



The Spiritual Gifts of Exhortation & Shepherding

Gift of Exhortation

The Greek word "parakaleo" means to admonish, to encourage, to beseech. You are a "how to" person. You have the Spirit-given capacity and desire to serve God by motivating others to action by urging them to pursue a course of conduct. In a teaching position, you are able to explain how to apply God's Word. Your goal is to present material that enables the Holy Spirit to promote change in the student's life. You reach out and help Christians become more mature.

As an exhorter you are a very practical person, a good counselor, tolerant of others, serious-minded, orderly, and usually impulsive. You are expressive in a group setting; the group listens when you speak. You are comfortable working one-on-one or in groups. You are enthusiastic and talkative and enjoy encouraging others.

You are burdened to show how Scripture relates to conduct and have a desire to unify people by using practical rather than doctrinal issues. You likely place great importance on God's will and believe that His Word has the answer for every problem. You tend to make decisions logically rather than on feelings and are very orderly.

Be careful not to interrupt other people; your enthusiasm sometimes makes you guilty of this. Others may think you don't use enough Scripture in teaching because you tend to use Scripture to support what you are teaching rather than starting with Scripture.

Unlike teachers, you have the willingness to teach the same material again and again, updating and perfecting it as you do. As a counselor you usually have the ability to leave other people's problems "in the office" rather than letting them drag you down.

Beware of Satan's attack on your gift. He may cause pride in your motivational abilities. He may influence you to lose sight of people because of program emphasis. Don't become discouraged when results are not evident. Be careful not to encourage others to do the wrong things through your persuasive abilities.¹

What does the Bible say about this gift?

Romans 12:8

¹ Wolf, L. (2022, July 7). *Spiritual Gift Exhortation* | *FREE Spiritual Gifts Survey* | *ChurchGrowth.org*. Free Spiritual Gifts Survey. <https://gifts.churchgrowth.org/spiritual-gift-exhortation/>



- Paul encourages those who exhort (urge, encourage) to give their exhortation with dedication, highlighting the role of encouragement and urging others to act in ways that align with Christian faith.

Acts 14:22

- Paul and Barnabas exhort the disciples to continue in the faith, especially in the midst of trials and hardships, demonstrating the supportive and encouraging aspect of this gift.

How can you use this gift?

You may use your special gift in many areas. You may want to be a leadership trainer. You could certainly serve as a counselor in church or in a counseling center. You could teach in church training or seminars or even small groups. You would make a good telephone ministry worker and would be a tremendous volunteer to follow up with new converts. You would work well as an encourager with those who are discouraged and as a counselor in a drug or alcohol program, rescue mission, poverty program, half-way house or runaway ministry or in a shelter for abused women and children. You could also use your gift in organizing or serving in a Men's or Women's Ministry.



Gift of Shepherding

The Greek word "poimen" means pastor. In Paul's spiritual gifts listing in Ephesians 4:11, this term is translated "pastor." Although the word "poimen" is translated pastor only one time in Scripture it is used sixteen additional times. The remaining sixteen are all translated "shepherd." Therefore, we are actually discussing the GIFT of shepherding, not the POSITION of pastor. Though a good pastor must have the gift of shepherding, everyone who has the gift of shepherding is not called to be pastor. The gift can be used in many positions in a church.

As a gifted shepherd, you have the Spirit-given capacity and desire to serve God by overseeing, training, and caring for the needs of a group of Christians. You are usually very patient, people-centered, and willing to spend time in prayer for others. You tend to be a "Jack of All and Master of ONE," meaning you are usually dominant in one of the speaking gifts (evangelist, prophet, teacher, exhorter) as well. You are often authoritative, more a leader than a follower, and expressive, composed, and sensitive. Your pleasing personality draws people to you.

You have a burden to see others learn and grow and are protective of those under your care. You want to present the whole Word of God and do not like to present the same materials more than once. You are willing to study what is necessary to feed your group and are more relationship oriented than task oriented. You are a peace-maker and diplomat - very tolerant of people's weaknesses. You tend to remember people's names and faces. You are more concerned with doing for others than others doing for you. You are faithful and devoted and may become a workaholic. You can become an all-purpose person in order to meet needs.

People with the gift of shepherding make the best Sunday school teachers and group leaders because their desire is to go beyond just teaching or leading, to shepherd and minister to the daily needs of their students. The position of Sunday school teacher or group leader is an extension of the pastoral ministry in the church. These groups should be shepherded on a small scale the same as the pastor shepherds the whole congregation on a large scale.

Be careful to involve other people; don't try to do it all yourself. Work on making people accountable. Do not be overly protective of your "flock." Because of these potentially weak areas, other people may think it is your job to do all the work; they rely too heavily on you. You may be expected to be available at all times, know all the answers, and be at every function. Learn when to say no.

Beware of Satan's attack on your gift. He will cause discouragement when the load gets heavy, and pride because your "sheep" look up to you. You may develop family



problems because of too little time and attention. You may become selfish when "sheep" feed in other pastures.²

What does the Bible say about this gift?

Ephesians 4:11

- Shepherds (pastors) are to equip the saints for the work of ministry, fostering maturity and spiritual growth in the community.

1 Peter 5:2-3

- Peter exhorts elders to shepherd the flock of God willingly and eagerly, serving as examples to the flock.

How can you use this gift?

This gift is a great help in many areas. You may serve as a Sunday school teacher, small group leader, pastor or assistant pastor, bus captain, special ministry leader (such as youth, children, men, etc.), nursery worker or as a half-way house or other type shelter volunteer. You may consider serving as a dormitory leader in a college, orphanage, children's home, etc. Scout troops would appreciate your assistance as a den leader.

² Israel, T. (2022, July 7). *Spiritual Gift of Shepherding - Spiritual Gifts Survey*. Free Spiritual Gifts Survey. <https://gifts.churchgrowth.org/spiritual-gift-shepherding/>