

1 Corinthians 12

Introduction

"Good analysts have called 1 Cor. 12:11 the 'Constitution of the Church,' for nothing in the New Testament better describes God's plan for Church structure and operation. Two-thirds of the chapter develops the comparison of the parts of the 'body,' the institution all 'members' were baptized into (1 Cor. 12:12-13), and lists the officers that God has placed 'in the church' (1 Cor. 12:28)...In Paul's illustration, the organization of the Church would be lifeless without the inspiration of God's spirit. Thus 1 Cor. 12:11 begins by surveying the power of the Holy Ghost within the Church." (Richard Lloyd Anderson, *Understanding Paul* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1983], 112)

1 Cor. 12:3 no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost

Joseph Smith taught that 1 Cor. 12:3 which reads, "' No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost,' should be translated 'no man can *know* that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.'" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 223.) Indeed, a careful review of history will reveal that it is possible to say that Jesus is the Lord but still deny the Holy Ghost. The remnants of apostate Christianity give us many examples. Those who draw near to the Lord 'with their lips, but their hearts are far from' him (JS-Hist 1:19). For 'not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven' (Matt. 7:21). Therefore, we cannot truly know that 'Jesus is the Lord' nor can we obtain a testimony that Jesus is the Christ without the power of the Holy Ghost. Spiritual knowledge can be obtained in no other way.

Marion G. Romney

"Without the gift or revelation, which is one of the gifts or the Holy Ghost, there could be no Church of Jesus Christ. This is apparent from the obvious fact that in order for his Church to exist, there must be a society of people who individually have testimonies that Jesus is the Christ. According to Paul, such testimonies are revealed only by the Holy Ghost, for said he, '. . . no man can [know] say that Jesus is the Lord. but by the Holy Ghost.' (See 1 Cor. 12:3.) In the 46th section of the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord specifically lists such knowledge as one of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, as follows: 'To some it is given by the Holy Ghost to know that Jesus Christ is the Son of God' (D & C 46:13.) Everyone who has a testimony of Jesus has received it by revelation from the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost is a revelator, and everyone who receives him receives revelation.

"Wherever and whenever revelation is operative, manifestations of other gifts of the Holy Ghost are prevalent." (*Conference Report, April 1956, Afternoon Meeting* 69.)

Henry D. Moyle

"Paul enumerates many gifts of the Spirit. The greatest gift, however, is not the performing of miracles or talking in tongues, or prophesying, etc.; but the inception of an individual testimony is the greatest of all gifts of the Spirit. And that is a gift which comes from God through the Holy Ghost and can be received by any man, woman, or child in the world who desires to know the truth." (*Conference Report, April 1957, Afternoon Meeting 32.*)

1 Cor. 12:7-12 The Gifts of the Spirit are in the Church today

Joseph Smith

"No matter who believeth, these signs, such as healing the sick, casting out devils, etc., should follow all that believe, whether male or female" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, 224*)

Heber J. Grant

"I bear my witness to you that if a record had been made of all those who have been afflicted, those who have been given up to die, and who have been healed by the power of God since the establishment of the Church of Christ in our day, it would make a book much larger than the New Testament. More miracles have been performed in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints than we have any account of in the days of the Savior and His Apostles. Today, sickness is cured by spiritual power ... The dead have been raised. My own brother was announced to be dead, but by the prayer of faith he lives and presides over one of the stakes of Zion. I know, as I know I live, that the healing power of Almighty God ... is in the Church of Christ of which you and I are members." (*Conference Reports, October 6, 1910, p. 119*)

James A. Cullimore

"I bear my solemn witness that these gifts are with the Church today. The sick are healed, the eyes of the blind are opened, the ears of the deaf are unstopped, the lame are made to walk. The gift of tongues blesses our missionaries and others the world over. The gifts of wisdom and knowledge are evidenced by the leadership of our people everywhere. Devils are cast out, spirits are discerned, the gift of faith is demonstrated on every side. Many mighty miracles give evidence that this is indeed his church, the church of Jesus Christ. All the gifts and powers and blessings that have always identified Christ's church are with the Church today.

"As members of the Church, is our faith sufficiently strong? Are we in tune with the Spirit that we might be blessed by these great gifts? Do we believe a miracle can be performed or a blessing given? Do we call upon the priesthood as often as we should to administer to the sick? Do we believe we can be healed? Do we have faith to heal? Is the priesthood always prepared to give a blessing? How strong is your faith?" ("Gifts of the Spirit," *Ensign, Nov. 1974, 27*)

1 Cor. 12:7 the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal

Orson Pratt

"No one who has been born of the Spirit, and who remains sufficiently faithful, is left destitute of a spiritual gift." (*Masterful Discourses and Writings of Orson Pratt*, p. 570.)

LeGrand Richards

"The Lord has not left any without some gift and as you look about you, you will find that where one is strong in one way he may be weak in another. The Lord never did give all His gifts to any one individual...You remember how Alma of old said he would that he had the voice of an angel, that he might cry repentance to all the world, but the Lord did not grant his desire, even though he was a prophet. Paul carried a thorn in his flesh all his days, but the Lord did not see fit to remove it; and the Book of Mormon says thereto are we given weaknesses that we might remain humble. Is there one among you who does not feel his weakness and would that he had greater power than he possesses for achievement in this great and mighty latter-day work? And yet you have to satisfy yourselves to do the things that are within your own reach and with the gifts that the Lord has seen fit to bestow upon you. But remember, 'The manifestation of the spirit is given to every man to profit withal'-that is why the Lord gave the parable of the talents. To one He gave five talents; to another, two; and to another, one. And remember the Lord will return and expect an accounting according to the talents given." (*Conference Report, April 1943, Second Day-Morning Meeting 48.*)

1 Cor. 12:8 the Gift of Wisdom

Wisdom, in the gospel sense, can be defined as the correct application of knowledge or correct judgment. Such was the gift which Solomon requested and received, as recorded in 1 Kings 3:5-10; 4:29.

"I have sat in administrative meetings...when extremely difficult matters were being considered, when it appeared that no resolution was possible. I have become frustrated, weary in the realization that we simply could not handle the matter. Then a man would speak, briefly, softly, but powerfully, and suddenly the issue was settled. It was as though he had poured oil on troubled waters, had gotten to the essence of the issue rapidly, and had drawn upon a guiding principle in making his particular recommendation. It was an obvious illustration of the gift of wisdom or divine judgment.

"Such gifts are of almost infinite worth." (Robert L. Millet, *Alive in Christ: The Miracle of Spiritual Rebirth* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1997], 58.)

Stephen L. Richards

"The fundamental knowledge which the Church brings to you will bring you understanding. Your testimony, your spirit, and your service will direct the application of your knowledge; that is wisdom. Every man needs it a hundred times a day. Every woman needs it. Every youth needs it. The foolish and the wise are the antipodes of mankind as are the two poles of the earth. The foolish build on the sand; the wise on the rock. The one perishes; the other endures. Thank God for the gift of wisdom." (*Where Is Wisdom?* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1955], 201.)

Joseph F. Smith

"...if you want wisdom, ask for it, as Solomon did; if you want knowledge and the testimony of the spirit in your hearts, seek for it earnestly. Put yourself in a position whereby you will be worthy to receive it, then it will come to you as a gift of God, and His name should be praised for the same." (*Conference Report, October 1903*, 97.)

1 Cor. 12:8 the Gift of Knowledge

"The greatest knowledge is that which opens the way to exaltation. As with wisdom, there are varying degrees of knowledge, temporal and spiritual, greater and smaller. The ultimate and sublime purpose of knowledge is 'for the salvation of our souls.' (Jacob 4:13.)

"Firsthand knowledge comes with the aid of the Spirit. To read the scriptures gives one knowledge of what others have said. That is secondhand knowledge. When the Spirit bears witness to the truth of what the prophets have written, it becomes the personal and firsthand knowledge of the reader. The knowledge thus obtained is a gift of God." (S. Brent Farley, *Studies in Scripture, Vol. 8: Alma 30 to Moroni*, ed. by Kent P. Jackson, [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1988], 307.)

1 Cor. 12:9 the Gift of Faith

Have you ever met a member who never doubts anything? They can't be rattled by doctrinal problems; they can't be rattled by anti-Mormon literature; and they can't be dissuaded from a firm testimony of the truth. They won't even allow themselves to become worried about the arguments of the intellectuals, atheists, or devil's advocates. Many of these individuals are born with an innate and unshakeable faith. Such faith is not blind faith, as many suppose, but rather a gift of the Spirit.

For those of us not so inclined, there is still hope. This can be one of the gifts after which we earnestly seek, allowing it to grow as Alma has instructed (Alma 32).

Heber J. Grant

"I am grateful that from the time I was a child until the present I have been blessed with the gift of faith, which is a gift from God. I recall many things as a young man I

did not understand, and could not comprehend, yet which I believed and believed firmly." (*Conference Report, April 1935, First Day-Morning Meeting 7 - 8.*)

Neal A. Maxwell

"Faith is a gift, of course, and reason, by itself, cannot lead man out of the apparent maze. Man does not understand the mind of God and his timetable; nor do we have his perspective. The gift of faith, then, often gives form to what has been called 'tacit knowledge,' that form of knowledge that lies just below the level of the individual's powers of articulation, which whispers things to him that are true but which are difficult to share and can seldom be put in persuasive form for the ears of others. Nevertheless, without the gift of faith or the perspective-giving insights of the gospel, man's reason will sweep him into sadness and cynicism." (*For the Power is in Them...*, 18)

Lorenzo Snow

"'To one is given faith.' Not a common, ordinary faith, which some people pretend to at the present day; but a faith which enables its possessors to be sawn asunder, to be cast into dens of lions, fiery furnaces, and to undergo tortures of every description. This was the kind of faith that the Holy Ghost conferred upon those who possessed it, enabling its possessor to stand in the midst of every difficulty, defy every opposition and lay down his life, if necessary." (*Journal of Discourses, 26 vols.* [London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1854-1886], 14: 304.)

1 Cor. 12:9 the Gift of Healing

The gift of healing can be one of the most dramatic examples of a spiritual manifestation. However, the gift can apply to spiritual as well as physical blessings. The gift of healing can be applied to any ailment, whether physical spiritual, or emotional. Unlike many other gifts, the application of this gift depends upon the faith of the administrator and the recipient (see DC 46:19).

In the early days of the Church, some sisters practiced the gift of healing by laying hands on the sick and praying for them. Joseph Smith remarked that such a practice should not be condemned. This may surprise many since we are so used to receiving blessings only at the hands of the elders. Indeed, the elders not the sisters should be requested when a blessing is needed. The scriptures expressly instruct us, 'Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord' (James 5:14).

While not in frequent practice today, this principle underscores in important, albeit poorly understood, principle regarding the gifts of the Spirit. It is important to understand that the gifts of the Spirit are independent of the priesthood. The gift of healings, working of miracles, and prophecy (all of which we usually associate with the priesthood) are in fact gifts of the Spirit not products of the Priesthood. When they are

performed by Priesthood brethren, then Priesthood power is inherently connected. Nevertheless, the sisters are as entitled to these gifts as the brethren. As **President Heber J. Grant** noted, "I rejoice ... that every Latter-day Saint, every humble son and daughter of God that has embraced the gospel and become a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has received the witness of the Holy Spirit, that the gift of tongues, the gift of prophecy, of healing, and other gifts and blessings, are found in the Church, and are not confined to men that hold responsible positions in the Church." (*Conference Reports*, p. 64, April 1901)

Joseph Smith

"He said the reason of these remarks being made was, that some little foolish things were circulating in the society, against some sisters not doing right in laying hands on the sick. Said that if the people had common sympathies they would rejoice that the sick could be healed...No matter who believeth, these signs, such as healing the sick, casting out devils, etc., should follow all that believe, whether male or female. He asked the Society if they could not see by this sweeping promise, that wherein they are ordained, if it is the privilege of those set apart to administer in that authority, which is conferred on them; and if the sisters should have faith to heal the sick, let all hold their tongues, and let everything roll on.

"...Respecting females administering for the healing of the sick he further remarked, there could be no evil in it, if God gave His sanction by healing; that there could be no more sin in any female laying hands on and praying for the sick, than in wetting the face with water; it is no sin for anybody to administer that has faith, or if the sick have faith to be healed by their administration." (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 223-224)

1 Cor. 12:10 the working of miracles

Heber J. Grant

"I bear my witness to you that if a record had been made of all those who have been afflicted, those who have been given up to die, and who have been healed by the power of God since the establishment of the Church of Christ in our day, it would make a book much larger than the New Testament. More miracles have been performed in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints than we have any account of in the days of the Savior and His Apostles. Today, sickness is cured by spiritual power ... The dead have been raised. My own brother was announced to be dead, but by the prayer of faith he lives and presides over one of the stakes of Zion. I know, as I know I live, that the healing power of Almighty God ... is in the Church of Christ of which you and I are members." (*Conference Reports*, October 6, 1910, p. 119)

1 Cor. 12:10 the Gift of Prophecy

Joseph Smith

"We believe that we have a right to revelations, visions, and dreams from God, our Heavenly Father, and light and intelligence through the gift of the Holy Ghost, in the name of Jesus Christ, on all subjects pertaining to our spiritual welfare, if it so be that we keep his commandments so as to render ourselves worthy in his sight." (Kent P. Jackson, comp. and ed., *Joseph Smith's Commentary on the Bible* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1994], 160.)

1 Cor. 12:10 the Gift of Discerning of Spirits

Dallin H. Oaks

"This power of discernment is essential if we are to distinguish between genuine spiritual gifts and the counterfeits Satan seeks to use to deceive men and women and thwart the work of God. The Prophet Joseph Smith said, 'Nothing is a greater injury to the children of men than to be under the influence of a false spirit when they think they have the spirit of God.' (Teachings, p. 205.) He also taught that 'no man nor sect of men without the regular constituted authorities, the Priesthood and discerning of spirits, can tell true from false spirits.' (Teachings, p. 213.)

"Satan-inspired and man-made counterfeits of spiritual gifts have been present throughout our religious history. This is evident from the enchantments wrought by Pharaoh's sorcerers and magicians (see Ex. 7:11, 22; Ex. 8:7), and from Isaiah's warnings against 'wizards that peep, and that mutter' and 'them that have familiar spirits' (Isa. 8:19). The Savior warned against false Christs and false prophets who 'shall show great signs and wonders, insomuch, that, if possible, they shall deceive the very elect ... according to the covenant.' (JS-H 1:22.) The Apostle John said, 'Try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.' (1 Jn. 4:1.)

"Just a few months after the Church was organized, Hiram Page, one of the earliest members, was receiving revelations through a seer stone. The Lord told the Prophet Joseph Smith to tell Hiram Page privately that 'those things which he has written from that stone are not of me and that Satan deceiveth him.' (D&C 28:11.) The receipt of revelation had not been 'appointed unto' Hiram Page, the Lord explained, 'neither shall anything be appointed unto any of this church contrary to the church covenants. For all things must be done in order, and by common consent in the church, by the prayer of faith.' (D&C 28:12-13.)

"Here we learn that Satan gives revelations to deceive the children of men and that our protection is in following the order of the Church on who should receive revelation for what subject. In this, both men and women have equal responsibility to follow the duly ordained leaders of the church who have the obligation to lead and, on occasion, to correct." ("Spiritual Gifts," *Ensign*, Sept. 1986, 72)

1 Cor. 12:10 the Gift of Tongues

Joseph Smith

"The gift of tongues is the smallest gift perhaps of the whole, and yet it is one that is the most sought after." (*History of the Church*, 5:28-30.)

Joseph Smith

"Be not so curious about tongues, do not speak in tongues except there be an interpreter present; the ultimate design of tongues is to speak to foreigners, and if persons are very anxious to display their intelligence, let them speak to such in their own tongues. The gifts of God are all useful in their place, but when they are applied to that which God does not intend, they prove an injury, a snare and a curse instead of a blessing." (*History of the Church* 5:31-32)

Joseph F. Smith

"There is perhaps no gift of the Spirit of God more easily imitated by the devil than the gift of tongues Where two men or women exercise the gift of tongues by the inspiration of the Spirit of God, there are a dozen perhaps who do it by the inspiration of the devil ...

"I believe in the gifts of the Holy Spirit unto men, but I do not want the gift of tongues, except when I need it...

"So far as I am concerned, if the Lord will give me ability to teach the people in my native tongue, or in their own language to the understanding of those who hear me, that will be sufficient gift of tongues to me. Yet if the Lord gives you the gift of 178 tongues, do not despise it, do not reject it. For if it comes from the Spirit of God, it will come to those who are worthy to receive it, and it is all right." (*Conference Reports*, April 1900, p. 41)

1 Cor. 12:10 the interpretation of tongues

David O. McKay

"The Gift of Interpretation"-The occasion was a conference held at Huntly, New Zealand, a thousand people assembled. Before that time I had spoken through interpreters in China, Hawaii, Holland, and other places, but I felt impressed on that occasion to speak in the English language. In substance I said, 'I have never been much of an advocate of the necessity of tongues in our Church, but today I wish I had that gift. But I haven't. However, I am going to speak to you, my brothers and sisters, in my native tongue and pray that you may have the gift of interpretation of tongues. We will ask Brother Stuart Meha who is going to interpret for me, to make notes, and if necessary he may give us a summary of my talk afterwards.'

"Well, the outpouring of the gift of tongues on that occasion was most remarkable. Following the end of my sermon Brother Sid Christy, who was a student of Brigham Young University, a Maori, who had returned to New Zealand, rushed up and said, 'Brother McKay, they got your message!'

"Well, I knew they had by the attention and the nodding of their heads during the talk. I said, 'I think they have but for the benefit of those who may not have understood or had that gift, we shall have the sermon interpreted.'

"While Brother Meha was interpreting that or giving a summary of it in the Maori language some of the natives, who had understood it, but who did not understand English, arose and corrected him in his interpretations.

"President George Albert Smith and Brother Rufus K. Hardy visited New Zealand several years after that event, and Brother Hardy, hearing of the event, brought home testimonies of those who were present, and he took the occasion to have those testimonies notarized. So it is the gift of interpretation rather than the gift of tongues, that was remarkable." (*Gospel Ideals: Selections from the Discourses of David O. McKay* [Salt Lake City: Improvement Era, 1953], 552.)

1 Cor. 12:13 by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles

John Taylor

"I have seen, in my wanderings over the earth, hundreds of such cases as the one we have listened to this morning. I have heard men speak in different nations-in Germany, France, England, Scotland, Wales, the United States, in the Canadas;-no matter where, go where you will, and let a man receive the truth, and his heart is filled with joy and rejoicing. I see people around me here from all these parts that I have heard testify the same things...

"It is this spirit, intelligence, and the gift of the Holy Ghost and its operations on our minds, that has made us one. It is on that account that we speak alike, think alike, write alike, testify alike, because we are baptized into one baptism, and have all partaken of the same Spirit, and we all feel the same thing and rejoice in the same hope. Wherever the Spirit of God operates upon the human mind in any part of the earth, it is productive of the same results; and hence you see people coming in from the east, the west, the north, and the south to this place, led and impelled by the same Spirit." (*Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. [London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1854-1886], 7: 119.)

1 Cor. 12:18 But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him

M. Russell Ballard

"Paul compared the members of the Church and their various responsibilities to the body: (quotes 1 Cor. 12:14, 18, 20-21, 26).

"The scriptures state clearly that while our respective callings may be different and may change from time to time, all callings are important to the operation of the Church. We need the priesthood quorums to assert themselves and fulfill their divinely mandated stewardship, just as we need the Relief Society, the Primary, the Young Women, the Sunday School, and the activities committees to perform their vital functions. And we need the officers and members of all of these inspired organizations to work together, assisting each other as needed for the benefit of individuals and families. This is not man's work nor woman's work; it is all God's work, which is centered on the atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ." ("Strength in Counsel," *Ensign*, Nov. 1993, 77)

John Taylor

"The body is not one member, but many, and if one of the members suffer they all suffer with it; if one member rejoice all are honored with it. The body is not all head; it would be a curious kind of a body without arms, stomach, legs, feet, &c.; it would be no body at all, it could not exist or act. You cut off any member of the body, say an arm, and the body is maimed; pluck out an eye and the body is maimed. Pluck out both eyes and you could not see. You may have ever so perfect a body and take away the legs and the feet, and what then? You can do nothing, you can't walk, you have got to be lifted by somebody else and carried about, a helpless, inanimate being, without motion, power and activity. So it is with the body, and if one member suffer all the members suffer with it. The head may be very perfect, but if the arm is withered or any part of the body injured the powers of the body are impaired, and it can not fully answer the ends of its organization. Hence it is that in the organization of the Church of Christ every member should act in its own place-the Presidency in theirs, the Twelve in theirs, the Bishops in theirs, the Seventies in theirs, the High Priests in theirs, and the Elders, Priests, Teachers and Deacons who are living their religion in theirs. A Teacher who keeps the commandments of God and fulfills his duties is more honorable than the Apostle who does not. You hurt any part of the body, for instance, cut your finger, and the entire body feels it immediately. Touch the head and every part of the body senses it. And so it is with every particle of the body-it is a perfect system; and so is the Church of God, and each of the organs, members in particular, thus the organized body walks in the path that God marks out, and seeks to accomplish all things that he designs for us to do. Hence there is a mutual sympathy, affection and regard, and a brotherhood and fellowship among the Saints of God who are living their religion, all through the organization of the Priesthood, from the head to the foot." (*Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. [London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1854-1886], 18: 202 - 203.)

1 Cor. 12:21 the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet

"He (Joseph Smith) continued to read the chapter (1 Cor. 12), and give instructions respecting the different offices, and the necessity of every individual acting in the sphere allotted him or her, and filling the several offices to which they are appointed. He spoke of the disposition of many men to consider the lower offices in the Church dishonorable, and to look with jealous eyes upon the standing of others who are called to preside over them; that it was the folly and nonsense of the human heart for a person to be aspiring to other stations than those to which they are appointed of God for them to occupy; that it was better for individuals to magnify their respective calling, and wait patiently till God shall say to them, 'come up higher.'" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 223-224.)

M. Russell Ballard

"Each man or boy who holds the priesthood, regardless of his priesthood or his ordained office, is a *fellow servant* in the work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

"Although I hold the ordained office of Apostle in the Melchizedek Priesthood, my associates in that office and I are fellow servants in the work of the Lord with the most recently ordained deacon or elder in the Church.

"While the Apostle Paul stated the truth that 'God hath set ... first apostles [in the Church]' (1 Cor. 12:28), he also stated the truth that each member of the body is necessary. No one in any priesthood office can say of those in other offices, 'I have no need of thee,' because we all are fellow servants in the service of the Lord. (See 1 Cor. 12:14-28.) Our common and most important objective is to do *His* work. Each priesthood bearer, acting within the duties of his calling, is needed to accomplish the work of the Lord.

"I repeat, a priesthood office is bestowed not for status but for service. You and I are *fellow servants* in the Church of Jesus Christ." ("The Greater Priesthood: Giving a Lifetime of Service in the Kingdom," *Ensign*, Sept. 1992, 71)

M. Russell Ballard

"Don't be intimidated by those whose native talents and capabilities may be more visible-and may therefore seem more valuable-than your own. Every person has a significant contribution to make. *Every person.*" (*Counseling with Our Councils: Learning to Minister Together in the Church and in the Family* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1997], 122.)

Neal A. Maxwell

"Paul's teachings on the interdependency of Church members are particularly relevant...Amid our diverse talents, backgrounds, and personalities, the eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of thee' (1 Corinthians 12:21). The concert pianist cannot say to the lowly piano tuner, 'I have no need of thee.' The pianist's great

music would not be possible on an untuned piano. Correspondingly, the tuner is unlikely to be able to play the piano superbly. Both use their hands, however, to the edification of all. So it is in a true community of Saints, where there 'are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit' (1 Corinthians 12:4)." (*If Thou Endure It Well* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1996], 100.)

1 Cor. 12:23 those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour

Jeffrey R. Holland

"It is an immensely satisfying thing to be needed in the body of Christ. Whether I function as an eye or arm is irrelevant; the fact is I am needed in this most majestic organism, and the body is imperfect without me. A popular singer made a small fortune reminding us that 'people who need people are the luckiest people in the world.' In The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints-the restored ecclesiastical body of Christ-people do need people and everyone is welcomed. This includes (in Paul's assertion) not only the attractive, talented, 'comely' members, but those of us who seem to have fewer gifts and face greater challenges, those who receive less honor and attention. In the Church of Jesus Christ 'more abundant honor' is given to these. Every member matters, and the less favored member most of all (see 1 Cor. 12:23-24)." ("Belonging: A View of Membership," *Ensign*, Apr. 1980, 27-28)

Marlin K. Jensen

"Considerations of church position and title are also of little consequence to Latter-day Saints whose eyes are directed toward God's glory. Their concern is focused on the opportunities for service that church callings present, rather than on gaining personal notoriety. Such members, who serve competently and quietly, regardless of whether they are the 'highest' or the 'least' in the kingdom, are probably those that the Apostle Paul had in mind when he wrote, 'And those members of the body [meaning the Church], which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour.' (1 Cor. 12:23.)

"The merit of rendering faithful service, regardless of one's position in the Church, was tenderly brought to my attention several years ago during the funeral service of a man who had done much good in his life without ever being recognized with a high church office. I was touched as I heard the deceased's brother-in-law describe him as a man who had never served as an elders quorum president, as a bishop, or as a stake president, but who 'had made a lot of them look awfully good.'" ("An Eye Single to the Glory of God," *Ensign*, Nov. 1989, 28)

1 Cor. 12:25 there should be no schism in the body

Howard W. Hunter

"Within this Church there is a constant need for unity, for if we are not one, we are not his. (See D&C 38:27.) We are truly dependent on each other, 'and the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.' (1 Cor. 12:21.) Nor can the North Americans say to the Asians, nor the Europeans to the islanders of the sea, 'I have no need of thee.' No, in this church we have need of every member, and we pray, as did Paul when he wrote to the church in Corinth, 'that there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another.

"And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.' (1 Cor. 12:25-26.)

"Paul's words are as applicable to us today as they were to the saints at Corinth.

"As we think of the great growth of the Church, the diversities of tongues and cultures, and the monumental tasks that yet lie before us, we wonder if there is any more important objective before us than to so live that we may enjoy the unifying spirit of the Lord. As Jesus prayed, we must be united if the world is ever to be convinced that he was sent by God his Father to redeem us from our sins.

"It is unity and oneness that has thus far enabled us to bear our testimony around the globe, bringing forward tens of thousands of missionaries to do their part. More must be done. It is unity that has thus far enabled the Church, its wards and stakes, branches and districts, and members, to construct temples and chapels, undertake welfare projects, seek after the dead, watch over the Church, and build faith. More must be done. These great purposes of the Lord could not have been achieved with dissension or jealousy or selfishness. Our ideas may not always be quite like those who preside in authority over us, but this is the Lord's church and he will bless each of us as we cast off pride, pray for strength, and contribute to the good of the whole." ("That We May Be One," *Ensign*, May 1976, 106)

Joseph Smith

The advancement of the cause of God and the building up of Zion is as much one man's business as another's. The only difference is that one is called to fulfill one duty and another duty. But if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it, and if one member is honored, all the rest rejoice with it. And the eye cannot say to the ear, 'I have no need of thee,' nor the head to the foot, 'I have no need of thee.' Party feelings, separate interests, and exclusive designs should be lost sight of in the one common cause, in the interest of the whole." (Kent P. Jackson, comp. and ed., *Joseph Smith's Commentary on the Bible* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1994], 164.)

1 Cor. 12:26 whether...one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it

"Indeed, a great benefit of a church organization is that individually we need not possess a specific gift in order to reap its blessings. Our fellowship with the Saints gives us access to most, if not all, spiritual gifts. Thus, other Church members are vital to our spiritual well-being, just as we are vital to theirs, through the gifts with which we have been collectively blessed. The Apostle Paul underscores this point in comparing spiritual gifts to parts of the human body: 'There should be no schism in the body; but ... the members should have the same care one for another.

"And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it' (1 Cor. 12:25-26)." (Arthur R. Bassett, "I Have a Question," *Ensign*, Mar. 1994, 52)

1 Cor 12:28 God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets

After being taught that the Church today is patterned after the 'Primitive Church' with 'apostles, prophets, pastors', etc. (A of F 1:5), an investigator then asked the author why we had a prophet at the head of our church instead of an apostle. He had perceptively noted that the New Testament teaches that the calling of an apostle comes before the calling of a prophet. While we call the President of the Church "the Prophet" as if there were only one, this practice can obscure the underlying doctrine that an apostle is greater than a prophet.

Just as the Book of Mormon teaches that 'a seer is greater than a prophet' (Mosiah 8:15), Paul is teaching that an apostle is greater than a prophet. The Prophet and President of the Church holds that calling not by virtue of being the only prophet in the church but rather by being the senior apostle, for every apostle is ordained to be a prophet, seer, and revelator. His authority comes from being 'the President of the High Priesthood of the Church; Or, in other words, the Presiding High Priest over the High Priesthood of the Church' (DC 107:65-66), a calling which he holds only because he was first ordained an apostle. Furthermore, the individual who holds this calling must be appointed by the Twelve according to the revelation, 'It is the duty of the Twelve, also to ordain and set in order all the other officers of the church' (DC 107:58). Indeed the true church should be full of prophets, even as Moses had lamented, 'would God that all the Lord's people were prophets' (Num. 11:29). If the members as a group would obtain the spirit of prophecy which is the testimony of Jesus (Rev. 19:10), then the church would be full of prophets, but they would still be subject to the apostles.

Bruce R. McConkie

"*Apostles*. This is the supreme office in the church in all dispensations because those so ordained hold both the fulness of the priesthood and all of the keys of the kingdom of God on earth. The President of the Church serves in that high and exalted position because he is the senior apostle of God on earth and thus can direct the manner in which all other apostles and priesthood holders use their priesthood." (*A New Witness for the Articles of Faith* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1985], 348.)

1 Cor. 12:30 **covet earnestly the best gifts**

Carlos E. Asay

"I find it significant that God has given us more than a casual invitation to obtain spiritual gifts. There are seven very pointed and command-like statements that remind us of the absolute necessity to seek these gifts. In a sense, God has given us a commission to seek, a requirement to obtain, and a responsibility to share these spiritual gifts. Study the following declarations and notice the words italicized; each is strong and each denotes action on our part:

1. '*Seek ye earnestly* the best gifts' (D&C 46:8).
2. '*Lay hold* upon every good gift' (Moroni 10:30).
3. '*Covet earnestly* the best gifts' (1 Corinthians 12:31) (in this context, 'covet earnestly' means 'ardently desire').
4. '*Desire* spiritual gifts' (1 Corinthians 14:1).
5. '*[Be] zealous* of spiritual gifts' (1 Corinthians 14:12) ('zealous' means enthusiastic in this case).
6. 'This is thy gift; *apply unto it*, and blessed art thou' (D&C 8:4).
7. '*Ask of God*, who giveth liberally. . . . He that asketh in the Spirit, asketh according to the will of God' (D&C 46:7, 30).

"The injunction is to 'seek earnestly,' 'lay hold upon,' 'covet earnestly,' 'desire,' 'be zealous of,' 'apply unto it,' and 'ask of God.' It isn't a proposition of, 'If you have the time, do it,' or, 'If you have the inclination, try it.' It isn't that at all. We are commanded to seek and cultivate gifts of the Spirit!" (*In the Lord's Service: A Guide to Spiritual Development* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1990], 124.)

Bruce R. McConkie

"We are commanded to seek the gifts of the Spirit; if we do not do so, we are not walking in that course which is pleasing to Him whose gifts they are...Why, for what purpose, and to whom are the gifts given? 'Verily I say unto you, they are given for the benefit of those who love me and keep all my commandments, and him that seeketh so to do; that all may be benefited that seek or that ask of me, that ask and not for a sign that they may consume it upon their lusts.' It is inherent in the whole plan of righteousness that those who seek the gifts of the Spirit do so for their own salvation and for the glory of God, and not for lustful and selfish and worldly reasons.

"And again, verily I say unto you, I would that ye should always remember, and always retain in your minds what those gifts are, that are given unto the church.' (D&C 46:7-10.) Truly all of the Lord's saints should seek him, should seek his Spirit, should seek his gifts. Where these gifts are, there is the true and saving gospel, and where they are not, there is no hope of salvation." *A New Witness for the Articles of Faith* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1985], 370.)

1 Cor. 12:29-30 are all workers of miracles? Have all the gift of healing? do all speak with tongues?

Joseph Smith

"The human family are very apt to run to extremes, especially in religious matters. And hence people in general either want some miraculous display, or they will not believe in the gift of the Holy Ghost at all. If an elder lays his hands upon a person, it is thought by many that the person must immediately rise and speak in tongues and prophesy. . . . We believe that the Holy Ghost is imparted by the laying on of hands of those in authority, and that the gift of tongues and also the gift of prophecy are gifts of the Spirit and are obtained through that medium. But then to say that men always prophesied and spoke in tongues when they had the imposition of hands would be to state that which is untrue, contrary to the practice of the apostles, and at variance with holy writ. For Paul says, 'To one is given the gift of tongues, to another the gift of prophecy, and to another the gift of healing.' And again, 'Do all prophesy? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?' [1 Cor. 12:29-30], evidently showing that all did not possess these several gifts, but that one received one gift, and another received another gift. All did not prophesy, all did not speak in tongues, all did not work miracles, but all did receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. Sometimes they spake in tongues and prophesied in the apostles' days, and sometimes they did not. The same is the case with us also in our administrations, while more frequently there is no manifestation at all that is visible to the surrounding multitude. . . . All the gifts of the Spirit are not visible to the natural vision or understanding of man. Indeed, very few of them are. . . ." (Kent P. Jackson, comp. and ed., *Joseph Smith's Commentary on the Bible* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1994], 161 - 162)

1 Cor. 12:31 yet shew I unto you a more excellent way

"Charity is a fruit of the Spirit. It is bestowed by God...Charity is that 'more excellent way' (see 1 Corinthians 12:31) that comes by and through the Holy Ghost as one of the gifts of God." (Robert L. Millet, *The Power of the Word: Saving Doctrines from the Book of Mormon* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1994], 240.)

Neal A. Maxwell

"Paul...after discussing the importance of gifts and the offices in the Church, says ' . . . yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.' (1 Cor. 12:31.) Paul then continues in the 13th Chapter of 1 Corinthians with his sublime writings about love. He boldly

declares that love undergirds everything else; without love the other gifts don't really matter." (*A More Excellent Way: Essays on Leadership for Latter-day Saints*, 1-2)