

Diving Deeper into Discipleship for July 3, 2022

Pastor Pete Fowler

The Gifts and the Giver: Division is Not an Option

Sermon Reflection Questions:

- Are you tempted to look at your own gifts, compare yourself to others, and believe that you don't belong? Or, have you ever looked down on gifts that you believe are less significant or honored?
- Ask God to help us see how He is continuing to arrange the gifts within the body of First Friends "just as He wants them to be."
- In what ways are you showing "equal concern" within the church? Are you willing to sit with others in their suffering? Are you looking for opportunities to celebrate the honor and success of others?

Devotional Reading and Reflection

- **Deuteronomy 31:9-12** | Does it surprise you that "foreigners" are included in this command? What does that teach us about the need for belonging?
- **1 Corinthians 1:26-29** | Why does God choose to use "weak and lowly" things? How might this relate to the discussion of the "weaker" gifts?
- **John 3:22-30** | How is John a good example for us in celebrating the success of others?

Weekly Spiritual Practice

July Practice: Corporate Guidance | Seeking the Mind of Christ (from *Celebration of Discipline* by Richard Foster, pg. 180)

- A personal experience of the Emmanuel presence of Jesus, that He has come to guide his people Himself, leading them in definite and immediate ways, is a deeply profound thing. But, it is not sufficient. Individual guidance must yield to corporate guidance. There must also come a knowledge of the direct, active, immediate leading of the Spirit together. Perhaps the preoccupation with private guidance alone in Western cultures is the product of their emphasis on individualism. The people of God have not always been so.
- Under corporate guidance the early Church faced and resolved its most explosive issue (Acts 15). Some freelance Christians had begun preaching the necessity of circumcision for all Christians and Paul saw the danger at once. Appointed elders and apostles gathered together in the power of the Lord to hear the mind of the Spirit. Peter brought his recent individual guidance (from his interaction with Cornelius) to the corporate body and the Spirit of God did a wonderful work. The gathered group came into what must be called a glorious, heaven-sent, unified commitment to reject the cultural captivity of the everlasting Gospel of Jesus Christ. They faced the toughest issue of their day and discerned the voice from on high.