

S.H.A.P.E. Exercise

NAME _____

“You Were S.H.A.P.E.d For Ministry”¹

If you’ve ever doubted your calling to ministry, consider this: God has been molding and shaping you for ministry since before you were born!

For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them. (Psalm 139:13-16)

This passage indicates that –

- 1. God shaped you for a purpose,**
- 2. You are unique, and**
- 3. You are wonderfully complex.**

You are a composite of many different factors, which can be summarized using the acrostic, **S.H.A.P.E.:**

Spiritual Gifts
Heart
Abilities
Personality
Experience

Spiritual gifts

The Bible teaches that God gives every believer certain spiritual gifts to be used in ministry (1 Cor. 12, Rom. 8, Eph. 4).

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

We believe the lists of spiritual gifts in the Bible aren’t meant to be exhaustive. However, we have compiled a list of spiritual gifts that are seen in operation at CCCC.

Administration – working with and through followers toward achieving Biblical goals and organizational objectives.

¹ This has been adapted from Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Life* (Zondervan, 2002).

Church-planting (*Missionary*) – the Spirit-given ability to minister cross-culturally with the goal of planting churches.

Discernment – to distinguish between truth and error, good and evil.

Evangelism – to act as a productive instrument of God in people coming to faith in Christ.

Exhortation – to come along side another in need of encouragement, challenge or earnest advice.

Faith – to trust in the power and presence of God and to act on this trust. **Giving** – to freely give for the Lord's work.

Hospitality – to provide an open home to those in need of food, lodging and fellowship, and a refuge to a bruised individual.

Knowledge – to master God's revealed truth in Scripture.

Leadership – to set goals and to motivate others towards their accomplishment in the Body of Christ.

Mercy – to aid the suffering or undeserving and to spare them from punishment or penalties justly deserved.

Prophecy – to report an insight brought to the mind by the Holy Spirit to assist in ministering to others.

Pastoring (*Shepherding*) – to effectively guide, feed, and protect a flock of followers in Christ.

Teaching (*Preaching*) – to cause the authoritative word of God to shine by giving detailed understanding and application of Biblical truth.

Helps – to provide timely assistance that relieves other Christian workers for direct spiritual ministry.

Wisdom – to apply knowledge effectively.

Spiritual gifts I believe I have: (see list below)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

I feel I may have these gifts because:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

If you are having difficulty discerning your gifts, take this free spiritual gift survey test:

<https://gifts.churchgrowth.org/spiritual-gifts-survey/gifts-survey/>

Heart

The Bible uses the term “heart” to represent the center of your motivation, desires, interests, and inclinations. Your heart determines why you say the things you do (Matt. 12:34), why you feel the way you do (Ps. 34:7), and why you act the way you do (Pr. 4:23).

Physiologically, each of us has a unique heartbeat. Each person has a slightly different pattern. Likewise, God has given each of us a unique emotional "heartbeat" that races when we encounter activities, subjects, or circumstances that interest us. Another word for heart is passion. There are certain subjects that you feel passionate about and others that you couldn't care less about.

God had a purpose in giving you your inborn interests. Your emotional heartbeat reveals a very important key to understanding His intentions for your life. Don't ignore your natural interests. People rarely excel at tasks they don't enjoy doing. High achievers enjoy what they do.

List some things you're good at and love doing:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

People compliment me when:

Abilities

These are the natural talents that you were born with. Some people have a natural ability with words. They came out of the womb talking! Others are naturally good with numbers. They think mathematically and they can't understand why you don't understand calculus.

Exodus 31:3 gives an example of how God gives people "skill, ability, and knowledge in all kinds of crafts" in order to accomplish His purposes. In this case, it was artistic ability to be used in building the Tabernacle. It's interesting that musical talent is not listed as a "spiritual gift," but it certainly is a natural ability that God uses in worship. One of the most common excuses people give for not getting involved in ministry is "I just don't have any abilities to offer." Nothing could be further from the truth. Many national studies have proven that the average person possesses from five hundred to seven hundred skills!

The real problem is two-fold...

First, people need some process of skill identification.

Second, they need a process to help them match their abilities with the right ministry.

There are people in our church with all kinds of abilities that are not being put to use: recruiting, researching, writing, landscaping, interviewing, promoting, decorating, planning, entertaining, repairing, drawing, and even feeding. These abilities should not be wasted. "There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord." (1 Cor. 12:5)

The following are my strongest abilities:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Other skills and/or abilities I'm learning and/or working on are:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

A few examples include:

Drama, writing, speaking, artistic, photography, video, counseling, fixing, designing, computers, accounting, music, memory, tutoring/explaining, athletics, etc.

Personality

It's obvious that God has not used a cookie cutter to create people. He made introverts and extroverts. He made people who love routine and those who love variety. Some people work best when given an individual assignment while others work better with a team.

There is no "right" or "wrong" temperament for ministry. We need all kinds of personalities to balance the church and give it flavor. The world would be a very boring place if we were all plain vanilla. Fortunately, ministry comes in more than 31 flavors.

Your personality will affect how and where you use your spiritual gifts and abilities. For instance, two people may have the same gift of evangelism, but - if one is introverted and the other is extroverted - that gift will be expressed in different ways.

When you minister in a manner that is consistent with the personality God gave you, you experience fulfillment, satisfaction, and fruitfulness. It feels good when you do exactly what God made you to do.

This is how I see myself:

1. In relation to excerpting control and setting the agenda I am more:

ACCOMODATING or **DIRECTING**

2. Around others I am more:

RESERVED or **ENGAGING**

3. In regard to creating harmony, the ability to be patient, and the desire for stability, I am more:

CHALLENGING or **HARMONIOUS**

4. My use of time is more:

SPONTANEOUS or **METHODICAL**

One example of why I circled each of the above is:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Experience

God never wastes an experience. Romans 8:28 reminds us, "And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose."

Consider five areas of experience that will influence the kind of ministry may be best shaped for:

- Educational experiences: What were your favorite subjects in school?
- Vocational experiences: What jobs have you enjoyed and achieved results while doing?

- Spiritual experiences: What have been the meaningful or decisive times with God in your life?
- Ministry experiences: How have you served God in the past?
- Painful experiences: What are the problems, hurts, and trials that you've learned from?

God sovereignly determined your shape for his purpose, so you shouldn't resent it or reject it. Instead of trying to reshape ourselves to be like someone else, we should celebrate the shape God has given to each of us.

Wise stewardship of your life begins by understanding your shape. You will be the most effective and fulfilled in ministry when you use your spiritual gifts and abilities in the area of your heart's desire and in a way that best expresses your personality and experiences.

What God made you to BE determines what God intends for you to DO.

My spiritual experience is (or how I became a Christian):

Some painful experiences that I've had:

A past experience I've learned from is:

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER: S.H.A.P.E.

If I could design a specific way to serve God around my personal SHAPE, and I knew I couldn't fail, it might be: