

70^{BPM}
94%

Seven Signs of Life

3. Sensitivity: Our Spiritual Awareness

Pastor David Flowers

Sermon Series Focus

- In biology we learn that there are *seven* processes of life that identify all living organisms. We could also view these as “signposts” to a healthy living organism.
- We're using these seven signs as a diagnostic tool for assessing your own spiritual health as a disciple, as well as the overall health of our church.
- Is this an area in my life that needs the Spirit to bring fresh vitality? Is this an area in our church where we need to give attention? What is God saying to me about these seven signs? Where can I (we) use his healing touch?

Seven Signs of Life

1. Movement: Prove You're Not Dead
2. Respiration: Breathing God's Breath
- 3. Sensitivity: Our Spiritual Awareness**
4. Growth: The Inevitable Result of Healthy Life
5. Reproduction: Multiplying Life, Creating the Future
6. Excretion: Getting Rid of the Junk
7. Nutrition: A Diet That Makes a Difference

Functions That Allow For Movement

- The first of the “seven signs of life” and the functioning of a healthy organism was *movement*.
- Healthy organisms require respiration (breathing that produces energy) in order to move.
- We also said that living organisms move according to stimuli. *Sensitivity* is what enables the body (us) to sense the stimulation and know that we must move.
- So sensitivity plays a vital role in life (e.g. sight, hearing, touch, smell, and taste).
- In fact, both respiration (breathing) and sensitivity to stimulation are necessary for spiritual movement.

Personal & Corporate Sensitivity

- How are your personal spiritual senses?
 - Are you *seeing* God at work in the present and future?
 - Are you *hearing* from God regularly and responding?
 - Are you *feeling* his Spirit, and sharing (being open) to others?
 - Are you *smelling* the aroma of his table and presence?
 - Are you *eating* and *drinking* of Christ with his Body?
- How are your corporate spiritual senses?
 - How has God gifted you to build up the church?
 - Are you developing and exercising those gifts through their use in the church for the healthy growth of the whole Body?

Paul, Ephesians 4:1-6 NLT

¹ Therefore I, a prisoner for serving the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of your calling, for you have been called by God. ² Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love. ³ Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace. ⁴ For there is one body and one Spirit, just as you have been called to one glorious hope for the future.

⁵ There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism,
⁶ one God and Father of all,
who is over all, in all, and living through all.

Ephesians 4:7,11-13 NLT

⁷ However, he has given each one of us a special gift through the generosity of Christ.

¹¹ Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers.

¹² Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ. ¹³ This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ.

Fivefold Ministries

“He has given *each one of us* a special gift...” Eph 4:7

Apostles “one who is sent out” are visionary and pioneering, always pushing into new territory. They like to do challenging tasks, dream, revitalize, establish new churches, ministries, non-profits, businesses or initiatives.

- Biblical examples: the Twelve, Paul, Priscilla & Aquilla
- Jesus’ example: one sent by God (Jn 3:16; Matt 21:33-46)
- Secular examples: entrepreneurs and explorers
- Apostles ask: “Are we leading the church to their destiny?”

Fivefold Ministries, cont.

Prophets are those who hear and listen to God. The prophet foretells and tells forth revelation from God. Prophets are able to see the bigger picture about what is happening and see creative solutions to develop vision.

- Biblical examples: Anna & Simeon (Lk 2) as they prophesy over the infant Jesus; Agabus (Acts 11) predicts a famine and helps Paul's ministry; Philip's daughters (Acts 21:9)
- Jesus' example: Every word spoken (foretelling and proclamation) about God's will and things to come
- Secular examples: often creative types, musicians, artists
- Prophets ask: "Are the people of God hearing his voice and responding appropriately and in a timely fashion?"

Fivefold Ministries, cont.

Evangelists are those who bring good news and share the message readily. They are *the recruiters to God's mission*. They love to spend time with non-Christians and remind us that they're still out there in the world (missional impulse).

- Biblical examples: Philip & the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8), sharing with non-Christians, believing his message.
- Jesus' example: He embodied the Good News. He was the Great Evangelist, as seen in John 3 with Samaritan woman.
- Secular examples: salesmen, recruiters, public relations
- Evangelists ask: "Are new people entering into the Kingdom of God and becoming disciples who make disciples?"

Fivefold Ministries, cont.

Pastors shepherd God's people and care for others with a tender heart. They see needs and provide comfort and encouragement. They spend most of their time with other Christians. Pastors enjoy one-on-one chats and showing hospitality to everyone. They speak the truth in love.

- Biblical example: Barnabas demonstrates heart (Acts 15)
- Jesus' example: He is the Good Shepherd (John 10)
- Secular examples: counselors, social workers, nurses, and anyone in care-giving professions
- Pastors ask: "Are the people of God caring for and showing compassion for everyone?"

Fivefold Ministries, cont.

Teachers hold forth the truth and are excited about it. The teacher looks for ways to explain, enlighten, and apply truth. Teachers enjoy reading, studying, and helping others learn. “Pastors and teachers” often compliment one another.

- Biblical examples: Apollos in Acts 18 & Paul in Acts 19
- Jesus’ example: often referred to as Teacher or Rabbi; His teaching was different because it was with authority
- Secular examples: lecturers, trainers, school teachers
- Teachers ask: “Are the people of God immersing themselves in Scripture and incarnating (living) it?”

“In short, apostolic movement involves a radical community of disciples, centered on the lordship of Jesus, empowered by the Spirit, built squarely on a fivefold ministry, organized around mission where everyone (not just professionals) is considered an empowered agent, and tends to be decentralized in organizational structure.”

Alan Hirsch, *The Permanent Revolution*

Ephesians 4:14-16 NLT

¹⁴ Then we will no longer be immature like children. We won't be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth.

¹⁵ Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church. ¹⁶ He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.

1 Corinthians 12:4-9 NLT

⁴ There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit is the source of them all. ⁵ There are different kinds of service, but we serve the same Lord. ⁶ God works in different ways, but it is the same God who does the work in all of us. ⁷ A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other. ⁸ To one person the Spirit gives the ability to give wise advice; to another the same Spirit gives a message of special knowledge. ⁹ The same Spirit gives great faith to another, and to someone else the one Spirit gives the gift of healing.

1 Corinthians 12:10-11 NLT

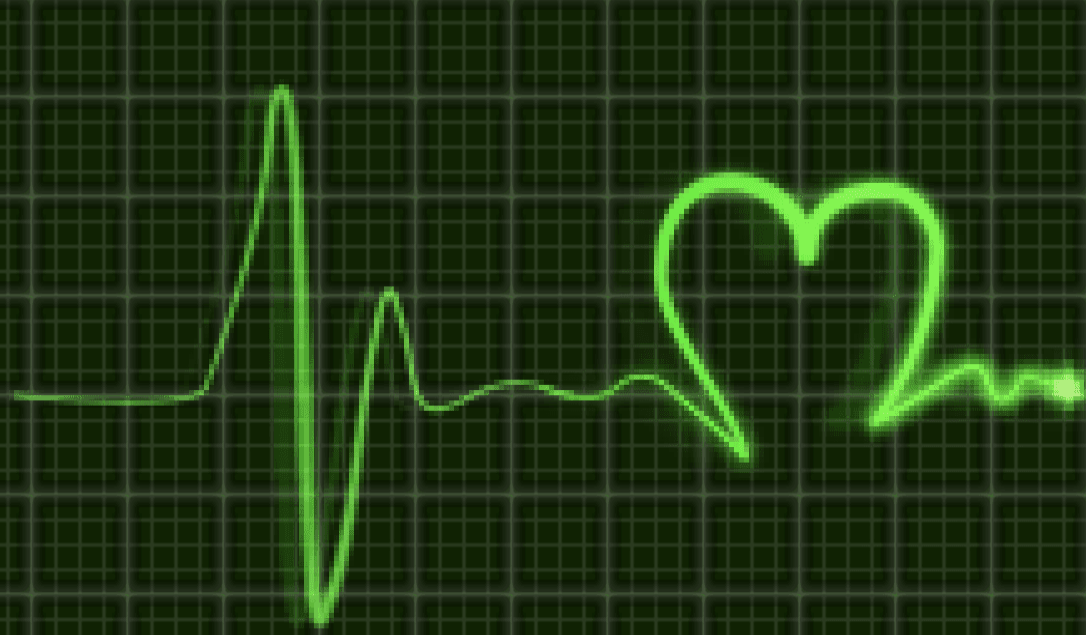
¹⁰ He gives one person the power to perform miracles, and another the ability to prophesy. He gives someone else the ability to discern whether a message is from the Spirit of God or from another spirit. Still another person is given the ability to speak in unknown languages, while another is given the ability to interpret what is being said.

¹¹ It is the one and only Spirit who distributes all these gifts. He alone decides which gift each person should have.

One Body, Many Parts

“Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.” 1 Cor 12:27

- As the Body of Christ, we are each called to a *base* ministry, we must discover it and function for the good of others
- If you excel in a particular gift and ministry, you might serve in a leadership role, but all are called to use their gifts
- The Spirit calls people and in time equips the church with gifts for the healthy and holistic functioning of the Body
- No part of the Body is unimportant; we should recognize and celebrate all the gifts, and allow each to do their part
- So, what is your base? What are your Spirit-given gifts? How are you using them for the health of the church?



70^{BPM}
94%

Seven Signs of Life

Sermon audio & slides in PDF can be downloaded at:
www.christiansburgmennonite.org