

## Everyone Using their Gifts

I know, there's no 'E' in 'Growth'. This could have come under being a 'Relationship Based' group, but I wanted to leave this particular aspect until the end of this series of studies. This is the last 'Going for Growth' study, although it will take you two weeks to complete. I hope you have found the series helpful.



### Worship

Imagine you are stuck on a desert island. You can choose just one verse, or short passage of Scripture to take with you as a constant reminder of God's character. What verse would you choose? Take a few minutes in quiet to reflect (and flick through your Bibles if you want to!) and then allow time for anyone who wishes to share what passage they would choose and why. You don't need to be able to quote it word for word, it is OK to paraphrase the essence of what the verse says. Take a few minutes to thank God for the wonderful truths in His Word.



### Reflection

Look back over this series of studies. The intention has been that each week different people would have the opportunity to lead a section of the study rather than the leader doing everything. Ask the group to share how they have felt about this – has it been a positive experience? Has anyone done something new that they had never tried before?



### Bible Study

When we think of God's people as a body, with all the different parts working together, we often tend to come back to that famous passage in 1 Corinthians 12. However, this metaphor recurs a number of times in the New Testament, and each occurrence throws a little more light onto how the Lord perceives His body on earth.

Read Ephesians 4:11-16.

- Paul starts by considering various leadership gifts. What reasons does he suggest for God bestowing these gifts on the church?
- There are two descriptions in this passage of what it means to grow as a Christian (verses 13 and 15). Compare them, and discuss what they each tell us about what the Lord wants to bring about in His people.
- Do you see any significance in the fact that these verses occur within a passage talking about the *body*?
- What is the role of the leaders in this growth? (Verses 11-12)
- What part is played in this by the whole body using their gifts? (Verses 12 and 16)



### More Reflection

Our individual gifts are recognised, strengthened and put to use in the context of the body – there is nothing private about it. For some reason, though, we sometimes feel shy about discussing what gifts God has given us, as though to do so would be blowing our own trumpet rather than giving glory to God.

Ask each member of the group, if they feel able, to share what main gift or gifts they think God has given them. Use this as a time to encourage and affirm each other. Others

in the group may have seen gifts in someone that that person has not yet recognised in himself or herself. Try to encourage everyone to share something.



## Prayer

Pray that as a group you would always encourage and draw out the latent gifts in each other. Ask the Lord to give you the confidence to take risks together as you try new things, and the security in each other's company to succeed or fail without embarrassment.



## Next Week

*What then shall we say, brothers? When you come together, everyone has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. All of these must be done for the strengthening of the church.*

*(1 Corinthians 14:26)*

This is the Apostle Paul's vision of a home church meeting, where everyone comes ready to contribute something to build up the body. For your next meeting why not plan an evening where everyone brings something to help each other to grow in their faith...

- A song, explaining why they've chosen it.
- Something they have written e.g. a poem or song.
- A word that God has given, or a prophecy or insight.
- A part of the Bible that they really like and why they've chosen it.
- A part of the Bible they think that God wants to speak to the group through and why.
- A prayer that they have read, or written.
- Something they have made / cooked for the group to express something to them.
- Something else...

Decide as a group what shape and format you would like the meeting to take. Please don't allow anyone to feel pressurised into doing something if they really don't want to – the idea is that this should be a fun and relaxed evening, not a stress-inducing exercise! Enjoy.