

7 Ways to Spread Asbury Revival at Your Church

By now you've heard that leaders at Asbury University decided to end the continuous revival meetings that broke out on their campus on Feb. 8. It wasn't an easy decision—students didn't want to stop praying and worshiping, and the crowds kept coming to the tiny town of Wilmore, Kentucky. So many hungry people visited Asbury from around the world that lines were sometimes half a mile long to get into three campus auditoriums.

But the reality is that everybody can't go to Kentucky, and there aren't enough auditoriums in Wilmore to hold all the people who need the fire of the Holy Spirit. The Asbury Revival was never about Asbury. God was using that school as a catalyst for a nationwide movement. He wants revival to spread everywhere.

After the initial outpouring at Asbury, pockets of revival fervor began spreading as visiting students returned to their schools. This has happened at Lee University in Tennessee, Samford University in Alabama, the University of the Cumberlands in Kentucky, as well as the University of Georgia, Texas Tech and Iowa State University. But I believe this contagious spiritual zeal was meant to spread to every campus as well as every church in the United States. Is your church open to such a move of God?

You are blessed if your congregation would welcome a revival—because many Christians have put the Holy Spirit in a box. We prefer normal. We are afraid of supernatural. And many believers are so accustomed to the usual Sunday morning drill that they would consider a visitation of the Holy Spirit a rude interruption. I'm praying that the Asbury Revival has whet our appetites for something deeper.

Here are seven practical things we can do to encourage a move of the Holy Spirit in your church or campus ministry:

Don't be in a hurry. A church service doesn't have to be long to be anointed. Twenty years ago, we charismatics were notorious for dragging out our meetings. But I fear the pendulum has now swung too far in the other direction. These days many congregations rush through the Sunday routine with the help of a countdown clock, and there's no time to sing an extra chorus or to savor the moment. If God wanted to interrupt our inflexible schedule, would we let Him?

Learn to "host" God's presence. An old inscription appears over the stage in the Hughes Auditorium at Asbury University, where the chapel services have been held for two straight weeks. It says: "HOLINESS TO THE LORD." I fear we've forgotten that God's holy presence is among us when we gather corporately. Psalm 22:3 says: "Yet You are holy, You who are enthroned upon the praises of Israel." People who have attended the Asbury meetings describe an uncanny sense of reverence in the auditorium. The place feels like holy ground. If we truly believe God dwells in our midst when we worship, we won't just flippantly do our own thing. We will tread carefully and learn to wait on His directives.

Quit trying to make worship so professional. Contemporary worship has been streamlined and repackaged in the past two decades. We added special lighting effects, graphics on giant screens, Hollywood-style video production, amazing sound quality and the coolest musicians with the coolest instruments. And yet, if we're honest, the cool factor often feels fake. What we crave is authenticity. That's what was on display at the Asbury Revival—just musicians with overflowing passion for God but no gimmicks. And that humble simplicity is what drew so many people to the Asbury campus that local officials had to close roads to the venue.

Soak your church in prayer. No revival in history ever came

without desperate prayer. God's presence comes when we long for Him like a deer that pants for water. If you want the cloud of God's glory in your church services, burn the incense of prayer first. There are anointed intercessors in your congregation who are wired for this task.

Preach an uncompromised message that brings conviction.

Authentic revival is not just about worship; it must be accompanied by the preaching of the gospel. But we must have hot bread. Revival preaching is not just a relevant message delivered in a hipster style that looks good on camera. Our words need to be birthed in prayer, soaked in tears of brokenness and ignited by the hot coals of heaven.

Leave time for altar ministry. A church without altar ministry is like a hospital without a maternity ward. New life often begins at the altar—whether it is salvation, healing or prayer for a fresh anointing. Today many churches that offer multiple services often skimp on ministry time because they need to rush the 10 a.m. group out of the sanctuary to get ready for the next crowd. Multiple services are fine, but we are crowding the Spirit out of the church if we don't schedule time for people to respond to the Holy Spirit.

Give time for testimonies. Nothing raises the faith level of a congregation like someone's raw experience with God. If a man was healed this week in your church, let him tell about it. If a teenager was delivered of depression, let her share what happened. If an infertile couple got pregnant, let them shout it from the housetops. Stories of supernatural intervention trigger a holy expectation in everyone. The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy, and testimonies can trigger an eruption of holy awe and joy.

 First Thessalonians 5:19 says it plainly: "Do not quench the Spirit." Let's fling open the doors and allow the Holy Spirit to have His way. Let's allow what erupted at Asbury to overflow in every church in the country. Instead of

being afraid of what God might disrupt, or whom He might offend, let's care more about what the church would be like if His manifest presence fills the house.

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