



Gifts
OF THE
Spirit

**SMALL GROUP
STUDY**

GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT

INTRODUCTION



We are currently in a year of encounter as we, as a church and as individuals, are making a renewed effort to draw near to the heart of God, going deeper in relationship with Jesus and each other and seeking to respond faithfully to what He says so we can fulfil our vision of **'Reaching Ryedale for Jesus'**.

As part of this year-long journey, at the beginning of October we started our second major teaching series of the year, for our Sunday morning gatherings entitled **'The Gifts of the Spirit'** based around the Scripture found in 1 Corinthians 12 .

The truth is, in order to have any chance of fulfilling the vision of 'Reaching Ryedale for Jesus', in order to see people come to faith, it will require from us much more than the skills and capabilities that we naturally have, it will need something more substantial - supernatural even.

The good news is that God has a variety of special gifts, that He wants to bestow on us from prophecy, to wisdom, to speaking in tongues, discernment, words of knowledge, faith, apostleship, administration, acts of service and teaching; to name a few!

The gifts aren't given to be used for our own agendas, but rather in order that we might build up the church, bring glory to God and to effectively reach out to our communities and point them to Jesus. 1 Corinthians 12 verse 7 says: ***"Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good."***

No follower of Jesus is excluded from receiving these gifts from the Holy Spirit, however what gifts we receive will depend on how the Holy Spirit wants to apportion them. 1 Corinthians 12 verse 11 says it like this: ***"All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and He distributes them to each one, just as He determines"***.

I look forward to you joining me on this journey.

Best Wishes

Pastor Steve

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SESSION 3 - GIFT OF TONGUES AND INTERPRETATION



In this, our third session, we are going to look at a couple of the spiritual gifts that are often paired together, the gift of TONGUES and INTERPRETATION.

OPENING QUESTIONS

- What is speaking in tongues?
- Do you speak in tongues? If you do, what do you find most useful about it? If you don't, is this something you want? Is there anything that puts you off?
- Is there a difference between speaking in tongues and the gift of tongues? Explain your answer.

READ: 1 CORINTHIANS 14 v 1 - 28

Of all the gifts, tongues is the one that has caused the most controversy in Christian circles over the years. There are those who believe if you are baptised in the Spirit then you should speak in tongues - if you don't you're not baptised in the Spirit (thus making people potentially feel like second rate Christians).

On the other end of the scale, there are those who believe that the gifts finished with the apostles and so speaking in tongues is not legitimate (at best, you're fooling people - at worst it's demonic!)

As an Elim Pentecostal Church we definitely believe the gift of tongues is for today. We would **encourage everyone** to seek tongues, as it is great for deepening a person's relationship with God and it can be an initial evidence of being baptised in the Spirit. However we would **NOT** hold to the view that every believer must speak in tongues in order to be baptised in the Spirit.

All the Gifts of the Spirit are for the common good for the body of Christ, but there are gifts that perhaps can have a greater impact because their purpose is to edify and build the church body. When Paul talks about this in 1 Corinthians 14, it's not the gift of tongues he mentions but rather prophecy that is the stand out gift, unless of course a message in tongues is interpreted.

1 Corinthians 14 verse 5 says: ***"I would like everyone of you to speak in tongues, but I would rather have you prophecy. The one who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in tongues, unless someone interprets, so that the church may be edified."***

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The best way to define speaking in tongues is: a heavenly language that God gives to individuals, that is not understandable to the speaker or for the most part to those who may hear, but connects the speaker to God in a deeper way than our normal every day language fails to do.

Speaking in tongues is a very personal thing, there will be those of you looking at this study who do speak in tongues and those of you who don't, those of you who are not sure and those of you who want to but are still waiting. There will be those who feel inferior because you don't (please here me - you are not!) and others further still who love speaking in tongues as much as you can.

I believe tongues is something that we should all desire. As a church we believe it is one of the evidences of being baptised in the Spirit, an example is found in Acts 19 verse 6: ***“When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied.”*** But it's certainly NOT the only evidence - prophecy, words of knowledge, wisdom, discernment, faith and miraculous signs are all clear indicators.

As your Pastor, I would lovingly say the following: *‘if you speak in tongues can I encourage you to make the most of it - it builds up your spirit, it draws you close to the heart of God.’* I personally find speaking in tongues such a liberating experience, it helps me when my words fail me, it strengthens me when I face difficult seasons and it gives me a sense of peace.

To those who perhaps have not considered asking God for the gift of speaking in tongues, can I encourage you to seek this most wonderful of opportunities and for those who desire it but are still waiting, keep pressing in

One of the common misconceptions about tongues is that speaking in tongues and the gift of tongues is one and the same thing. However, they are two separate things but under the same general category. Speaking in tongues is for our own personal edification, between us and God, whether it's in prayer or singing in the Spirit.

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Our reading from 1 Corinthians 14 verse 4 says: ***“The one who speaks in a tongue builds up himself”*** and 1 Corinthians 14 verse 15 states: ***“I will pray with my spirit, but I will pray with my mind also; I will sing with my spirit, but I will sing with the mind also.”***

We don't need to understand what we are saying because it goes beyond words, it's the connection between our spirit and His Spirit, and it allows us to pray according to God's will. Romans 8 verses 26 - 27 says it like this: ***“In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans.”***

On the other hand the *GIFT* of tongues is used by God to convey a specific message. This kind of message is shared publicly in the context of a church meeting (not in the privacy of our own devotion). This is all good but how do we know it's a message in tongues and not just someone being over exuberant with their worship to God?

In my experience, the gift of tongues generally comes in a period of a service/prayer meeting where people are waiting upon God in silence, the tone of the speakers voice has clear diction, carries an authority and anointing they wouldn't usually have and it sounds like it's a message or statement.

The biggest indicator however, is the message needs to have an interpretation either by the person who has given the message or by another person in the congregation. If there is no interpretation then Scripture tells us the speaker needs to remain quiet. 1 Corinthians 14 verses 27 - 28 says: ***“If anyone speaks in a tongue, two - or at the most three - should speak, one at a time, and someone must interpret. If there is no interpreter, the speaker should keep quiet in the church and speak to himself and to God.”***

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What is the role of the gift of interpretation of tongues in the body of Christ?
- The gifts of tongues and interpretation work hand in hand but what are the potential difficulties with this? (Read 1 Corinthians 14 v 26 - 28)

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The primary purpose of the gift of interpretation of tongues is to bring understanding and clarity to the people in the congregation of what has been said in a previous message of tongues - which, to the human ear, can often sound like gobbledygook!

The interpretation at times can be word for word, however most often it generally conveys the heart of the tongues message. Interpretation of tongues, like prophecy, should always build up and edify the church. 1 Corinthians 14 verse 15: ***“Unless someone interprets, so that the church may be edified.”***

The other purpose is to bring order where chaos and confusion would ensue, if there is no interpretation, and bring clarity to what God is wanting to say to His church.

The gift of tongues and that of interpretation are the gifts that often cause the most stress amongst believers because it involves relaying a message from God in a tongue that we don't understand and either we need the interpretation from God of the message or we need the faith to believe that God is going to give the interpretation to someone else to share.

The danger of this is, we could either:

1. Stay silent, because of the fear of getting it wrong or looking stupid
2. We make an interpretation of the message up, because no one has responded with an interpretation to the message we gave and thus we end up giving a message from ourselves, that could potentially air our own agenda, hurts or frustrations.

IMPORTANT: The gifts of tongues and interpretation go hand in hand, so much so that we must understand that the primary responsibility of interpreting a message in tongues ***ALWAYS*** falls on the one who give the message in tongues despite, at times, God deciding to use someone else to give the interpretation. 1 Corinthians 14 verse 13 ***“For this reason the one who speaks in a tongue should pray that they may interpret what they say.”***

All of the Gifts of the Spirit, including tongues and interpretation should only ever be given under the power and directing of the Holy Spirit, therefore it's always wise to double check with God before we share, making sure our motives are right. If we are still confident it's right we need to step out in faith with boldness, believing that God has given you a message in tongues to share that He wants the church to understand it - so if He hasn't given the interpretation to you, by faith, believe He will have given it to someone else.

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If you are in any doubt then leave it, as it says in verse 28 ***“If there is no interpreter, the speaker should keep quiet in the church and speak to himself and to God.”***

Finally, like with prophecy, it’s important that any message given is weighed in the light of Scripture and tested.

PRAY: Spend some time praying together as a group, thanking God for the gift of tongues and interpretation, asking that we wouldn’t be scared of it but treat it with respect and be open to what God might want to say through us.

Additional Reading

Acts 10 verses 44 - 48

Jude verses 20 - 21

Mark 16 verses 15 - 20

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NOTES



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