



Discerning Spiritual Gifts for the  
Ministry & Mission of the Church

A Study Resource by Discipleship and Leadership  
Formation



Church of the Brethren

Welcome!

*Community of Gifts* is a resource created from a Brethren perspective to support congregations in a process of personal and community discernment.

When the individuals within the congregation identify their gifts and abilities, and have them affirmed within the shared life of the community, the congregation flourishes. This tool, then, is designed to begin the process of discovering and affirming how each person contributes to the ministry and mission of the church.

This resource is comprised of six video lessons and a printable guides for discussion and gifts discernment. The first video sessions explore a passage of scripture related spiritual gifts discernment. There is a discussion guide in the printable resource to help group leaders facilitate discussion after the video. The latter videos help define spiritual gifts and discernment. There are gifts inventories and worksheets to help individuals explore how their gifts, skills, and passion intersect.

The *Community of Gifts* inventory is different than other discernment resources. Instead of just filling out an inventory in solitude, we have provided an observer assessment so that others can name the gifts they see in their siblings in faith. The results of both inventories are compiled and then shared within the small group setting where gifts are affirmed and explored. In other words, the community takes time to recognize the gifts of one another.

At the foundation of this resource is the conviction that ministry requires a community of gifted disciples. Former Church of the Brethren staff, Donna Kline and Stan Dueck, were instrumental in the original version of the spiritual gifts resources. They helped brainstorm the process, format the inventory tools, and frame the questions for the worksheets.

The explorations of the key passages of scripture were originally published in Brethren Life and Thought in an article entitled "One Body, Many Parts: Reclaiming the Ecclesial Context of the Spiritual Gifts" in the spring issue of 2014. We are grateful for their permission to use the material in this version of the resource.

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## For Leaders

Sharing our thoughts and listening to others is a vulnerable process. That means we all come to small group discussions with different comfort levels. This guide for leaders is intended to help leaders facilitate supportive and creative sharing. Be sure to refer to these guidelines for sharing at the beginning of each gathering. Also, practice Mutual Invitation so that each person can have the opportunity to share with the group.

### **Guidelines for Small Group Sharing**

1. Stay engaged and limit distractions so that you can listen with your whole self.
2. Avoid making assumptions about intent or motives. Instead, speak only for yourself using “I” statements.
3. Avoid debating or advising others, or setting them straight. Instead, seek to understand others.

### **Mutual Invitation Sharing**

In order to ensure that everyone who wants to share has the opportunity to speak, here are some helpful steps to facilitate the group’s conversation:

1. The leader or other designated person in the group will share first.
2. After that person has spoken, he or she then invites another to share; it does not need to be the next person in the circle.
3. After the next person has spoken, that person is given the privilege of inviting another to share.
4. If you are not ready to share yet, say “I pass for now” and you will be invited to share later on. If you don’t want to say anything at all, simply say “pass” and proceed to invite another to share. Follow this process until everyone has been invited.

## **Session Set Up**

The videos are available on the Church of the Brethren website and are hosted on Vimeo. This allows you to download the videos rather than depend on streaming them over the internet. Be sure to have bibles available and copies of the discussion handout printed.

Plan to have blank paper and pens or pencils available so people can take notes on the video or sketch their thoughts. You may even consider having art supplies such as colored pencils or crayons for those who process ideas visually.

## **Inventories and Worksheets**

The last two sessions utilize the assessments and worksheets that follow. All of these should be printed out and available by the fourth session. Participants should bring their completed worksheets to the last two sessions prepared to share their insights and questions. Each participant should receive:

1. One "Self Assessment"
2. Four to Five "Observer Assessments"
3. One "Compilation of Gifts" worksheet
4. The Definition of Gifts
5. One "Understanding Your Passions" worksheet

Ideally, participants should complete these assessments and worksheets in between gatherings. However, extra sessions can be added to the schedule to allow for participants to complete the forms. It is best to allow more time for participants to prayerfully complete the homework rather than hurry them in a few minutes during the session.

Participants should bring the "Understanding Your Passions" worksheet to the fifth session and their "Compilation of Gifts" worksheet to the sixth session.



## Session 1 - Acts 6:1-7

### Community and the Spirit

- I. What caught your attention in the video discussion of the passage?
- II. First Reading- After a few moments of silence, begin sharing words or phrases that stood out in hear the passage read.
- III. Second Reading- Reflect together on what was heard, based on the following questions:
  - How does your congregation call its leadership?
  - What role does discernment of the community's needs and the spiritual abilities of members of the community play in the process?
- IV. Closing Prayer- Enter a time of prayer by inviting each person to share prayers and thanksgivings.

Invite someone to offer this prayer in closing or pray it together in unison:

Almighty God, you have given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplication to you; and you have promised through your well-beloved Son that when two or three are gathered together in his Name you will be in the midst of them: Fulfill now, O Lord, our desires and petitions as may be best for us; granting us in this world knowledge of your truth, and in the age to come life everlasting. Amen.

—the Prayer of Chrysostom, from the Book of Common Prayer



## Session 2- I Corinthians 12

### A New Unity

- I. What caught your attention in the video discussion of the passage?
- II. First Reading- After a few moments of silence, begin sharing words or phrases that stood out in hear the passage read.
- III. Second Reading- Reflect together on what was heard, based on the following questions:
  - What is the relationship between the Holy Spirit and Baptism?
  - What gifts of the Spirit are most celebrated in your congregation or in the Church of the Brethren?
- IV. Closing Prayer- Enter a time of prayer by inviting each person to share prayers and thanksgivings.

Invite someone to offer this prayer in closing or pray it together in unison:

Almighty God, you have given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplication to you; and you have promised through your well-beloved Son that when two or three are gathered together in his Name you will be in the midst of them: Fulfill now, O Lord, our desires and petitions as may be best for us; granting us in this world knowledge of your truth, and in the age to come life everlasting. Amen.

—the Prayer of Chrysostom, from the Book of Common Prayer



## Session 3- Romans 12:1-8

### The Ministry of All

- I. What caught your attention in the video discussion of the passage?
- II. First Reading- After a few moments of silence, begin sharing words or phrases that stood out in hear the passage read.
- III. Second Reading- Reflect together on what was heard, based on the following questions:
  - When have you witnessed something ordinary have a significant spiritual impact?
  - What gifts are often overlooked in the ministry of the church?
- IV. Closing Prayer- Enter a time of prayer by inviting each person to share prayers and thanksgivings.

Invite someone to offer this prayer in closing or pray it together in unison:

Almighty God, you have given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplication to you; and you have promised through your well-beloved Son that when two or three are gathered together in his Name you will be in the midst of them: Fulfill now, O Lord, our desires and petitions as may be best for us; granting us in this world knowledge of your truth, and in the age to come life everlasting. Amen.

—the Prayer of Chrysostom, from the Book of Common Prayer



## Session 4- Ephesians 4:1-16

### The Church's Mission

- I. What caught your attention in the video discussion of the passage?
- II. First Reading- After a few moments of silence, begin sharing words or phrases that stood out in hear the passage read.
- III. Second Reading- Reflect together on what was heard, based on the following questions:
  - How has the gifts of the wider church impacted your community of faith?
  - How does your congregation share its gifts with the community or with the wider church?
- IV. Closing Prayer- Enter a time of prayer by inviting each person to share prayers and thanksgivings.

Invite someone to offer this prayer in closing or pray it together in unison:

Almighty God, you have given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplication to you; and you have promised through your well-beloved Son that when two or three are gathered together in his Name you will be in the midst of them: Fulfill now, O Lord, our desires and petitions as may be best for us; granting us in this world knowledge of your truth, and in the age to come life everlasting. Amen.

—the Prayer of Chrysostom, from the Book of Common Prayer



## Session 5- Skills, Talents, and Passions

### Grace upon Grace

- I. What caught your attention in the video discussion of skills, talents, and passions?
- II. What is a skill or talent you have that may surprise others in the group?
- III. When has someone else's ability ministered to you personally or to your community of faith?
- IV. What did you learn about yourself in doing the "Understanding your Passions" worksheet?
- IV. Closing Prayer- Enter a time of prayer by inviting each person to share prayers and thanksgivings.

Invite someone to offer this prayer in closing or pray it together in unison:

Almighty God, you have given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplication to you; and you have promised through your well-beloved Son that when two or three are gathered together in his Name you will be in the midst of them: Fulfill now, O Lord, our desires and petitions as may be best for us; granting us in this world knowledge of your truth, and in the age to come life everlasting. Amen.

—the Prayer of Chrysostom, from the Book of Common Prayer



## Session 6- Spiritual Gifts

### Discernment in Community

- I. What caught your attention in the video discussion of discernment?
- II. What surprised you about your list of spiritual gifts?
- III. How did your self assessment differ from your observers?
- IV. What gifts on your list are you ambivalent about?
- IV. Closing Prayer- Enter a time of prayer by inviting each person to share prayers and thanksgivings.

Invite someone to offer this prayer in closing or pray it together in unison:

Almighty God, you have given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplication to you; and you have promised through your well-beloved Son that when two or three are gathered together in his Name you will be in the midst of them: Fulfill now, O Lord, our desires and petitions as may be best for us; granting us in this world knowledge of your truth, and in the age to come life everlasting. Amen.

—the Prayer of Chrysostom, from the Book of Common Prayer



## Spiritual Gifts Indicator

### Self-Assessment

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Read each of the following statements and then, using the numbers below, indicate how well you feel it describes you:

- 0 = Never like me
- 1 = Sometimes like me
- 2 = Often like me
- 3 = Always like me

1. \_\_\_\_ Others have said that I am good at relating stories from scripture to experiences in life.

2. \_\_\_\_ I often find myself praying with and for those in need.

3. \_\_\_\_ I regularly experience spiritual things that cannot easily be explained.

4. \_\_\_\_ Others say that I have helped them understand new ideas.

5. \_\_\_\_ I enjoy exploring questions I have about scripture or the history of the church, or theology.

6. \_\_\_\_ It is easy for me to trust God.

7. \_\_\_\_ I am good at getting people together for a shared project and like helping them to work together.

8. \_\_\_\_ I enjoy helping others.

9. \_\_\_\_ It is easy for me to communicate with others through other languages, art, or music.

10. \_\_\_\_ I like to talk with others about spiritual things.

11. \_\_\_\_ I would love to be sent to minister in new places.

12. \_\_\_\_ My favorite part of working with others is the relationships that develop.

13. \_\_\_\_ Others often look to me to get a group working together and keep them motivated.

14.\_\_\_\_ I often understand what others are trying to say, especially when others are confused.

15.\_\_\_\_ The experience of working with others is often more important to me than what gets done.

16.\_\_\_\_ I often see new opportunities or have a vision for what is possible.

17.\_\_\_\_ Others would describe me as generous.

18.\_\_\_\_ I am energized by getting things done, especially practical things done for others.

19.\_\_\_\_ I enjoy helping someone learn something new.

20.\_\_\_\_ It is easy for me to apply things to everyday life.

21.\_\_\_\_ Others often ask me about things about faith and life.

22.\_\_\_\_ I often think about how the world does not look the way God desires it to be.

23.\_\_\_\_ Others look to me to help understand what God is doing in their lives.

24.\_\_\_\_ I am comfortable sharing my faith.

25.\_\_\_\_ I have been told that I am a calming presence when things are crazy.

26.\_\_\_\_ I can see practical ways of living our faith that promote peace and justice.

27.\_\_\_\_ I have participated in or interpreted an event that might be considered a miracle, something that is not easily explainable.

28.\_\_\_\_ I feel that I am able to kindle the imaginations of others, encouraging them to use their energies, skills, and spiritual gifts to carry out God's vision for the church.

29.\_\_\_\_ I am comfortable encouraging others to trust and hope in God's promises.

30.\_\_\_\_ I like to organize events and programs, and do well at finding people to participate in meaningful ways.

31.\_\_\_\_ I am happy to share my energy and talents for the work of the church.

32.\_\_\_\_ I have taken responsibility for the ongoing spiritual welfare of a group within the church.

33.\_\_\_\_ Others come to me when they are in need of a listening ear or advice.

34.\_\_\_\_ I have been told that I am a good teacher, especially in terms of helping others better understand scripture, God, relationships, themselves, and the world.

35.\_\_\_\_ I feel called to support, encourage, and strengthen those who are suffering or who are going through a crisis in their faith or lives.

36.\_\_\_\_ Envisioning God's future for my life gives me purpose and hope.



## Spiritual Gifts Indicator

### Observer Assessment

This assessment is for: \_\_\_\_\_

I am seeking to discern and better understand my spiritual gifts and how God has equipped me for service. This information is important to me, and I am looking for people who know me well to provide honest feedback and affirmation based on their observations of me. Please return this guide to me as soon as possible. Thank you for your thoughtful consideration and help.

Read each description below. Mark each description, indicating how well it matches the person for whom you are completing this assessment.

- 0 = Never describes this person
- 2 = Often describes this person
- 1 = Sometimes describes this person
- 3 = Always describes this person

1. \_\_\_\_\_ I have heard this person successfully relate stories from scripture to experiences in life.

2.\_\_\_\_\_ This person is a healing presence for others, praying with and for those in need.

3.\_\_\_\_\_ They seem to sense spiritual things that cannot easily be explained.

4.\_\_\_\_\_ They have helped others understand new ideas.

5.\_\_\_\_\_ This person enjoys the in-depth study of scripture, history of the church, or theology.

6.\_\_\_\_\_ They easily trust God.

7.\_\_\_\_\_ They excel at motivating, directing and inspiring others to work together.

8.\_\_\_\_\_ This person enjoys helping others.

9.\_\_\_\_\_ They easily communicate with others through other languages, art, music etc.

10.\_\_\_\_\_ This person often talks with others about spiritual things.

11.\_\_\_\_\_ I can see this person ministering in new contexts/locations.

12.\_\_\_\_\_ This person enjoys group projects mainly for the relationships that develop.

13.\_\_\_\_\_ Others look to this person to get a group working together and keep them motivated.

14.\_\_\_\_\_ They are able to understand what others are trying to say, especially when other people are confused.

15.\_\_\_\_\_ The experience of working with others seems to be more important to this person than the outcome of a shared project.

16.\_\_\_\_\_ This person often sees new opportunities or has a vision for what is possible.

17.\_\_\_\_\_ They are generous with their time and resources.

18.\_\_\_\_\_ This person is energized by doing practical tasks which support the work of the church.

19.\_\_\_\_\_ They enjoy helping others learn something new.

20.\_\_\_\_\_ They seem able to apply spiritual truths (from scripture or other sources) to everyday life.

21. \_\_\_\_\_ They are sought out to explain things of faith.
22. \_\_\_\_\_ This person often speaks about how God desires the world to be.
23. \_\_\_\_\_ They help others understand what God is doing in their lives.
24. \_\_\_\_\_ This person is comfortable sharing their faith.
25. \_\_\_\_\_ They are a calming presence when things are crazy.
26. \_\_\_\_\_ This person offers practical ways of living our faith the promote peace and justice.
27. \_\_\_\_\_ I am aware that this person has participated in or interpreted an event that might be considered a miracle, something that is not easily explainable.
28. \_\_\_\_\_ They are able to kindle the imaginations of others, encouraging them to use their energies, skills and spiritual gifts to carry out God's vision for the church.
29. \_\_\_\_\_ This person easily encourages others to trust and hope in God's promises.
30. \_\_\_\_\_ They are good at organizing events and programs, and do well at finding people to participate in meaningful ways.

31.\_\_\_\_\_ This person willingly shares energy and talents for the work of the church.

32.\_\_\_\_\_ I know that this person has taken responsibility for the ongoing spiritual welfare of a group within their church.

33.\_\_\_\_\_ Others go to this person when they are in need of a listening ear or advice.

34.\_\_\_\_\_ This person is a good teacher, especially in terms of helping others better understand scripture, God, relationships, themselves, and the world.

35.\_\_\_\_\_ This person supports, encourages, and strengthens those who are suffering or who are going through a crisis in their faith or lives.

36.\_\_\_\_\_ I am aware that as this person envisions God's future for their life, they feel a sense of purpose and hope.



## Compilation of Gifts Assessments

Complete the following worksheet based on the responses to your Self-Assessment and those received from your Observers. The small number in each cell below corresponds to the number of the statement on the worksheets.

For example, if your response to #7 was 3 and #30 was 2, enter a 3 and 2, respectively, in the first two spaces in Row A.

Repeat the process for the responses from each of your observers, then add the responses for each row and enter the total in the far right column (maximum=36).

When you have added up all the responses, highlight the top six gifts and record them below using the key.

### Key to Gifts

A - Administration

B - Apostle

C - Discernment

D - Evangelism

E - Exhortation/encouragement

F - Faith

G - Giving

H - Healing

I - Helps

J - Knowledge

K - Leadership

L - Miracles

M - Pastoring

N - Prophecy

O - Service

P - Teaching

Q - Tongues/interpretation of tongues

R - Wisdom

List your top three gifts in the order of highest numerical value as indicated in the final column of each row of the matrix.

1.

2.

3.

List the next three spiritual gifts based on numerical value

4.

5.

6.

	Self		Observer		Observer		Observer		Observer		Observer		Total
A	7	30	7	30	7	30	7	30	7	30	7	30	
B	16	11	16	11	16	11	16	11	16	11	16	11	
C	23	29	23	29	23	29	23	29	23	29	23	29	
D	24	1	24	1	24	1	24	1	24	1	24	1	
E	35	33	35	33	35	33	35	33	35	33	35	33	
F	6	36	6	36	6	36	6	36	6	36	6	36	
G	31	17	31	17	31	17	31	17	31	17	31	17	
H	2	25	2	25	2	25	2	25	2	25	2	25	
I	12	15	12	15	12	15	12	15	12	15	12	15	
J	5	21	5	21	5	21	5	21	5	21	5	21	
K	28	13	28	13	28	13	28	13	28	13	28	13	
L	27	3	27	3	27	3	27	3	27	3	27	3	
M	32	10	32	10	32	10	32	10	32	10	32	10	
N	22	26	22	26	22	26	22	26	22	26	22	26	
O	18	8	18	8	18	8	18	8	18	8	18	8	
P	34	19	34	19	34	19	34	19	34	19	34	19	
Q	9	14	9	14	9	14	9	14	9	14	9	14	
R	20	4	20	4	20	4	20	4	20	4	20	4	



## Definition of Gifts

Spiritual Gifts are capacities given to followers of Jesus for the ministry and mission of the church.

**Administration**—the ability to motivate, direct and inspire others to work together. Persons with this gift assume oversight for an organization or program, and often have the ability to understand organizational structure and systems.

**Apostle**—the ability to perceive and accept God’s call to lead others wisely and compassionately as they explore their spirituality, and to oversee mission work outside the congregation, in all its definitions. Apostles often have a vision for starting ministries where others may not.

**Discernment**—the ability to discover the will of God, to distinguish between truth and error, to identify when something is of God. Those with this gift may challenge, comfort or confront others to trust and hope in the promises of God.

**Evangelism**—the ability and willingness to share one’s faith and the gospel story within and beyond the faith community, with those who have no faith or who are unsure of their faith.

**Exhortation/encouragement**—the ability to stand beside others in need and bring comfort, counsel, and encouragement; to call out the best from others. Persons with this gift support, encourage, and strengthen those who are suffering or who are going through a crisis in their faith or lives.

**Faith**—having extraordinary confidence in God’s promises, power and presence. Persons with an exceptional gift of faith have a healthy prayer life, are sensitive to the will of God, and possess a firm trust that God will come through, even without concrete evidence.

**Giving**—those with this gift offer energy, talents and material resources for the work of the church with exceptional cheerfulness and generosity, and have the ability to cultivate generosity in others.

**Healing**—the ability and willingness to pray for God’s help for the sufferer. Persons with this gift are often referred to as being a healing presence.

**Helps**—the ability and eagerness to assist others in need. Those with this gift focus not on what they do for others, but on the relationship that evolves.

**Knowledge**—the ability to discern and understand the truths of God’s word, making them relevant to daily life. Persons with this gift enjoy learning, especially from scripture, and have ways of sharing these learnings in ways others can easily understand.

**Leadership**—the ability to envision God’s will and purpose for the church, and to direct people in making that vision a reality. Persons with this gift have the skills to capture the imaginations, energies, skills and spiritual gifts of others to pursue and accomplish God’s will.

**Miracles**—the ability to perform or interpret powerful works that transcend our perception of natural laws.

**Pastoring**—Those with this gift assume responsibility for the spiritual welfare of a group within the church (not necessarily through ordained ministry).

**Prophecy**—the ability to link biblical truths and God’s will for living, and to be an instrument for revealing or interpreting historic or current messages from God for righteous and just living in today’s world.

**Service**—a willingness to share the burdens of others and help them do their own tasks more effectively; the ability to experience spiritual value in practical tasks which support the work of the church and help others.

**Teaching**—the ability to communicate so that others may learn, to teach others how to better understand scriptures, God, relationships, themselves, and the world.

**Tongues/interpretation of tongues**—the ability to communicate or understand forms of communication beyond the ordinary, including foreign languages, Braille, art, music, and other means of communication.

**Wisdom**—the ability to move from divine knowledge (received directly from God, from one's spiritual gift of knowledge, or from another's shared gifts) to practical applications in daily living. Those with this gift may also have the ability to help others discover the wisdom they have within themselves.



## Understanding Your Passions

Passion is the God-given desire expressed as an intense emotion or enthusiasm that compels us to make a difference in a particular ministry, or in a concern known to the community or wider world.

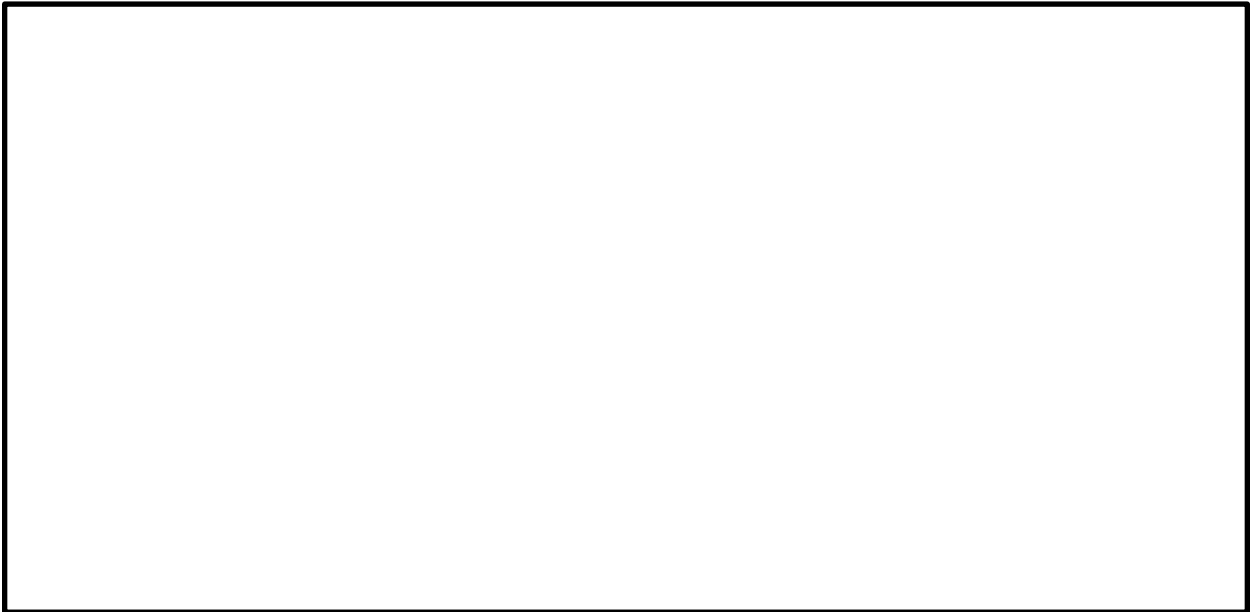
This worksheet is a guide to explore how God is inviting you to use your passions, talents, and spiritual gifts for the ministries of the church. Complete the following passion assessment, understanding that there are no right or wrong answers.

It is important that you not rush.

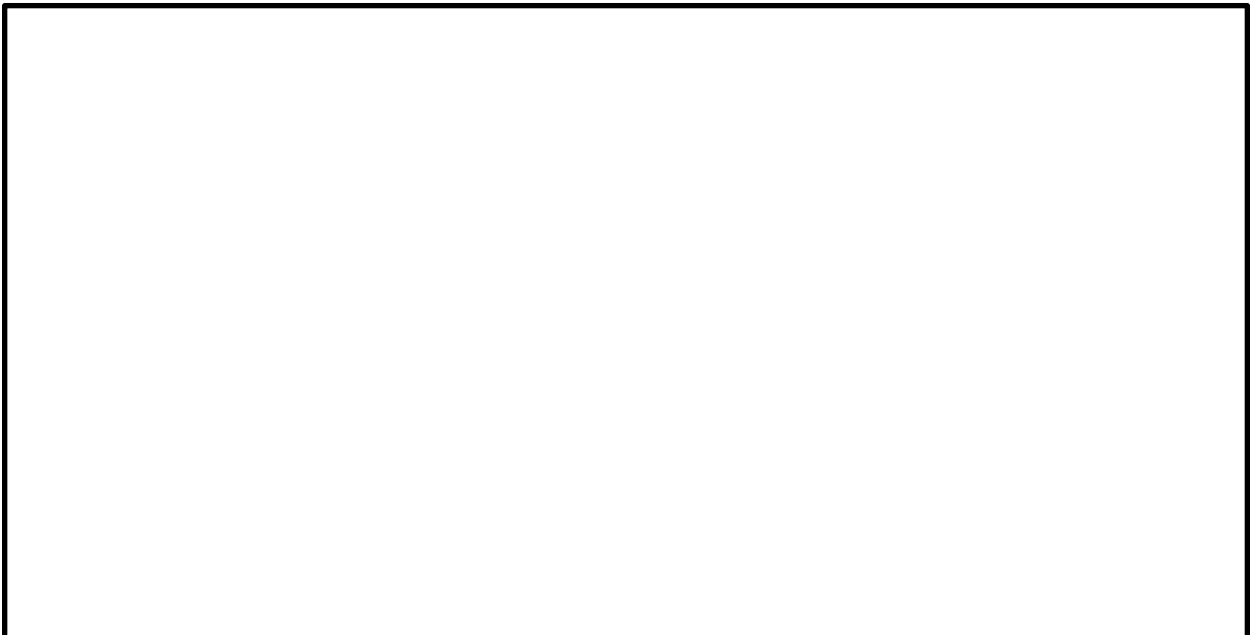
Prayerfully answer the following questions here, in your journal, or on another sheet of paper:

If you could invest the rest of your life and know you could change one thing in the world, what would it be? What do you think led you to choose that focus?


Imagine being with family, good friends and colleagues from work. What would they say you are most interested in or deeply passionate about?

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What conversation topics energize you and keep you talking? (Clues: politics, technology, family, violence, discipleship, literacy, etc . . .)

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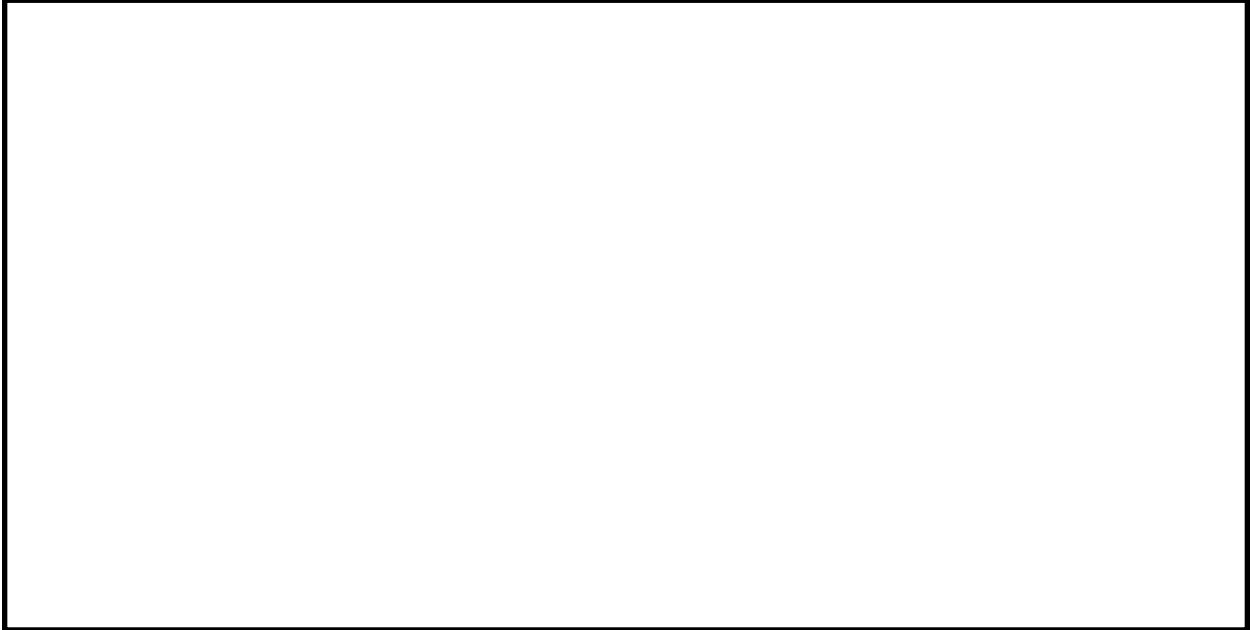
Who are the people whose need touches the depths of your heart? (Clues: older adults, the poor, college students, children, disabled, etc.)



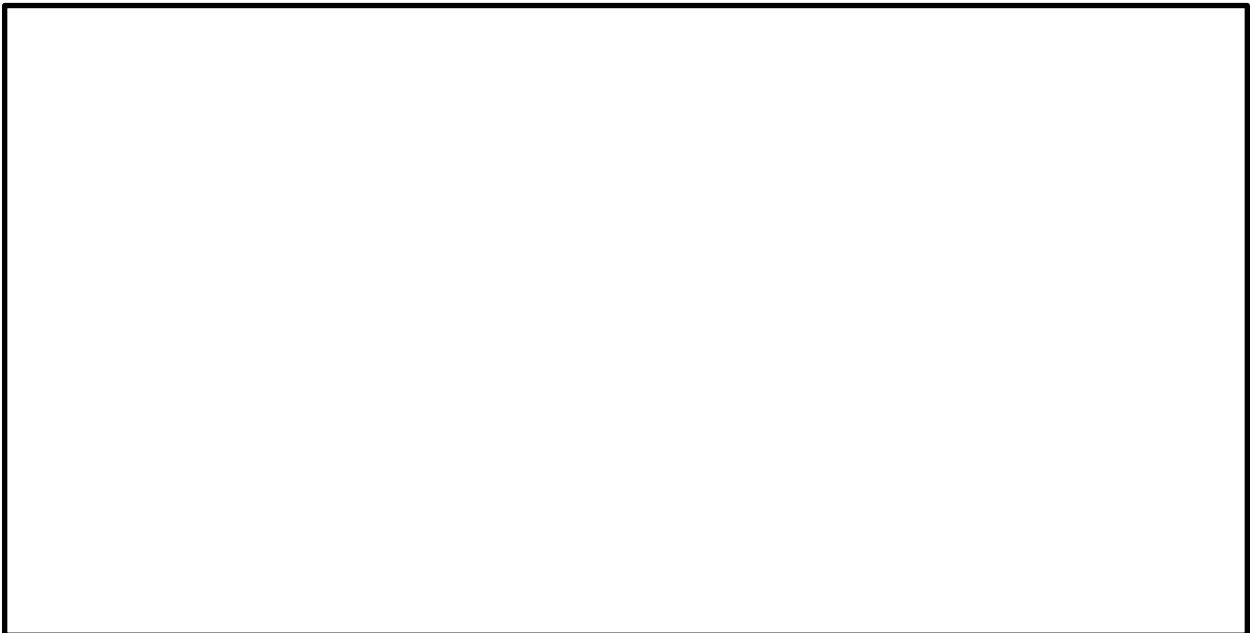
What have people asked you to do or help with that you would love to do more of?



What are some experiences you have had that made you feel fully alive? These experiences may have taken place at home, work, or school or during free time. Briefly describe each of the moments, including your thoughts on what made these moments such fulfilling experiences.

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Prayerfully reflect on your notes. What underlying themes do you see?

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Based on my responses to the questions,

I have a passion for . . .

using these gifts and interests . . .

with this group of people . . .

Possibilities for involvement might include:

In my congregation:

In my community:

Other: