

Week 2: What is Your Table?

We desire to be together. We are willing to open our personal lives to the church and the unsaved. So, we invite someone in. But what are we inviting them to? What is the table we are offering them a seat at?

We can eat at several friends' homes and none of the tables are the same, nor the experiences. Each of us has something unique to invite others to at our table. So, are we familiar with our own table, the place that we serve from?

The end of all things is near. Therefore be alert and of sober mind so that you may pray. Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms."

1 Peter 4:7-10

Each of us, fearfully and wonderfully made in the image of God, have been empowered with spiritual gifts that serve one another. These gifts while emphasized in church ministry functions were never meant to be limited to just that. Our gifts are constantly for one another whether in our homes, workplaces, with friends, or at our dinner table. Gifting naturally flows in our lives, but we can also choose to use our gifts purposefully to serve. If we have a teaching gift, we can impart understanding. If we have a gift of encouragement, we can give hope and strength. If we have a gift of prophesy, we can bring clarity. If we have a gift of compassion, we can provide comfort. Spiritual gifts tend to hold an added weight in their impact that is often felt by the one receiving from it.

The joy of being together is not only in the laughter, story sharing and food, but also in the intentionality to humbly serve one another with what we uniquely carry. When we invite someone to our table, we generously welcome them in to share in what we have. There is no competition of who has the better thing to give or fear that we have no good thing at all. We each have a place and gifting that serves purpose in one another's lives.

For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you. For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully. Romans 12:3-7

Romans 12 Gift	General Definition	What It Does
Perceiver	Declares the will of God	Keeps us centered on spiritual principles
Server	Renders practical service	Keeps the work of ministry moving
Teacher	Researches and teaches the Bible	Keeps us studying and learning
Exhorter	Encourages personal progress	Keeps us applying spiritual truth
Giver	Provides material assistance	Keeps specific needs provided for
Administrator	Gives leadership and direction	Keeps us organized and increases our vision
Compassion	Provides personal and emotional support	Keeps us in right attitudes and relationships

All we have been given by God, what we have received from others, and what we have learned in our lives are places we can serve from.

1. What do you think are your spiritual gifts listed in Romans 12?	2. What are other spiritual things, talents, experiences, passions, skills you bring to others?
3. What makes it difficult to speak or act in personal places of each other's lives?	4. How can we avoid being overbearing in trying to use our gifts to serve someone?

We are all a part of the body, each with its own function in the building up of the church. We grow and mature together as we serve one another in word and action, whether in a church building or in our home.

Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work. Ephesians 4:15-16

5. What people come to mind as those who served out of their gifts to meet specific needs/roles in your life?	6. We can't give to someone who does not want to receive from us. How can we be a safe person someone would want to receive from?
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Practical Convo: What if your table, your home isn't an ideal place to gather people? Where can you create spaces for personal community with others?