

# DISCIPLESHIP LESSON 36

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| <b>1</b> | PRAYER |
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**Pray** for God's guidance through his Spirit, for awareness of his presence and for listening to his voice. Dedicate this lesson about disciple making to the Lord.

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| <b>2</b> | SHARING (20 minutes) <span style="float: right;"><i>[QUIET TIMES]</i><br/>DEUTERONOMY 28:1 – 31:13</span> |
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**Take turns** and **share** (or **read** from your notes) in short what you have learned from one of your quiet times out of the assigned Bible passages (Deuteronomy 28:1 – 31:13).

Listen to the person sharing, take him serious and accept him. Do not discuss what he shares.

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| <b>3</b> | MEMORISATION (20 minutes) <span style="float: right;"><i>[THE GOSPEL]</i><br/>REVIEW OF SERIES C</span> |
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## A. METHOD OF REVIEWING MEMORISED BIBLE VERSES

Reviewing previously memorised Bible verses has the following parts:

### 1. Review the new memorised Bible verses.

Review means to repeat the last 5 Bible verses you have memorised once every day. Repetition is the best method to remember Bible verses and to quote them accurately. Therefore, review the last 5 Bible verses you have memorised at a minimum of once a day for the duration of 5 weeks. Thus, you review every new Bible verse about 35 times before it comes into the 'back-review' system.

### 2. Review the old memorised Bible verses.

"Back-review" means to review all your previously memorised Bible verses once every 3 weeks. Back-review is the best method to remember all the Bible verses you have previously memorised. Therefore, for every 100 previously memorised Bible verses, back-review 5 of them every day. Thus you back-review all these previously memorised Bible verses once every 3 weeks.

### 3. Keep cardholder at hand.

Every day place the last 5 memorise Bible verses and 5 out of every 100 previously memorised Bible verses in your memorisation cardholder and keep it all day at hand. Use travelling time and spare moments during the day for review, meditation and prayer.

### 4. Check accuracy.

Check one another to see whether you still know the Bible verses that you have memorised accurately. During every group meeting check two by two one another's last memorised Bible verse. Once in a while check two by two one series of 5 Bible verses that you have previously memorised. Check one another to see whether you still know the topic or title, the Bible reference as well as the whole Bible verse *without one mistake*. As a cue, sometimes give the topic or title, sometimes the Bible reference and at other times only the first few words of the Bible verse.

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## B. REVIEW TWO BY TWO SERIES C: "THE GOSPEL"

1. Nature of sin. Romans 3:23. For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.
2. Punishment of sin. Ecclesiastes 12:14. For God will bring every deed into judgement, including every hidden thing.
3. Atonement of sin. Romans 5:8. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.
4. Salvation is a gift. Ephesians 2:8-9. For it is by grace that you have been saved, through faith - and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast.
5. Salvation by faith. John 1:12. Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.

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| <b>4</b> | BIBLE STUDY (70 minutes) <i>[THE CHURCH]</i><br><b>(6) CHRISTIANS LIVE AND FUNCTION AS A BODY IN THE CHURCH.</b><br><b>1 CORINTHIANS 12:4-7,12-28</b> |
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Make use of the five steps method of Bible study and study 1 Corinthians 12:4-7,12-28 together.

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| <b><u>STEP 1. READ.</u></b><br><b>Read.</b> LET US READ 1 Corinthians 12:4-7,12-28 together.<br>Let us take turns to read one verse each until we have completed the reading. | <b>GOD'S WORD</b> |
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| <b><u>STEP 2. DISCOVER.</u></b><br><b>Consider.</b> WHICH TRUTH IN THIS PASSAGE IS IMPORTANT FOR YOU?<br>Or WHICH TRUTH IN THIS PASSAGE TOUCHES YOUR MIND OR HEART?<br><b>Record.</b> Discover one or two truths that you understand. Think about them and write your thoughts in your notebook.<br><b>Share.</b> (After the group members have had about two minutes to think and write, take turns to share).<br>Let us take turns to share with one another what each of us has discovered.<br>(The following are examples of people sharing what they have discovered. Remember: In every small group, the group members will share different things, not necessarily these things) | <b>OBSERVATIONS</b> |
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12:4-7,12-26

**Discovery 1. How the world-wide Church and local church ought to function.**

Paul uses the functions of the human body to illustrate the functions of the Body of Christ. The Bible teaches three important principles how the Church should function.

(1) The world-wide Church and local churches ought to proclaim the gospel.

Without faith in Jesus Christ, no one will be saved. Jesus says, "If you are not born-again, you cannot enter the kingdom of God" (John 3:3,5). And here the apostle Paul says that one can only become a member of the Body of Christ through baptism with the Spirit (that is through rebirth) (1 Corinthians 12:13). No one is born a Christian, because his parents are Christian. Jesus said, "You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again'" (John 3:3-8)! Only by believing in "his name", that is, believing in Jesus Christ as he has revealed himself in the Bible, and by receiving (welcoming) Jesus Christ into his heart and life will give a person the right (ability) to become a born-again child of God (John 1:12-13). "Faith comes through hearing the word (the voice) of Jesus Christ" (that is experiencing that the words of the Lord in the Bible are directed to him personally) (Romans 10:14-17). That is why the gospel must be preached!

(2) The world-wide Church and local churches ought to welcome diversity.

Although there exists only one Body of Christ (one world-wide Church), it consists of many different members. The members of the worldwide Church come from every tribe and language and people and nation (Revelation 5:9). All these members differ from one another with regard to the different *spiritual gifts* they have received, the different *services* to which they are called and the different ways in which the Holy Spirit *manifests* his work through them in the churches (1 Corinthians 12:4-7). Ephesians 4:11 refers to the spiritual gifts as part of his grace which Jesus Christ gives at his ascension to Christians (Ephesians 4:7-8). They are spiritual gifts in the sense of *functions (offices)*, but not in the sense of *positions*. Christians with these spiritual gifts ought to function under the council of elders (1 Timothy 5:17).

For example, one Christian may have received the spiritual gift of teaching; he has been called to serve as a teacher for children and he manifests his teaching ability especially in drawing illustrations and telling good Bible stories. Another Christian has also received the spiritual gift of teaching; he has been called to serve as a teacher for adults and manifests his teaching ability especially in leading adults in good Bible Studies and exposition of the Bible. Etc. The members also differ with regard to the different places they have been assigned in the Church. For example, one Christian with the spiritual gift of showing mercy has been assigned to help the poor members of the congregation. Another Christian with the same spiritual gift of showing mercy has been assigned to help the disabled and foreigners (refugees) in the society outside the Church. Etc.

The distinguishing characteristic of the real worldwide Church and the individual congregations is not uniformity, but diversity. *Uniformity* means that all the members are expected to dress in the same way, to speak and behave in the same way and to participate in the same activities (religious duties) in the congregation. Uniformity leads to disunity, strife and conflict, because many members cannot find room in that congregation to function with their spiritual gift and service. But *diversity* can lead to real unity, because the service of every Christian is needed and every Christian acknowledges and appreciates the service of the others. The world-wide Church and the individual congregation can only be what it should be and do what it should do if it possesses all those diverse members and if all those members are governed from one centre, namely its Head, Jesus Christ.

(3) The members of the world wide Church and local churches ought to be mutually dependent.

In the one Body of Christ there is no reason for inferior or superior feelings and evaluations. The eye needs the ear and the hand needs the foot. Each member is necessary for the functioning of the local congregation and the world-wide Church. Each member should show concern for the other members. Each member is needed to serve the others. And each member needs the service of the others. *Serving one another with your spiritual gift (gifts)* is therefore another way to love *one another*! A Christian can simply not do without the spiritual gifts and services of other Christians. Each member's service and gift complements that of another. In this way, the local church and the worldwide Church are being built up in the best way. Every Christian should therefore desire to serve others with his spiritual gift and allow the other to serve him with his spiritual gift.

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12:28

Discovery 2. The important spiritual gifts in the congregation and the world-wide Church.

Paul literally says, "God has made some in the church *unto something* (Greek: *tithémi*): first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers ...". In his letter to the Corinthians he says that the most important gifts are: apostles, prophets and teachers. In his letter to the Ephesians he teaches that five spiritual gifts are important for the equipping of the members of the church: apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers (Ephesians 4:11)!

(1) The apostles of Jesus Christ.

"The apostles of Jesus Christ" (Ephesians 1:1; Ephesians 2:20; Ephesians 3:5; Ephesians 4:11) were a unique group of disciples whom Jesus Christ himself chose, called, trained and sent out as his eye- and ear-witnesses, especially of his life, teaching death and resurrection. They consisted of the eleven disciples of Jesus (Mark 3:13-19) and Paul (Acts 26:16-18; Romans 1:1; 1 Corinthians 9:1-2). There are no longer such "apostles", because no one would qualify (Acts 1:21-22)!

(2) The apostles of the churches.

However, "the apostles of the churches" (Acts 14:4; 2 Corinthians 8:23; Philippians 2:25; 1 Thessalonians 2:6-7) still exist and consist of Christians sent out by churches to accomplish a special task. They have received the spiritual gift of "apostles" (1 Corinthians 12:28; Ephesians 4:11), the special ability to be sent out on a special mission. Today, we call such people "missionaries", "church (house-church) planters" and "church builders".

(3) The prophets of the Old Testament.

The Law was communicated to the prophet Moses through angels (Deuteronomy 33:2; Acts 7:53; Galatians 3:18; Hebrews 2:2). The prophets of the Old Testament" were people who revealed and spoke God's words (Hebrews 1:1). They only could say, "Thus says the Lord" and their words were recorded in the Bible. They too were a unique group. There are no longer "prophets" as they, because no one may add new revelations or words to the Bible (Revelation 22:18-19).

(4) The prophets of the New Testament.

The words of the New Testament were communicated to the apostles of Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit (John 14:16; 16:13-15). But "the prophets of the New Testament" in the sense of Christians with the gift of prophecy still exist. They have the ability to proclaim the words of the Bible with the power of the Holy Spirit and touch the hearts of people. Today, we call such people "preachers".

Always remember: "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (Revelation 19:10; cf. Revelation 12:17; contrast Jeremiah 23:16-40). Whatever Jesus Christ said and did in the Old Testament and in the New Testament (that is, the contents of the Bible) is the spirit or essence of prophecy!

Conclusion. According to the teaching of the Bible, the very important spiritual gifts are: the missionaries or church planters and church builders, the preachers, the evangelists, the pastors and the teachers. They are in the worldwide Church, but may also be found in the local churches. They do not only possess a special ability (function) as for example: "teaching", but also a special office as for example: "teacher". They ought to function under the supervision of the local council of elders.

In 1 Corinthians 12:31 Paul therefore says that those Christians whom the Holy Spirit has given spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12:11), should eagerly desire those spiritual gifts that "express God's Words or message in intelligible (meaningful) words" (1 Corinthians 14:19), that "build up the church" (1 Corinthians 14:12) and that "strengthen, encourage and comfort" people (1 Corinthians 14:3). Paul calls this spiritual gift "prophecy" (preaching).

"The greater (best) spiritual gifts" in the Church are "apostles" (missionaries), "prophets (preachers of God's Word) and "teachers" (of God's Word) (1 Corinthians 12:31)! Especially these three spiritual gifts proclaim "the testimony of Jesus" (Revelation 19:10).

**STEP 3. QUESTION.****EXPLANATIONS**

**Consider.** WHICH QUESTION ABOUT ANYTHING IN THIS PASSAGE WOULD YOU LIKE TO ASK TO THIS GROUP?

Let us try to understand all the truths in 1 Corinthians 12:4-7,12-28 and ask questions about the things we still do not understand.

**Record.** Formulate your question as clearly as possible. Then write your question in your notebook.

**Share.** (After the group members have had about two minutes to think and write, let each person first share his question.)

**Discuss.** (Then, choose a few of these questions and try to answer them by discussing them together in your group.)

(The following are examples of questions the students might ask and some notes about the discussion of the questions.)

12:4-7

Question 1. What is a spiritual gift?

**Notes.** A spiritual gift is a special ability like “teaching” or a special office like “teacher”. It is a manifestation of God’s grace, power and wisdom through the ministry of a Christian. It is an expression of God’s grace in a variety of forms through the stewardship of Christians (1 Peter 4:10). It is always a gift (1 Corinthians 12:11) and not the product of the Christian’s skill or ingenuity. It is a measured gift and thus always limited in extent (Ephesians 4:7).

12:8-10,28

Question 2. Which spiritual gifts are mentioned in the Bible?

**Notes.** The lists of spiritual gifts in the Bible do not intend to be exhaustive. Romans 12:4-8; Ephesians 4:11 and 1 Peter 4:11 mention the gifts that ought to function in the Church. 1 Corinthians 7:1,7; 1 Corinthians 12:8-10 and 1 Corinthians 12:28 mention the gifts that functioned in the congregation of Corinth. Creative and musical gifts are also mentioned in the Bible (Exodus 28:3; Exodus 31:1-6; Exodus 35:10,25,35; Exodus 36:1; Psalm 33:2-3; Psalm 45:1; Psalm 78:72).

Particular gifts are not mentioned, for example, “humour”, “listening”, “a feeling for languages”, “organising”, “skilfulness with hands”, etc. The spiritual gifts may be expressed in various ways. For example, there is the spiritual gift of teaching children, the spiritual gift of teaching the handicapped or the spiritual gift of teaching adults.

Question 3. What are the four distinct purposes of spiritual gifts?

**Notes.** There are four distinct purposes of the spiritual gifts.

- (1) To serve one another (1 Peter 4:10-11).
- (2) To build up the world-wide Church and the individual congregations (1 Corinthians 14:12).
- (3) To equip Christians for works of service (Ephesians 4:11-13).
- (4) The ultimate purpose of spiritual gifts is to glorify God in all things (1 Peter 4:11)!

12:11

Question 4. Who determines which spiritual gift one receives?

**Notes.** The Triune God (the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit) gives special abilities to Christians and appoints special offices in the Church. Although the apostle Paul encourages Christians to whom the Holy Spirit has given spiritual gifts to eagerly desire “the greater (best) gifts” (1 Corinthians 12:31), especially to prophecy and above all to love (1 Corinthians 14:1) and although the elders of the church *symbolically* confer a necessary spiritual gift for example to Timothy (1 Timothy 4:14), it still remains a fact that God (1 Peter 4:10), Christ (Ephesians 4:7) or the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:11) determines in a sovereign way which spiritual gift a Christian receives! God determines the specific spiritual gift, the specific ministry (service), the specific working or manifestation of the spiritual gift (1 Corinthians 12:4-7) and the special place of every Christian in the worldwide Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:18).

Question 5. How does a Christian discover his spiritual gift?

**Notes.**

- (1) By studying the Bible and prayer.

The Bible teaches what a spiritual gift is, which spiritual gifts are important and how Christians ought to cope with spiritual gifts. Therefore: study the Bible! Understand the biblical teaching about the spiritual gifts, their characteristics and functions. Ask God to reveal to you whether he has given you a spiritual gift (gifts) and, if so, which?

Do not forget that evil spirits are also able to produce spiritual gifts in people who trust in them (1 Corinthians 14:12)<sup>1</sup>.

(2) By actively serving in the local church or worldwide Church.

A spiritual gift is an ability (skill) that provokes you to serve in a particular area. Your spiritual gift is at the same time a desire, a skill and a revelation (manifestation) of God's work in you. God does not give spiritual gifts to be an ornament with which one could boast, but rather as an ability to serve others. Thus, whoever does not serve cannot discover whether he has a spiritual gift or not! In order to discover this, one must serve in a variety of ministries – ministry among children, youth work, works of mercy, encouraging people with problems, evangelism among non-Christians, disciple making among Christians, etc. You will soon discover which abilities you have been given and which abilities you have not been given.

(3) By evaluating your ministry (service).

Because spiritual gifts are inseparable from serving others and building up the congregation, the effect your service has on others and the congregation is a good indication of your spiritual gift. Ask yourself the following questions,

- “How do other Christians evaluate my service?”
- “What do other people often ask me to do?”
- “What do they say that I can do well?”
- “What do they say that I did that benefited them?”
  
- “How do I myself evaluate my service?”
- “What do I enjoy doing?”
- “What things do I do well?”
- “What things do I do that build up others?”

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12:4-7,14-27

Question 6. How should a Christian view himself in the local congregation or world-wide Church?

**Read** Romans 12:3-6; 1 Corinthians 12:4-7,14-27

(1) God determines the diversity in the church.

There are differences among Christians, which God in his sovereign providence, love and distributions of his grace has caused to exist. There are differences in the measure of faith of Christians, namely differences in the grace which God gives, difference in the spiritual gifts which God distributes and differences in the ministries God assigns. God's sovereign will determines these differences and also the direction of each Christian's life.

(2) God gives grace to the humble.

“For by the grace given me, I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgement, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you” (Romans 12:3). “Thinking of oneself more highly than he ought” is pride! Pride consists in coveting or exercising a prerogative, which does not belong to one. No one is immune to exaggerated self-esteem. A Christian who covets a higher or another spiritual gift (skill/competence or office) in the congregation than what God has graciously given to him, is engaged in wilful self-exaltation.

“Humility” is:

- Thinking of oneself with sober judgement
- or thinking of oneself in accordance with the measure of faith God has given. That is: you heartily accept the spiritual gift, ministry and place God in his sovereign will has given you (Romans 12:3-6).

Christians should not think that they have spiritual gifts, which they do not have, or refuse to acknowledge the spiritual gifts, which God has graciously given to them. Both an exaggerated self-esteem and false humility are wrong in God's eyes. God gives grace to the humble (1 Peter 5:5-6). Christians must not pretend that they have a spiritual gift or ministry which God has not given them!

(3) God determines the measure of faith of a Christian.

“The measure of faith” which God has given to each Christian (Romans 12:3) does not refer to the quantity of faith, but to the kind of faith. “The many different ‘measures of faith’ reflect the many different ways in which Christians exercise their faith (as for example, their knowledge, trust and obedience) with respect to the diversity of spiritual gifts (skills/competences and offices) within the local church and within the worldwide Church. God's grace grants each Christian a specific measure of faith, that is, as a member of Christ's Body, each Christian receives a specific spiritual gift or another grace, a task and a place within the worldwide Church of Christ. He also receives a corresponding measure of faith (knowledge, trust and obedience) that corresponds to these (cf. Philippians 1:29), by which and within the limits of which he should exercise his spiritual gift. All spiritual gifts can only be exercised properly by faith and by

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<sup>1</sup> Apparently there were some people in the congregation of Corinth who depended on (evil) “spirits” to produce phenomena as speaking in strange tongues or making predictions. 1 Corinthians 14:12 translated from the Greek (Nestle-Aland): “Since you are pushing (striving for) “spirits” (Greek: pneumata), not spiritual gifts (Greek: charismata), you must (rather) long for whatever (gifts) build up (the Church), so that you may excel”. Cf. [www.deltacourse.org](http://www.deltacourse.org), delta PLUS study 29.



love (1 Corinthians 13). Thus, every spiritual gift has limits as to the type of function and as to the area in which it should be exercised.

Question 7. What is the difference between the gifts of the Spirit and the fruit of the Spirit?

**Notes.** The possession and use of spiritual gifts of the Holy Spirit is not a proof of being spiritual or mature. Although the Christians in the congregation of Corinth possessed all the spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 1:7)<sup>2</sup>, they were everything except spiritual or mature (1 Corinthians 3:1-4; 1 Corinthians 13:8-11). On the contrary they were unspiritual (carnal) and immature (still babies in Christ)! They quarrelled, split into church denominations and remained unchanged just like the people in the world (the non-Christians)! The exercise of the spiritual gifts without love for other Christians is completely worthless in God's eyes (1 Corinthians 13:1-3)! The real proof of a Christian being spiritual and mature is demonstrating the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23; 1 Corinthians 13:13).

**STEP 4. APPLY.**

**APPLICATIONS**

**Consider.** WHICH TRUTHS IN THIS PASSAGE ARE POSSIBLE APPLICATIONS FOR CHRISTIANS?

**Share and record.** Let us brainstorm with one another and record a list of possible applications from 1 Corinthians 12:4-7,12-28.

**Consider.** WHICH POSSIBLE APPLICATION DOES GOD WANT YOU TO TURN INTO A PERSONAL APPLICATION?

**Record.** Write this personal application down in your notebook. Feel free to share your personal application. (Remember that people in every group will apply different truths or even make different applications of the same truth. The following is a list of possible applications.)

1. Examples of possible applications from 1 Corinthians 12:4-7,12-28.

- 12:12. Realise that as a member of the Body of Christ you cannot function apart from the Body of Christ. Every Christians can only function as a part of the Christian Church (See manual 3, supplement 14).
- 12:13. Believe that only regeneration by the Holy Spirit can make a person a genuine member of the Body of Christ.
- 12:15. Never harbour inferior thoughts and feelings about yourself, because God made you indispensable for the other members in the Body of Christ!
- 12:18. Accept the place and task God has assigned to you in the Body of Christ.
- 12:21. Never harbour superior thoughts and feelings about yourself. Be modest and realistic with respect to the spiritual gift(s) God has given you. As a member of the Body of Christ you need the other members of the Body of Christ to function. The other members are indispensable for your Christian life.
- 12:25. Realise that God has combined the members in the Body of Christ in such a way that the members should have equal concern for one another.
- 12:26. Think whether there are members with whom you should suffer or rejoice together.
- 12:28. Remember that it is God who in a sovereign way gives spiritual gifts (including some offices) to the worldwide Church and the local church (1 Corinthians 12:11; Ephesians 4:7).

2. Examples of personal applications from 1 Corinthians 12:4-7,12-28.

I want to thank God for giving to me a place and a task in the Body of Christ. It is wonderful to realise that other members need my contribution and that I need their contribution. God desires that I exist. He wants me and needs me!

I accept the fact that a part of the spiritual gifts refer to special abilities (preaching, teaching, mercy, etc.) and others to special offices (apostles: church planters and church builders, preachers, evangelists, pastors and teachers). These offices are not the leaders of the worldwide church or of the local church. They do not stand beyond or above the elders of the local church! Some elders and other Christians may possess one of these spiritual gifts, but these spiritual gifts are not required in order to be chosen as an elder! Christians that possess these spiritual gifts are not more important than Christians who do not possess these gifts! These spiritual gifts are especially needed to equip Christians for their works of service (ministries) in the worldwide Church (Ephesians 4:11-12).

**STEP 5. PRAY.**

**RESPONSE**

LET US TAKE TURNS TO PRAY ABOUT ONE TRUTH THAT GOD HAS TAUGHT US in 1 Corinthians 12:4-7,12-28.

(Respond in your prayer to what you have learned during this Bible study. Practise to pray only in one or two sentences. Remember that people in every group will pray about different issues.)

<sup>2</sup> They especially strived to speak in tongues.

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| <b>5</b> | PRAYER (8 minutes) | <i>[INTERCESSION]</i><br>PRAY FOR OTHERS |
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*Continue to pray* in groups of two's or three's. Pray for one another and for the people in the world (Romans 15:30; Colossians 4:12).

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| <b>6</b> | PREPARATION (2 minutes) | <i>[ASSIGNMENT]</i><br>FOR NEXT LESSON |
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*(Group leader.* Give the group members this preparation for at home in writing or let them copy it down).

1. Commitment. Be committed to make disciples. Preach, teach or study the Bible study of 1 Corinthians 12:4-7,12-28 together with another person or group of people.
2. Personal time with God. Have a quiet time from half a chapter of Joshua 1 - 4.  
Make use of the questions method of quiet time. Make notes.
3. Memorisation. Review the series C: "The gospel". (1) Nature of sin. Romans 3:23. (2) Punishment of sin. Ecclesiastes 12:14. (3) Atonement of sin. Romans 5:8. (4) Salvation is a gift. Ephesians 2:8-9. (5) Salvation by faith. John 1:12. Daily review the last 5 memorised Bible verses.
4. Prayer. Pray for someone or something specific this week and see what God is doing (Psalm 5:3).
5. Update your notebook on making disciples. Include the notes on your personal time with God, memorisation notes, Bible study notes and this preparation.