

In his teaching Paul gives clear insight into how the Holy Spirit is at work in the body of Jesus Christ, the church.

In 1 Corinthians 12 he first describes the general working of the Holy Spirit in the church. He begins the chapter with:

- *Now about **the gifts of the Spirit**, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed. (1 Corinthians 12:1)*

‘**The gifts of the Spirit**’ is the translation of the Greek ‘**pneumatikos**’.

The Greek/Dutch dictionary translates ‘**pneumatikos**’ as:

- spiritual, of the spirit
- worked by the spirit
- in accordance with the spirit

The same word is used in the text:

- *This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, explaining **spiritual (pneumatikos)** realities with **Spirit-taught (pneumatikos)** words. (1 Corinthians 2:13)*

God is the origin of everything.

He is a God of order and structures. That is the reason why He gave detailed laws in the Old Testament, not only covering intercourse with Himself, but also for society.

During his life Jesus explained the full meaning of this corpus of laws.¹

The church, the body of Jesus Christ, is society in miniature.

God also gives a structure for this society, in the New Testament.

He appoints disciples for the serving tasks in this structure. They live under the command and authority of Jesus Christ and allow themselves to be led by the Holy Spirit.

- *Those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. (Romans 8:5)*

Paul describes how he sees this order and structure in the church in 1 Corinthians 12:4-6.

- *There are different kinds of **gifts/presents out of kindness**, but the same **Spirit** distributes them.*
- *There are different kinds of **service**, but the same **Lord**.*
- *There are different kinds of **working**,*
- *but in all of them and in everyone it is the same **God** at work. (literally: working all this in everyone).*

Paul distinguishes 3 areas of spiritual life in the church:

- gifts/presents out of kindness
- service
- workings

It is remarkable how God, as the Divine Trinity, is involved with the building up of the life of the church, the body of Jesus Christ.

¹ Study: Matthew 5:17 - Jesus has fulfilled the law.

And each Person of the Divine Trinity is involved with a particular component part:

- the Holy Spirit - with gifts/presents out of kindness (directed towards the members of the body)
- the Lord Jesus - with services (a structure for the church worldwide)
- God - with workings (a structure for the local church)

Spiritual gifts through the Holy Spirit.

In 1 Corinthians 12 Paul first describes the **spiritual gifts/presents out of kindness** through the **Holy Spirit**.

(In a more literal translation of the Greek):

- *But to each one **the revelation of the Spirit** is given to gather together/to carry together/to be useful.*
 - *For indeed to one is given **a word of wisdom/insight** through the Spirit*
 - *moreover to another **a word of knowledge/understanding** according to the same Spirit;*
 - *and to another **faith** by the same Spirit*
 - *and to another **spiritual gifts/presents of healings out of kindness** by the same Spirit*
 - *and to another **workings/acts of power/proficiencies***
 - *and to another **prophecy***
 - *and to another **discernments/distinguishing of spirits***
 - *and to another **all kinds of languages/tongues***
 - *and to yet another **explanation/interpretation of languages/tongues.***
- And all these are the work of one and the same Spirit. (1 Corinthians 12:7-11)*

This text is discussed in the study: 1 Corinthians 12:7-11 – Spiritual gifts through the Holy Spirit.²

Services – the Lord Jesus.

These are discussed by Paul in the letter to the Ephesians, as **a structure for the church worldwide**.

(In a more literal translation from the Greek):

- *And **He (Jesus)** has indeed **given***
 - *apostles*
 - *and prophets,*
 - *and evangelists*
 - *and pastors*
 - *also teachers,*
 - *for the perfection of the saints, for the building up of **the body of Christ,** ...*
- (Ephesians 4:11-12)*

This text is discussed in the study: Ephesians 4:11 - Structure of the universal church.³

² Study: 1 Corinthians 12:7-11 – Spiritual gifts through the Holy Spirit.

³ Study: Ephesians 4:11 – Structure of the universal church.

Workings - God.

These are elaborated upon by Paul in the first letter to the Corinthians as **the structure for the local church**.

(In a more literal translation from the Greek):

- *Moreover, **God** has indeed **designated a place** in the church to,*
 - *firstly apostles,*
 - *secondly prophets,*
 - *thirdly teachers,*
 - *then strength/power/ability,*
 - *thereafter spiritual gifts/presents of healings out of kindness,*
 - *helps,*
 - *leading,*
 - *diversity of tongues. (1 Corinthians 12:28)*

This text is discussed in the studies: 1 Corinthians 12:28 - God has appointed⁴ and 1 Corinthians 12:28 – Structure of the local church.⁵

Summary.

Paul sees 3 different areas in which the Holy Spirit is at work in the church, via the life of the disciples of Jesus Christ:

- **Human weakness** whereby **the Holy Spirit** comes to help - 1 Corinthians 12:7-11.
- **The church worldwide** to which **Jesus** gives people to guard His whole body and to support the local churches where necessary - Ephesians 4:11.
- **The local church** in which **God** appoints people a place - 1 Corinthians 12:28.

The teaching from Romans 12⁶ must also be mentioned for the sake of completeness.

There Paul describes **the personal responsibility** of a **disciple** in his/her life with Jesus Christ⁷.

- **The personal efforts** of the church members, who look after one another and support and help one another **to the best of their ability** - Romans 12:6-9.

In this way God provides what is necessary:

- *... to equip the saints for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up,*
- *until **we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God** and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.*
- *Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming.*
- ***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.***

4 Study: 1 Corinthians 12:28 - God has placed.

5 Study: 1 Corinthians 12:28 - Structure of the local church.

6 Study: Romans 12:6-9 – We have spiritual gifts.

7 Study: Discipleship (2).

- **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 4:12-16)

All this is so that the testimony of Jesus Christ may (continue to) sound loud and clear in the world, in accordance with Jesus’ prayer:

- *My prayer ... for those, who will believe in me ... that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.* (John 17:20-21)

The 4 areas in which the Holy Spirit is at work:

Personal effort.	The Holy Spirit help sus in our weakness.	The structure of the local church.	The church worldwide.
<p><u>Romans 12:6-8</u> We have spiritual gifts/presents out of kindness</p>	<p><u>1 Corinthians 12:7-11</u> Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given</p>	<p><u>1 Corinthians 12:28</u> Moreover God has indeed designated in the church</p>	<p><u>Ephesians 4:11</u> And He (Jesus) has indeed given</p>
<p>prophecy according to the correct measure of faith/trust</p>	<p>a word of wisdom/insight a word of knowledge/understanding</p>	<p>apostles prophets</p>	<p>apostles prophets</p>
<p>servicing, in servicing</p>	<p>faith</p>	<p>teachers</p>	<p>evangelists</p>
<p>teaching, in teaching</p>	<p>spiritual gifts/presents of healings out of kindness</p>	<p>strength/power/ability</p>	<p>pastors</p>
<p>admonishing (comforting, encouraging), in admonishing/comforting/encouraging</p>	<p>working of strength/power/ability prophecy (as Divine revelation through the Holy Spirit)</p>	<p>spiritual gifts/presents of healings out of kindness helps</p>	<p>teachers for the perfection of the saints, to build up the body of Christ</p>
<p>giving (sharing), in simplicity</p>	<p>discernments of/ distinguishing spirits</p>	<p>leading diversity of tongues</p>	
<p>Leading (providing leadership), zealously</p>	<p>all kinds of languages/tongues</p>		
<p>showing mercy, in kindness</p>	<p>explanation/interpretation of languages/tongues</p>		