

The Purposes And Functions Of Praying In The Spirit

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Here Is A Summation Of The Major Purposes Of Praying In The Spirit (Tongues):

- 1) **Speaking Mysteries** to God (which leads to revelation in our earthly realm)
- 2) **Praying in the Spirit to God** (Worship & Praise)
- 3) **Building up oneself in faith** (Growing in Grace)
- 4) **For Comfort, courage, strength...**(Refreshing)
- 5) **Overcoming our weakness** (which is that we do not know what to pray...)
- 6) **Pray without ceasing** (Staying Connected)
- 7) **Empowering & Remaining** in the Spirit (Transformation)

1) Speaking Mysteries

It is speaking mysteries because they are presently **unknown to us** about situations, people, and God. God's will comes to us (revelation knowledge) being revealed and **translated from the Spirit realm (of God's all knowing life within our spirit) to our physical realm of our mind, emotions, our will, and understanding.**

Remember that **revelation knowledge** is what Jesus said he would build his church upon. Praying in the Spirit **increases** the process of revealing *mysteries of the Spirit* realm to our heart and mind.

Matt. 16:16 Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

17 Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for **flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.**

18 "And I also say to you that you are Peter, and **on this rock I will build My church**, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

Peter did not pray in tongues until the Day of Pentecost; however, revelation comes to us regardless but it is slow.

Consider that Paul the apostle said that he prayed in tongues more than anyone (I Cor. 14:18). Consequently, he is also **responsible for almost two-thirds of the New Testament revelations.**

1Co 4:1 Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards **of the mysteries of God.**

1Co 14:2 For he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God, for no one understands *him*; however, in the spirit he speaks **mysteries.**

It is through praying in the Spirit that the mysteries, that which is unknown in our earthly realm, become bridged (providing much more than normal) from the Spirit realm. The Holy Spirit translates, transfers, and proceeds to reveal the will of God, the understanding of God to our spirit. From our spirit then to our hearts, revelation knowledge is multiplied to us. Praying in the Spirit overcomes our carnal ways, our spiritual weaknesses, and **downloads** spiritual life and knowledge at a faster pace.

An analogy: When we are connected to God spiritually being born again, it is like our computer is connected to the internet. This means we can be working on many things or programs while our computer is connected whether or not we take

advantage of the access to the internet information.

Revelation knowledge coming to our spirit comes as we are in the Spirit. When we are literally praying, singing, worshipping, and enjoying the presence of God; however, we often lose our connection at least consciously as we get busy with everyday life. This type of Christian experience to me is like **dial-up** connection to the internet. It works, we have connection, but everything is slower, drawn out, time consuming, and often we don't engage spiritually with God for long periods of time. We often find God in peace and rest, receive our comfort, and then go on our way living our life. What praying in the Holy Spirit does is like going from *dial-up* to **DSL** and then to **high speed cable!**

For example, with dial-up we can't use our phone while connected to the internet. If someone calls while we are on the internet, they get a busy signal. With DSL or cable we are actually free to use our phone while connected. In fact, every time we turn on our computer we automatically connect without effort from us to make it happen. In other words we are always connected (like prayer that never ends). **More importantly, praying in the Spirit increases and strengthens our faith and receptivity to revelation knowledge God has for us.** We can be working on other things while still connected, still accessing God's Spirit.

2) Praying In Tongues (Spirit) Is Praying To God.

I Cor. 14:14 **For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays,** but my understanding is unfruitful.

I Cor. 14:2 For he who speaks in a tongue **does not speak to men but to God,** for no one understands him; however, in the spirit he speaks mysteries.

We are praying to God by the intercession of the Holy Spirit according to God's will in all things. This is great comfort and

assurance that our life is being useful for God's kingdom. This is not the only way one can pray in the Spirit; yet, it is one of the **most effective gifts** which overcome many of our weaknesses.

Praying all kinds of prayers includes *praying in tongues*.

Eph 6:18 And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with **all kinds of prayers** and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.

We are praying/speaking to God! Is this something only for the few or elite Christians? Is this something only for those weak Christians that need something more? On the Day of Pentecost all one hundred and twenty spoke with other tongues. All of the apostles including Paul spoke in tongues for prayer and praise! If these are weak Christians who need more count me in.

3) **Edifying/Building Up Our Faith, Exhortation, And Comfort,**

I Cor. 14:14 **For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays,** but my understanding is unfruitful.

1Co 14:4 He **who speaks in a tongue edifies himself**, but he who prophesies edifies the church.

Jude: 20 But you, beloved, **building yourselves up** on your most holy faith, **praying in the Holy Spirit,**

Edification: From *oikoxomew*, 'to build, to build up.' The same word is used for the building of the Temple at Jerusalem (**Joh 2:20**), and by the Lord when He said He would build His assembly (**Mt 16:18**). *Oikoeomh* occurs often in the epistles with the **exhortation** that all things in the church should be done to edification (Ro 14:19 15:2 1Co 14:3-26 Eph 4:16, 29).

The gifts in the church were also for the edifying of the body of Christ, (Eph 4:12); and when things were at their worst Christians were exhorted to be building up themselves on their most holy faith (Jude 20).

As a building is **increased and strengthened**, so the body of Christ is built up by **the ministry of the Spirit** through the word until all come "unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Eph 4:13).

We are built up when we step into the Spirit from **our carnal ways** of thinking, being, and relating. Carnal Christianity is very strong. **It is when we are constantly trying to live by what we see, hear, touch, smell, or taste...the five senses of our body.** We are spirit beings **that have fallen from the Spirit realm of believing, living, and being.** Praying in tongues (in the Spirit) takes us away and over this problem and puts us where God wants us—in His Spirit. It is a spiritual experience that defies our natural thinking. We operate in this gift by faith in His grace. We will never come to practice this gift by carnal reasoning.

4) **Comfort**

Ac 3:19 "Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, **so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord,**

This is a very important benefit for praying in the Spirit. Our fears, worries, and anxieties **get the best of us in the flesh.** When we wake each morning our default is the flesh. We automatically see, hear, think, taste, smell, and touch carnally. **We need a program, a strengthener, to help us in our weakness to overcome our default living.** How many times have we enjoyed God's presence in a meeting, a time of prayer, listening to an inspired song, to have that sense of comfort,

rest, and peace fade away in the natural course of living? We go home and have to take care of life's needs, issues, and activities only to find ourselves back where we were before we encountered the living God in a God moment.

God's answer to overcome our default tendencies is to give us a tool, a program, a weapon, a gift that we can exercise that will not hinder our need to take care of worldly activities. We can pray in the spirit and our spirit prays, with the intercession of the Holy Spirit, while our mind is unfruitful. This means our mind is almost idling, waiting, thinking about what we are praying about without knowing specifically what is being prayed. Or our mind can be involved in other things while our spirit is praying. **The benefit is that we can now be involved in work, play, and other activities while we are praying in the Spirit!**

The comfort we receive when we realize that the Holy Spirit is praying through our spirit, about God's will concerning whatever the need is, increases our awareness, our sense of well being, and keeps our consciousness spiritually minded (Rom. 8:26-28).

We can continually access the Spirit's intercession on our behalf or the behalf of others while living our daily lives. We don't have to experience the up and down, the fading away, while attending to everyday needs. We can maintain a readiness, awareness, and closeness in our spiritual life while praying in the spirit often, regularly, even while doing other things.

5) Overcoming Our Weakness

We often do not know what or how to pray. If you can receive it: The passage speaks about our weakness of not knowing how to pray; praying in the Spirit is God's answer and gift to us.

Rom. 8: 26 Likewise the **Spirit also helps in our weaknesses**. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the **Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered**.

NLT (Literal Translation) 26 And the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness. For example, we don't know what God wants us to pray for. But the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings **that cannot be expressed in words**.

American Standard Version 26 In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for *us* with groaning too deep for words; (This means words of intelligible speech...groaning, utterances, sounds, not in words we understand)

27 Now **He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to *the will of God***.

28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to *His* purpose.

When we don't know what to pray for or how to pray one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is to pray in tongues. The Holy Spirit intercedes and prays for us, according to God's will (vs. 27).

When we do not know how or what to pray then pray in the Spirit! Release and activate what God has given to us as a tool, a weapon, to overcome our sin nature to bring us to the Spirit's will.

Paul exhorts us and challenges us that he prays in the Spirit more than anyone else! This explains why he was so in tune with Spiritual things! This is why he had such great revelations and walked powerfully in the Spirit. He was accessing the Spiritual life within him continually.

I Cor. 14:18 “I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than you all”

If only some were to receive and use this powerful gift then he wouldn't have expressed himself this way...**He would not have boasted about something others were not to have**...that would not be of the Spirit but a carnal response. Further, earlier in this chapter he flat out says that he wants, wishes, would that everyone speaks in tongues...but in the church words of intelligible speech!

NKJV I Cor. 14:5 **I would that you all spoke with tongues**, but rather that you prophesied (in the church setting):

NAS: I Cor. 14:5 Now I wish that you all spoke in tongues,

How often we find ourselves not sure what to pray for, what God's will is, what we are to do or say...God in the Spirit overcomes our weaknesses with the gifts of the Holy Spirit. **The gift of praying in tongues means we can pour our hearts out with our understanding and in the Spirit.** When my son was going through his divorce there are times when I don't know how or what to pray...I go to God praying in tongues.

6) Praying Without Ceasing

This command seems impossible to us.

I Thes. 5:16 Rejoice always,
17 **pray without ceasing**,
18 in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.
19 Do not quench the Spirit.

This admonition is **impossible** for us to accomplish if we are to live our daily lives. We can and should live God consciously all the time; yet, even this effort is a constant battle to regain and remain spiritually minded. **Praying in the Spirit is possible while doing any daily activity.** We can pray under our breath, in our mind, in a whisper, while driving, mowing, washing clothes, doing housework, or any kind of work.

I Cor. 14: 15 What is it then? **I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.**

No wonder Paul has such power and revelation in his life and ministry he prayed in tongues more than anyone. He prayed with his understanding and with the Spirit both praying and singing...

We can with our conscious mind and attitude live in a continual sense of God's presence; praying with our minds as much as possible. The truth is that we often cease praying and being mindful of God. We have to focus on other things and when we do our praying gets put on the back burner so to speak.

This is real and the only way to overcome this is to constantly be working to stay spiritually minded. Our sin nature however, is in opposition to the Spirit and works against us accomplishing praying without ceasing.

When we get irritated, angry, distracted by other desires, wants, and pleasures, we often find ourselves asleep spiritually. The flesh or carnal way of being will not just go away; there is often a very subtle fight and then an all out war for us to be spiritually minded. How often do we read the bible? How often do we spend time in prayer? How often when

we do we are easily distracted and go do something that comes to our attention instead?

Praying without ceasing for Jesus would have been much easier than for us because he did not have the continual pulling, battling, and blinding issues of the sin nature in him. This may explain why it is that he never spoke with other tongues. At least the scripture doesn't record or imply anywhere where he did. Yet, all the apostles, and early disciples did, and Paul (after his conversion on the road to Damascus, where tongues in not mentioned at all), is writing to all of us how much he does speak in tongues!

The early church assumed it and experienced it readily. We have lost this gift in the sea of fear and confusion. It is this gift of praying in the spirit that helps us overcome our in and out, up and down experiences of spiritual life. We can pray without ceasing readily, anytime, while at work, in the yard, playing golf, mowing the yard, etc...**We can literally pray without ceasing as the command is given!**

7) Which Brings Me To The Empowering & Remaining In The Spirit

When we pray in the Spirit we are remaining in the life of the Spirit even though we may have our mind focused somewhere else for a time. We can continually be accessing the Spirit always connected by faith praying in the Holy Ghost. **This is the gift and weapon of our warfare spiritually that resides in every believer because the Holy Spirit is in every believer!** We need to access it, release it, and activate it in order to avail ourselves of what God has provided to overcome our carnal living and nature. The scriptures admonish us to walk in the Spirit!

Ga 5:16 I say then: **Walk in the Spirit**, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

Ga 5:25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also **walk in the Spirit.**

We can daily continual to pray in the Spirit with our mind occupied with other activities. As we pray we remain spiritually minded. If we live in the Spirit being born again, then let us also walk in the Spirit by engaging our gift which is for us to overcome our natural tendencies.

Ro 8:6 For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

Ac 1:8 **“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you;**

We’ve got to be honest with our Christian experience, “do we know God’s power?” The empowering sense of praying in the Spirit (tongues) when we have deep needs and heartfelt fears, is like the faucet going from being turned on to gushing!

The manifestation of the fullness of God’s Spirit in our **spirit needs release** (and comfort) and our understanding is limited; but the Spirit using our tongue and gushing expresses the power, the joy, as if one is going to burst! This experience can carry us away. Time has often been lost, hours have passed, just being in God, in the Spirit, praying with my whole heart in tongues (and all kinds of prayers) for this or that or just for God’s will to be done in my life. Our carnal nature, our selfishness cannot be overcome by anything but God’s divine presence, power, and glory being revealed in us.

Conclusion

This is presented to enumerate many reasons why God wants us to use the gift of praying in the Spirit (praying in tongues).

We often do not understand and because we don't we will not obey. God wants us to obey his word and then we'll come to understand. The spiritual life of most people fades even after a great mountain top experience...God has equipped us with this tool and weapon to help us, strengthen us, and keep us spiritually awake, aware, and minded.

Often praying in the Spirit can lead to mountain top experiences of great joy, peace, hope, faith, and rest. People have been filled with the Holy Spirit and yielding their members to God have **often spontaneously began to speak with other tongues.** Millions of believers today have spoken in other tongues. Some denominations refuse it, others ignore it, some accuse it being of the devil...look at the scriptures, read the book of Acts; it is not of the devil it is for your benefit—it's of God!

Some while praying the spirit have experienced joy unspeakable and full of glory. In a way, it is like a faucet that having been turned on and water is beginning to flow, suddenly is opened fully and water is gushing out!

Remember, Paul exhorted us that gifts of the Spirit, are always subject to us. **This means we will never be out of control!** *The Spirit of the prophets is subject to the prophets* (1 Cor. 14:32). Yet, unless we are willing to let go and then speak it will not happen. We must desire spiritual gifts, we must do the speaking; we must yield and yet at the same time speak. Anyone who begins to speak with other tongues and becomes out of control *is not of the Spirit of God.* People who go crazy wildly contorting, or making bazaar sounds are not of the Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit is gentle, kind, patient, loving, under self control, etc...

If you desire to speak or pray in the Spirit, exercising and releasing the gift of the Holy Spirit (which is already in you), then earnestly seek to do so. **One of the things we must**

remember is that it is a step of faith. Our natural mind will consider this foolishness; yet, to God it is his pleasure to give us this gift. God is already willing; he has already given you this gift when he gave you the Holy Spirit. The challenge to you is to then by faith believe, and then trust, and then speak the utterances that your heart and mind are producing...it will not come upon you like a storm, or as an out of body experience, or overtake you so that you are not in control anymore...no, you speak by faith and begin to expand the utterances as the Spirit leads.

1Co 15:46 However, **the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual.**

Smith Wigglesworth:

There comes the natural, and then the spiritual. For instance, when it is on your heart to pray, you begin in the natural and your second word will probably be under the power of the Spirit. You begin and God will end. It is the same in giving forth utterances under the Spirit's power. You feel the moving of the Spirit within and you begin to speak and the Spirit of God will give forth utterance. Thousands have missed wonderful blessings because they have not had faith to move out and begin in the natural, in faith, that the Lord would take them into the realm of the supernatural. (Smith, pg 91 EIF)

PART II

Looking More Intently from Acts and Other Scriptural Witness

Tongues from New Testament (And two passages from the Old Testament)

Praying in the Holy Spirit TWO OPERATIONS:

- 1) Prayer language
- 2) Church Service manifestation of speaking in tongues with the interpretation

Who Will Speak/Pray In The Holy Spirit?

Mr 16:17 “And these signs will follow **those** who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; **they** will speak with new tongues;

Who is “they” anyone who believes...

Who Did Speak/Pray In The Holy Spirit?

(120 gathered; all spoke in tongues; no one interpreted; various languages understood because of the peoples gathered...)

Ac 2:3 Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and *one* sat upon **each of them**.

Ac 2:4 And they were **all filled** with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Acts 10:46 For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God. Then Peter answered,

OT: Who shall have the Spirit poured out upon them? What was the result?

16 “But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

17 ‘And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit **on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy**, Your young men shall see visions, Your old men shall dream dreams.

18 And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; And they shall prophesy.

19 I will show wonders in heaven above And signs in the earth beneath: Blood and fire and vapor of smoke.

20 The sun shall be turned into darkness, And the moon into blood, Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD.

21 And it shall come to pass *That* whoever calls on the name of the LORD Shall be saved.'

Poured out upon all...

Peter Witnesses The Holy Spirit Fall Upon The Delegation In Cornelius's House "For The Speak With Tongues And Magnify God"

Acts 10:44 While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word.

45 And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also.

46 For **they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God. Then Peter answered,**

47 "Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized **who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?"**

48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then they asked him to stay a few days.

Gentiles At Corinth Pray In The Spirit

Ac 19:6 And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, **and they spoke with tongues and prophesied.**

All Are To Speak In Tongues But In The Church It Is Far Better To Prophecy!

If one speaks in tongues let him interpret; which then it becomes prophecy! Paul says that he wishes all spoke with tongues but not necessarily in the church service...

1Co 14:5 **I wish you all spoke with tongues**, but even more that you prophesied; for he who prophesies is greater than he who speaks with tongues, unless indeed he interprets, that the church may receive edification.

Note: Paul wishing all? If we only receive one or two gifts certainly all could NOT speak in tongues...but that is not the case!

Praying In The Holy Spirit...Praying In Tongues, My Spirit Prays

1Co 14:14 For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful.

Paul defines tongues as praying in the Spirit. **Paul at His conversion (Acts 9) is blinded; no record of speaking in tongues...yet**

1Co 14:18 **I thank my God I speak with tongues more than you all;**

1Co 14:21 In the law it is written: "With *men of* other tongues and other lips I will speak to this people; And yet, for all that, they will not hear Me," says the Lord.

O.T.: Isaiah 28:10-12

10 For precept *must be* upon precept, precept upon precept, Line upon line, line upon line, Here a little, there a little."

11 For **with stammering lips and another tongue He will speak to this people,**

12 To whom He said, "This is the rest with which You may cause the weary to rest," And, "This is the refreshing"; Yet they would not hear.

Tongues In The Church With Interpretation Are For Unbelievers.

This is the speaking in tongues and interpretation that is public and open sharing...not the prayer language of tongues.

1Co 14:22 **Therefore tongues are for a sign**, not to those who believe **but to unbelievers**; but prophesying is not for unbelievers but for those who believe.

Paul Says The Tongue Fest Will Create Discord And Confusion...

1Co 14:23 Therefore if the whole church comes together in one place, **and all speak with tongues**, and there come in *those who are* uninformed or unbelievers, will they not say that you are out of your mind?

Yet, Even Though The Tongue Fest Will Make Others Uncomfortable; Especially If Over Done, **Do Not Forbid It In The Church...** The Corinthians were coming together and ALL were speaking in tongues. Paul doesn't tell them it's wrong, He tells them to moderate it. He doesn't tell them that only one or two can speak in tongues (except when interpreting for others) there is an assumption that all will speak in tongues; however, in a church setting the major language spoken should be understandable by all.

1Co 14:39 Therefore, brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, **and do not forbid to speak with tongues**.

Strategies for Operating in the Spirit (See Booklet: "What About Spiritual Gifts")