



Identifying gifts of administration

TN115 Training Notes series: Administration

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These notes are written for those who probably do not regard administration as a key element in their own gifting, but who want to be able to spot a gifted administrator when they meet one.

One practical application would be a selection process for administrative or operational staff in churches or mission agencies. Another would be a gifts exercise to find who in the congregation might be suitable to be appointed to organisational roles in the church.

This explains to non-administrators what a gifted administrator might look like.

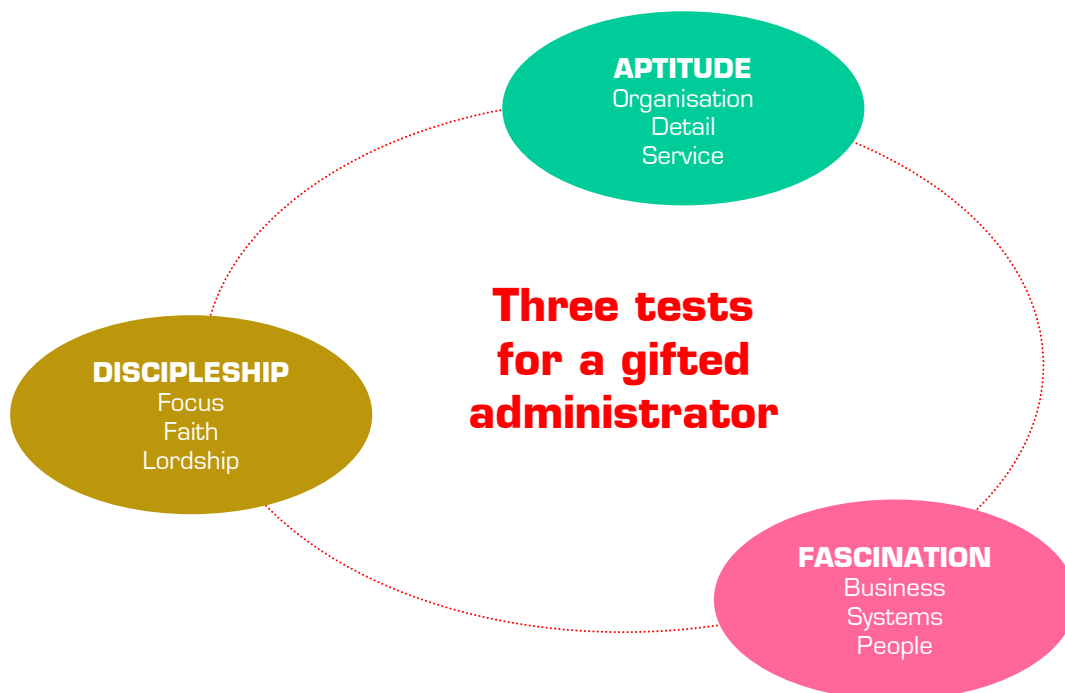
You will find the major health-check, 'A Gift Assessment for Administrators', in the Resources section of this website (see HC8 and HC9). That is a detailed tool designed to help people assess their own administrative gifting. But it is probably too detailed for other applications so this is a much-simplified version designed for wider use. If, having read these notes, you then want to study the health-check, that is great. But in these notes I keep everything short and simple.

You need to be aware that there is a spectrum of administrative gifting from basic organisation (getting-things-done-well), to major operations (project management, IT solutions, compliance with legislation, and so on). In the list of gifts in 1 Corinthians 12 this can be lined up with the gifts of helping and guidance (the latter used to be translated 'administration' but 'operations' gets much closer to the meaning of the Greek). In staff appointments, the spectrum covers a Church Administrator through to an Office Manager (somewhere between the two gift areas) through to an Operations Manager.

In what follows I talk about 'helper-administrators' and 'leader-administrators' to pick out these two points on the spectrum. Article A15 on the website explains this in more detail when it investigates the 1 Corinthians 12 passage.

Three features to look out for

These notes make the assumption that a spiritually gifted ‘administrator’ (that term will be used quite widely throughout the spectrum just described) can be tested on three broad areas, each of which is then broken down into three parts, each part of which is then given five specific points to check. So there is a total of 15 points to check for each of the three areas for testing. Here are the three, each with their three parts, in a diagrammatic representation (taken from the more detailed health-check).



In broad terms, any kind of gifted administrator can be spotted by using the ***Aptitude test***. Those whose gifts lie more in the leader-administrator (operations) part of the spectrum can be seen in addition from the ***Fascination test***. And because this analysis is all about spiritual gifting not natural talent, there is a need for a ***Discipleship test***.

These notes now explain each of these tests with their three parts and five specific points per part to check.

1 The Aptitude test

This looks at how someone lives their life and tackles their work. The key elements here are their self-organisation, their attention to detail and their willingness to serve out of the limelight. These apply to all types of administrator. Any gifted administrator will shine well above average in most of what is covered in the Aptitude test.

Organisation

A gifted administrator will live an ordered life. This will show up in the way they:

- plan their days, weeks and years with clear priorities and reviews but with enough flexibility to amend plans if required;
- manage themselves so they make good use of their time, are punctual for events, and seek not to ‘waste time’;

- handle their own finances and possessions with care, plan their expenditure and are disciplined in matters such as their Christian giving;
- use digital tools effectively without being enslaved to them or turning them into idols;
- list and co-ordinate a range of different activities at work and at home all at the same time without muddling things up as a result.

Detail

A gifted administrator will be meticulous in handling detail. You will notice this in how they:

- seek accuracy in all they do, avoiding typos, ensuring things they say are correct and quickly spotting errors;
- tidy up loose ends, stick with a task until it is finished and close things down well;
- notice what needs doing and just get on with it without being asked, spotting what's been left out;
- love neatness, keeping everything tidy and in its correct place, tidying things away when no longer required;
- ensure their filing/storage systems work well so things can be quickly and easily found again when required.

Service

The gifted administrator sees the role they play in terms of serving others, enabling others' ministries to shine while their own role may not be noticed. They:

- are reliable, keeping their promises, delivering on time, not having to be asked twice;
- serve quietly behind the scenes in sometimes routine or unglamorous jobs, not looking for praise;
- but noticed by others as having such a humble gift and encouraged by them to use it;
- foster good relationships with a wide range of people, not being seen as wholly task-centred;
- are creative in finding simple, organisational solutions to tricky problems, not being frightened to break from the normal ways of doing things.

2 The Fascination test

But the leader-administrator will in addition show a keen fascination for how things are organised on a broader scale. Helper-administrators will be intrigued by some of these areas, but these are designed to test and so discover the operationally gifted Christian. Such a person will demonstrate their gifting in most of the following ways, even if they at present have limited experience of working in these areas.

Business

The gifted leader-administrator will show a fascination for the business aspects of operations. In particular, they:

- are intrigued by the working of any office, real or virtual: its layout, workflow, IT systems, waste management, reception;
- find buildings of great interest: their design, planning permissions, people-flows, maintenance, insurance, eco-factors;
- take a keen interest in charity accounting, budgeting and control, SORP issues, financial software, Christian stewardship;
- are fascinated by trading operations, business plans, retail, hiring out rooms, cleanliness and food hygiene;
- long to see effective compliance with well written policies, health and safety issues and good risk management.

Systems

There will be a particular interest in how specifically church systems are designed and work, with some relevant experience. They will:

- be future-focused, wanting to work to a clearly articulated church vision which they can distinguish from daily detail;
- explore church mission action plans and budgets with clear aims that ensure visions turn to practical action;
- demonstrate interest in a range of church systems, expressing frustration when they are ineffective: small groups, welcome procedures, communications, etc.;
- have a good grasp of available digital tools: church management systems, diary co-ordination, use of social media;
- be intrigued by how to get messages across to diverse groups using website, SMS, print and every other possible means.

People

But a gifted leader-administrator will also be a people-person, understanding how to work with and through others in an effective way. They will:

- enjoy working in and leading diverse teams of people to see results, with good emotional intelligence;
- take organisational initiative of a kind that both paid staff and volunteers respect and follow in a team context;
- be fascinated by the design of people-structures for effective leadership, governance, children's groups, etc.;
- take a keen interest in how meetings can work well, being frustrated by poor chairing or lack of shared decision-making;
- be keen on good project management and event planning, able to bring different strands of activity together well.

3 The Discipleship test

But much of what has been covered in the first two tests could apply to natural talents and interest, whereas this exercise is seeking to discover spiritual gifting. So a third test of Christian discipleship is added. Two of the sections of this apply to discipleship in general but the final section is designed around the idea of discipleship within

administrative service. This is a challenging test, but the standards in Scripture are never less than this. The following is based on Training Notes TN91 on this website.

Focus

Christian disciples will want to put Jesus Christ at the centre of their life. They will:

- pray to follow where Christ leads them in life, obeying his call wherever it takes them;
- seek to learn from the Teacher through Scripture and so grow in knowledge of their Lord;
- love the Lord their God with all their heart, mind, soul and strength and their neighbour as themselves;
- aim to live day-by-day with the Christian character described within the nine-fold fruit of the Spirit;
- seek to make and grow other disciples through their witness, nurture, support and advice.

Faith

Christian disciples will seek to live out their faith in daily life. They will:

- seek to live by the values of the kingdom without conforming to the world's standards;
- be integrated into the life of a local church, with a real sense of belonging through worship and communal life;
- witness to their faith as far as is possible to work colleagues, friends and family by life and word;
- maintain their relationship with Jesus when going through suffering and when life is tough;
- accept their state whether single or married and seek to honour God within that.

Lordship

But those who display gifts of administration will show this in their discipleship too. They will:

- have a real passion for administrative service, longing to use their gifts to serve the Christian community whether voluntarily or paid;
- be aware of some form of call from God to this area of gifting, unable to escape from a feeling that God is speaking to them;
- have already seen their gifts being used in a church context or in other Christian or charity service;
- make good use of their time day by day, awaiting the return of the Lord Jesus Christ in glory;
- live simply without greed, sitting lightly on possessions, employing any personal wealth generously in God's work.

So, if you want to spot a Christian with some aspects of God's gifts of administration, check out their **aptitude** through their personal organisation, their attention to detail and their willingness to serve.

If you feel they are more leader-administrators than helper-administrators look out too for a **fascination** in business aspects of operations, a passion for church systems but all with a love of and ability to work well with other people.

Then check out their quality of **discipleship** through a focus on following Jesus, putting faith into practice and in submission to Christ as Lord in their call to administrative service.

But, a word of caution. The points above describe the almost-perfect administrator. Most of us fall rather short of this standard! And many of us have a dark side: we can be controlling, grumpy, over-busy, pedantic, lost in detail, and more. Just thought I'd mention that.

Practical uses

These notes should prove useful for:

- selection processes for administrative staff in churches and missions: application forms, short-listing, interviews;
- discovering those in the congregation to be asked to take on administrative roles;
- team training for administrative teams at church;
- teaching on gifts of administration;
- personal use to assess administrative gifting.

However, if you use these notes to test your own gifting, you might then move on to the fuller assessment tool provided on this website in the Health-checks section of the Resources pages.

HC8 & HC9, *A Gift Assessment for Administrators*, in the [Health-checks](#) section of the Resources pages on this website, give you a thorough way of assessing your administrative gifting, using the same structure as these notes but with much more detail.

These notes are available at <https://www.john-truscott.co.uk/Resources/Training-Notes-index> then TN115. See also Articles A15, *Christian administration?* and Training Notes TN91, *An MOT for disciples of Jesus*. These notes are a much cut-down version of Health-checks HC8 and HC9, *A Gift Assessment for Administrators*.

Contact John if you would like to enquire about the possibility of training or consultancy around the use of spiritual gifts of administration.

Cartoons are by Micki Hounslow for filing categories of Leadership, Management, Structures, Planning, Communication and Administration. File TN115 under Administration.

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