On Sunday, we celebrated the gifts, services and ministries expressed in the life of the St James community. It is such a delight to see so many of you taking part and participating in the life of the St James community.

One of the most prominent pictures of the local church in the New Testament is the picture of a body.

Our body has many parts and they all have an important role and function. In a similar way, we can all bring something of importance to the life of our local faith community. We are all important and God directs us all to bring something that will contribute to the growth and the strengthening of the whole.

Use the headings below to have a discussion about what God is doing, and how the Spirit equips us to join in.

**In your life**

* What do you sense God is doing?
* How is he prompting you to pray or to act at the moment?
* How do you need the Spirit to equip you?

**At St James church**

* What do we sense together that God is doing?
* What gifts of the Spirit should we be praying for?

**In our town, country, world**

* Where do we feel prompted to pray?
* Where might the Spirit be prodding us to say or do something?

**Read**: 1 Corinthians12.1 – 14

**The Giver**

* *Why* does God give gifts to his church, according to Paul?
* What does the passage say about *how* God distributes his gifts?

Note that in verses 4 – 6 Paul uses three different phrases to speak of God’s activity in a faith community: different kinds of *gifts*, different kinds of *service*, and different kinds of *working*.

* How do you see that expressed in the life of St James?

Within the diversity there is a unity centred on the “Giver”. Note that Paul uses three different words to describe the “Giver”: ‘Spirit’, ‘Lord’ and ‘God’. These three words, especially in their Greek forms, are strongly suggestive of the three persons of the Trinity.

* Think about this. What message do you think Paul was trying to get across here?

**The Receivers (that is us!)**

Paul really wants the Corinthians to understand more about being the receivers of spiritual gifts. To answer the questions below please read 1 Cor. 12. 12-31. The whole chapter is important in thinking about being a receiver.

According to Paul:

* *Who* receives spiritual gifts?
* What *attitude* should we have towards each other and the gifts we each receive?
* How can God's gifts bring *unity* in the church?
* What does it mean in practice to *'eagerly desire'* God's spiritual gifts?

**The Gifts themselves**

The list Paul is offering in 1 Corinthians 12 is not exhaustive and there are several different lists of examples of God's gifts in the New Testament (Romans 12. 6 – 8; Ephesians 4.11 – 13; 1 Peter 4. 9 – 11). On Sunday we also read a passage from the OT where God had bestowed abilities, skills and knowledge to devise artistic designs (Exodus 35.30 - 36.1).

What is important to know is that God has given you his Spirit and will prompt you to serve him. Your response of obedience will be a blessing to others.

Prayer:

Lord Jesus, thank you for the gifts you have given me, most importantly for the gift of new life. It is easy to trust in myself or in other things, but I choose to trust you to direct my life and my priorities.

I want to make you the most important thing in my life, seeking to spend time with you every day.

Lord fill me with you Holy Spirit that I may display your presence by the way I live. May you love flow from me to every person I will meet. May my heart shines because it is filled with your joy and your peace.

Amen