 - Every gift must be cultivated so that we are most effective in our ministry service.
4. Now that you've gotten some details about spiritual gifts and have taken the time to read through the passages that list them, discuss with the group what you think your primary gifts are. How do you know that you have these gifts? Are there any gifts that you do not currently have but are actively praying to receive?
5. Here are four parameters to help us develop a framework for understanding the role of spiritual gifts in our lives. Take the time to read through them with your group and discuss the questions listed with them.
- **Spiritual gifts serve the lordship of Jesus.** *You know that when you were pagans you were led astray to mute idols, however you were led. Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking in the Spirit of God ever says "Jesus is accursed!" and no one can say "Jesus is Lord" except in the Holy Spirit. (1 Corinthians 12:2-3)* The entire point of ministry and spiritual gifts is to reveal the lordship of Jesus Christ as God over all people and things. How do you actively see the gifts of the Spirit pointing people back to Jesus?
 - **Spiritual gifts are given by the Trinity.** *Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in in everyone. (1 Corinthians 12:4-6)* Here we see that the entire

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Trinity is involved in gifting the church for ministry. How does this perspective help you better understand the way that God, Jesus, & the Holy Spirit all work together for a single purpose?

- **Spiritual gifts each exist to benefit the whole church.** *To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. (1 Corinthians 12:7) Whatever someone's gift, the purpose of the gift is to build up and benefit the entire church, not just edify the individual using the gift. Take a few minutes and discuss how you've seen someone using their spiritual gift(s) and how that spiritual gift benefitted the whole church?*
- **Spiritual gifts are appointed by God.** *All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills. (1 Corinthians 12:11) Spiritual gifts are given by God's choice; we cannot choose our gift. So, anyone who is unhappy about how God has designed them is, in effect, complaining about God not giving them the gift they wanted. This is like a spoiled kid unwrapping a present only to complain about it. Are you thankful for the gift that God's given you? Have you expressed that to Him?*

NOW WHAT:

1. What part of this week's message has had the greatest impact on you? What truth(s) has God taught you through the message and our group discussion?
2. What do you need to do with that truth this week to become a fully engaged follower of Jesus?