

How to Have a Spiritual Church

A spiritual church is not only one that is guided by mature leadership and reflects the character and fruit of the Holy Spirit but is also one that teaches sound doctrine in the full counsel of God and operates in the various gifts and ministries of the Holy Spirit.

The leadership of any church must be as the apostles of old—given to prayer and the ministry of the Word (Acts 6:4). If they are not, nothing else will work very well. They must have an understanding of the ministries and manifestations of the Holy Spirit. Without them in operation in any church, all we will be left with is a social club, a charitable organization, a sermonizing center and a place bereft of the real power of God.

This is where we have a real problem today. Many of our church leaders are without the revelation and experiential knowledge of the operations of the Holy Spirit. They have charisma, they have eloquence and they have education and degrees, but they lack an intimate knowledge and understanding of the true ways of the Holy Spirit and how to establish a New Testament church of power.

In addition to the aforementioned, the first foundation a New Testament church must have is prayer. I am not speaking of general prayer, for many possess that; I am speaking of spiritual prayer. The church has greatly limited herself by relegating all prayer to the mental realm or praying only with their own understanding (1 Cor. 14:13-15). We need spiritual praying, which consists of praying with all kinds of prayer (intercessions, thanksgiving, supplications, petitions and so on) in other tongues, often with interpretation, and at times with groanings and travail (Gal. 4:19, Rom. 8:26).

Instead, what we have today is a lot of mental praying or praying with our own understanding only, which is very limited, or we have no praying at all. It is not necessarily how many people pray or the quantity that will make the biggest difference, but the quality of praying that will move a church into greater power and the increased activity of the Holy Spirit. It is often the smaller and more seasoned prayer groups in a church that will produce the power of God, and not necessarily the numbers of those who participate. I would never discourage numbers for there is also great power in the larger corporate prayer assembly if led and guided by seasoned ministers, but it is the smaller and more skilled pray-ers in any church that really get the job done.

Secondly, in addition to spiritual prayer, a New Testament church must have leadership that allows for the manifestation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. It must be taught and caught. There must be teaching with demonstration. There must be liberty given to exercise these gifts but with established limitations according to 1 Cor. 14:26-32 that produces order and peace, and not disorder and confusion. There must be a protocol established with the example of the gifts of the Holy Spirit moving and demonstrated first through seasoned vessels, and then others who are trained and proven may also enter in. If not, you'll have a free for all mess.

When the church assembles in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ there ought to be a tremendous power made available through prayer, and there should also be a manifestation of the Holy Spirit's gifts and workings that make for a joyful and exciting time together. The assembly of the saints should never be boring, dull or listless. We should never know what God is going to fully do in advance. There should not be the predictability that marks so many of our meetings today.

Every time we assemble there should be a newness, a freshness and a spontaneity that prevails. Our times of assembling should be Spirit-filled times, for the letter kills but the

Spirit always gives life.

The Holy Spirit comes to make everything new, fresh and alive again! Learn of Him, yield to Him and know that His plans are bigger and better than yours. Glory to God!

Are you being conformed to the image of Christ or are you conforming Him to your image? Check out Bert's latest book of a compelling tetralogy called The Real Jesus.