

## What You Do Best in the Body of Christ St. Paul Episcopal Church

If the whole area of spiritual gifts is new to you, let this be the beginning of a discovery journey. On this journey, we're **trusting** in God and **praying** for guidance as our "SHAPE" is revealed to us. Remember, all Christians have one or more spiritual gifts – and that does include YOU! To become more familiar with spiritual gifts and how they are used, continue to study the definitions of the various gifts and observe others in action to see if you can identify the gifts they have. Also use your gifts in service and see if it feels "right." When you serve according to your spiritual gifts, you serve more competently and feel more energized.

When you know your spiritual gifts, you know **WHAT** you will do when you serve in the Body of Christ. The "what" is the **action** part of serving. Having knowledge of only spiritual gifts **does not** give you complete ministry direction. You still need to know where and how to use those gifts. That's where our Heart for Ministry or Passion comes in.

Our Heart for Ministry or Passion is the God-given desire that compels us to make a difference somewhere. It is the "heart" of the matter. Some might call it a burden they feel for someone or something; it can also be a vision, a dream, a call; it is what constantly tugs at your heart; it is what gives you energy and motivation; it is what you would most like to do for others; it is an area where you feel you could make the most of significant contribution. Passion can relate to particular groups of people or it can relate to issues or causes. Passion is a pull from within your spirit toward a cause or ministry area that could impact others and make a difference for Christ.

We must understand the purpose God designed for us – a major piece of which is found within our own heart's desire. Yours is

- ☺ A heart uniquely created by God
- ☺ A heart with which God intended to lead you
- ☺ A heart meant to draw you to the focus of your ministry
- ☺ A heart overflowing with emotional energy – your passion

With passion, we get the **WHERE** we are best suited to serve. And just as there are no right or wrong spiritual gifts, there is no right or wrong passion. God has given each of us one or more passions as part of his master design. We are not all supposed to have the same passion. If that were the case, think how many needs would go unmet.

Your passion might change with time as you change and as the world and the world's needs change. But always remember, God is in charge and we trust him with his plan. As you think, pray and gain ministry experience, your passion will become clearer and clearer. It is an on-going process.

It may even have been the case that your passion has been suppressed. Maybe you shared it with someone you trusted long ago – a parent, spouse, friend, even a pastor – who responded with skepticism. You may have been told something like: "why on earth would you want to do that;" "you're not smart enough;" "that would be irresponsible;" "you don't have the money;" or "that's

great but would your parents/children/spouse/pastor approve?" When others respond negatively to our passion, our response is sometimes to push that feeling deep within and our passion gets buried. While that passion may get hidden, it has not gone away. We may have silenced it for the time being, but it has not completely gone away. Our passions are God-given and meant to be expressed! Submerging it for 10 or 20 or however many years will not make it go away, so now is the time to let it come to the surface! Use your energy to discover and then fulfill the calling to which you have been called.

These worksheets are designed to help you think about your passion and to begin that discovery process. Remember, there is no right or wrong passion so there is no right or wrong response. As you reflect on and answer these questions, your passion should begin to surface. Some questions to think about when considering your passion: How do you spend your leisure time? What do you love doing? What brings you greatest joy? What feeds your soul? What do you dislike doing and hope you never have to do again?

In addition to working on these sheets, listen to your own heart over the coming days. When you are in conversation with others, when you hear or read the news or human interest stories, when you are having your devotional times, how is your heart stirred? Perhaps you'll begin to get a better feel for what your passion is.

Don't worry at this time about how you can fulfill your passion. Don't let the fact that our church may not have such a ministry to keep you from identifying your passion. For now, you just want to name it.

God has indicated where you are to serve – it has been written on your heart. Be patient and that place will be revealed to you.

**See "Passion Indicators" and "Needs" sheets** These might also require thought, so find a quiet place to reflect and pray about your answers.

\*\*\*\*\*

Now it is time to move to the **how** we are to serve – our personal preference and style

Reread or review scripture passages: Romans 12:1-8, 1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4:1-16

Cross your arms. Look and see which arm is on top. Now put the other arm on top...how does that feel?

You have a preferred hand for writing your name and you have a preferred way of crossing your arms. Just as with spiritual gifts and passion, there is no right or wrong personal preference. It is just that – a preference.

You also have a preferred style for serving. Your personal style is the way in which you are the most comfortable serving. It feels more comfortable for you to respond in certain ways. No one way is more important or better than another. God designed each of us to respond to our world a little differently; therefore, each of us prefers to relate in different ways.

Sometimes, you may not have the freedom to express yourself naturally. When that happens, you spend more time and energy on whatever you're doing and are more sensitive than in other situations.

What if you could serve God in ways that reflected your personal style? What if you could find ministry opportunities that actually required someone with your style? You could be sure of one thing – you'd experience far more energy for ministry!

How are you energized? Personal style is sometimes called personality or temperament. It is your most natural way of relating to others. Your personal style is unique to you and it energizes you!

There are some activities that give us energy and some that drain us of energy. God has wired us this way. We function very much like a battery – we have to be charged up to be useful. Energy must first be put into the battery so it can be given out. A battery can only give until it is empty. Once it's empty, it is useless, unless it is recharged and made available for use again. Some sources connected to a battery will charge it up; others will drain it.

Are you aware of what energizes you? Do you find people or tasks more fulfilling? Both are needed. Both must be served with excellence. God has created some of us with an orientation to people as our recharging source. Others have been designed to receive energy from the accomplishments of tasks.

Be mindful that we don't place more value on our own preference. The preferences are equal and really represent our primary and secondary ways of relating to the world.

To go one step further, how are you organized? Are you more comfortable "playing it by ear," "shooting from the hip," or "making it up as you go along?" Or do you prefer structure, lists, "just getting it done," "working the plan?"

Most of us can do both. We can behave in structured or unstructured ways, just as we can cross our arms both ways. But one way feels a whole lot more natural.

The next step helps us find our personal style intensity. Personal style is a continuum with the pure 100% people-oriented folks on one end and the 100% task-oriented folks on the other. You will probably be more mild or moderate. It is important to recognize your level of intensity because most of us have a zone around us in which we can relate and be fine. But, when we consistently operate

outside our zone and move further away from our personal-style preferences, boredom or burn out results.

Most of us do our theology through the eyes of our personal style. We read and relate to biblical truth according to our style preferences. If you are energized through people, you will have a tendency to place a higher value and emphasis on themes like love, forgiveness, fellowship, community, and grace.

If you are task oriented, you may focus on such themes as going and making disciples, praying, and putting on the armor of God. Obeying, committing, and serving are the concepts that energize you.

Structured people pick up on judgment, law, order, preparation, and justice. Unstructured people gravitate to the understanding of walking by faith, God's giving us the words we need at the appointed moment, trust, being filled with the Spirit, and not worrying.

No matter how you see God, you do not see all of him. We need each other to complete the fullness of Christ. We need what we lack in order for the body of Christ to be balanced and healthy. Be the man or woman of God has made you to be, understanding that what you offer through your personal style is needed but is not complete.

**A word of caution - your personal style may explain your behavior, but it does not excuse it!! 😊**

Just because you are unstructured does not mean you can fail to meet deadlines just as being structured does not excuse you of the need to be flexible. Interacting with people will not eliminate the need for completed projects just as completing tasks does not give you permission to be insensitive, distancing, or abusive.

A significant part of our design is revealed through our personal style. It is another way God's divine fingerprint has been put upon us. As a part of our servant profile, our style complements our passion and indicates the unique way our spiritual gift(s) may be expressed.

In addition to personal preference and style, **talents skills and abilities** are important in defining your shape. You might have been born with these or you might have developed them over the years. No matter what, you do have a variety of skills, talents and abilities. You may have heard someone say, "I don't have any talents or special skills." A statement like that really dishonors God and God's creative goodness. Everyone has talents, skills and abilities, but they are not the same for everyone. We just need to discover and acknowledge them so they can be used in the most effective ways.

Experiences in life definitely affect your shape and design. You are what you are now because of what you have gone through in your life. You have been affected both positively and negatively by your past experiences. Your ministry will be shaped by your life experiences, so you need to identify those experiences and reflect on them to see how you have grown, changed and adjusted as a result

of them. Spend some time remembering, recalling and reflecting on the following (you may want to write these on a board or newsprint so that people can see and reflect more easily):

Successful, Triumphant Experiences – positive and rewarding outcomes of living

Spiritual Experiences – meaningful decisions and times with God

Painful Experiences – problems, hurts, and trials that have taught you

Educational Experiences – learning opportunities of all kinds

Ministry Experiences – ways you have served others and the results of that service

These memories are your life. They've made you who you are. You act in certain ways, choose to do certain things and have special thoughts and feelings because of these past experiences. Whether you realize it or not, God has been with you through all of those experiences. Give thanks for God's faithfulness and goodness!

One other element that will affect how you put your SHAPE to use is your availability. At different ages and stages of your life, you'll have different kinds of time to use in service to others. God wants you to be a good and faithful steward of your time, although your availability will be different from others. Be sure to consider how are you able to commit your time?

These worksheets look at the How of serving – personal style – and you've also identified your talents, skills and abilities. You've reflected on the life experiences that have shaped you, and you have thought about your time availability. All these are factors in using your shape. Are you seeing how unique you are?!

**Closing prayer:** Gracious and loving God, thank you for creating us with our own unique gifts, giving us a heart for a special area of ministry and allowing us different personal styles. Your wonders never cease to amaze us. Help us to acknowledge and accept our own gifts as well as the gifts we see in others. As we learn more about who we are, show us what we do best in the Body of Christ we know as Trenholm Road United Methodist Church. And may knowing that you have special plans for our lives give us excitement and encouragement as we seek to be obedient to your will. In the name of your son, Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen.

## PASSION INDICATORS

1. Imagine you are meeting someone for the first time. In the course of the conversation, you talk about a variety of topics. Then a new subject begins. As you are talking, you start speaking a little faster. You lean forward. You become increasingly animated. Your voice goes up a little. Your passion may be indicated by more active body language. You are talking about a subject that could keep you up late at night. It's the topic that would cause you to jump out of bed in the morning. What are you talking about?
2. Sometimes our dreaming or reflection allows us to imaginatively explore the desires of our heart. In these times, we may visualize or find ourselves being drawn as if by a current toward something that heightens our feelings and enlarges our capacity for action. The image that we see will hit an emotional chord. When you are alone, do you ever wonder, "What if...?" Does your response to that question create emotional energy? What is it?
3. Make a list of your greatest achievements, but be sure that they are things you enjoyed doing. These achievements may be accomplishments that others do not find particularly impressive, but were important to you. Perhaps when you were twelve, you and a friend decided to put on a neighborhood carnival. You organized the booths, got people to run them, had prizes, made and sold tickets, and actually made a little profit. You pulled it off and had a great time doing it. It was an enjoyable achievement. Are there similarities in your list of enjoyable achievements? What themes can you see?

4. What kinds of things are you doing? What topics are you involved in, in which you lose track of time? When you are moving in the direction of your passion, time can easily slip away. Our passion can make us less aware of what is going on around us because we become so focused on what we care about most. What might that be?
  
5. People who are fulfilling their passion are making a purposeful difference. Those who are expressing their heart's desire will find greater energy and focus as they positively impact those around them. Of course, the process of fulfilling your passion will not always be easy or fun. But in the midst of moving toward your passion, there is an inner confidence that you are doing what God wants you to do in the way he wants you to do it. There is an assurance that you are where he wants you, and that he is using you according to his divine purposes. Where is that happening? In what area would you like to see it happen?
  
6. Your passion will energize you. Not only will you become more alive emotionally, but the activity or thoughts about your passion will actually give you energy. This is God's way of moving you toward those people, roles, or causes that are his created agenda for your life. His will for you is partly revealed in your God-given passion. What energizes you?
  
7. Whatever your passion is, it needs to be submitted to a twofold test: Does it glorify God? Does it build others up? If your passion and its expression do not meet this test, you have not identified your God-given passion. You may have expressed a desire of your heart, but it is not from God. Read Psalm 37:3-4 and John 15:7. When we are trusting in the Lord, doing good and abiding in Christ, his heart's desire becomes our heart's desire. When you are abiding and delighting in God, what desires do you have?

## NEEDS

1. What needs for others in our world do you see as most urgent?
2. What needs for others in the surrounding community do you see as most urgent?
3. What are SPECs most significant needs at this time?
4. What are the most important needs in your family at this time?
5. What are the most important needs in your own life at this time?



## What You Do Best in the Body of Christ ~Your Personal Style~

Circle the number the best describes you.  
Total and write in the box.

### How are you energized?

- |   |  |                        |
|---|--|------------------------|
| 1. I'm more comfortable...<br>doing things for people                     | <div style="background-color: #cccccc; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">1 2 3 4 5</div> | being with people      |
| 2. When doing a task, I tend to...<br>focus on the goal                   | <div style="background-color: #cccccc; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">1 2 3 4 5</div> | focus on relationships |
| 3. I get more excited about...<br>advancing a cause                       | <div style="background-color: #cccccc; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">1 2 3 4 5</div> | creating community     |
| 4. I feel I have accomplished something when I've...<br>gotten a job done | <div style="background-color: #cccccc; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">1 2 3 4 5</div> | built a relationship   |
| 5. It is more important to start a meeting...<br>on time                  | <div style="background-color: #cccccc; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">1 2 3 4 5</div> | when everyone is there |
| 6. I'm more concerned with...<br>meeting a deadline                       | <div style="background-color: #cccccc; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">1 2 3 4 5</div> | maintaining the team   |
| 7. I place higher value on...<br>action                                   | <div style="background-color: #cccccc; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">1 2 3 4 5</div> | communication          |

Energized Total E =

### How are you Organized?

- |  |  |                   |
|--|--|-------------------|
| 1. While on vacation, I prefer to...<br>be spontaneous | <div style="background-color: #cccccc; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">1 2 3 4 5</div> | follow a set plan |
| 2. I prefer to set guidelines that are...<br>general   | <div style="background-color: #cccccc; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">1 2 3 4 5</div> | specific          |
| 3. I prefer to...<br>leave my options open             | <div style="background-color: #cccccc; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">1 2 3 4 5</div> | settle things now |
| 4. I prefer projects that have...<br>variety           | <div style="background-color: #cccccc; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">1 2 3 4 5</div> | routine           |
| 5. I like to...<br>play it by ear                      | <div style="background-color: #cccccc; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">1 2 3 4 5</div> | stick to a plan   |

6. I find routine...

boring

1 2 3 4 5

restful

7. I accomplish tasks best by...

working it out as I go

1 2 3 4 5

following a plan

Organized Total O =

### Key to Personal Style

If your E total was:                    7 – 20 you are energized through *tasks*.  
    22 – 35 you are energized through *people*.

If your O total was:                    7 – 20 you are organized by being *unstructured*.  
    22 – 35 you are organized by *structure*.

The intensity of your personal style is indicated by a score of:

7 – 10 Concentrated  
11 – 14 Moderate  
15 – 18 Mild  
19 – 23 Undefined  
24 – 27 Mild  
28 – 31 Moderate  
32 – 35 Concentrated