

How to Prepare for the Holy Spirit's Next Move

At the height of the Jesus movement in 1972, tie-dyed hippies gathered in parks and stadiums to celebrate their newfound faith in Christ. But when these young converts went home to visit traditional churches, many were rejected because they had long hair and preferred to worship using drums and guitars instead of pianos and pipe organs.

Even though these kids were full of the Holy Spirit and excited about preaching the gospel in the streets, the church turned them away—because Christians weren't ready for something new.

God desires to bring a fresh wave of the Holy Spirit in every generation. The prophet Isaiah wrote: "Behold, I will do something new, now it will spring forth; will you not be aware of it? I will make a roadway in the wilderness, rivers in the desert" (Is. 43:19). Even when we are in a spiritual drought, God promises to unleash a river of His presence and power.

I am convinced we are standing on the threshold of another wave of the Spirit. But we must face these questions: Are we ready? Will we be aware? Will we embrace the next outpouring of the Spirit when it comes, or will we stick our noses in the air like the traditional denominations of the 1970s did?

If you want to be ready for all that God has for you in this new season, take these steps:

1. Rekindle the Spirit's flame in your heart. You will be ready for revival when revival stirs your own heart. You must be hungry for more of God. Ask the Lord to give you that hunger. Then begin to seek Him with passion. Set aside daily time to pray and read His Word. Ask Him to fill you afresh with the Holy Spirit.

2. Dismantle all dead religious tradition. Jesus warned the Pharisees that they would miss the day of His visitation because of their stale traditions. Many churches today are stuck in a time warp; they sing 1970s songs and enforce a 1950s dress code, so no one from 2015 feels comfortable visiting their church except the people who live in their religious bubble. You will never break out of tradition until you “sing a new song” (see Ps. 98:1; Is. 42:10) and welcome a fresh encounter with God.

3. Be willing to move geographically. The Bible says Naomi moved from Moab to Bethlehem when she heard God was visiting His people (see Ruth 1:6). If she had stayed where things were familiar and comfortable, Naomi would have missed God’s best for her and her family. Before the Lord pours out His fresh anointing, He gets His people in position. Make sure you are in the place where He wants you. He may be calling you to relocate to a new city or a new church to prepare you for revival.

4. Align yourself with the right people. Abram had to separate from his nephew Lot before he could inherit all of God’s blessings. Sometimes people can keep us from experiencing all that God has for us. If you are enmeshed in toxic relationships that hinder your spiritual growth, break free from their influence and find healthy mentors, friends and spiritual leaders who can encourage and equip you. Sometimes this might mean leaving an unhealthy church to find a healthy one.

5. Allow God to meddle with your sectarian pride. Christians tend to be cliquish. We find a church or denomination we are comfortable with, and then we tend to look down on all other groups as if they are inferior. We think we have the best worship style, the coolest pastors or the soundest doctrine. So if the Holy Spirit shows up at the church down the street, we are smug and suspicious—and quick to criticize what is actually God’s work. Don’t let pride cause you to oppose what

He's doing.

6. Be open to God's surprises. When the Azusa Street revival erupted in Los Angeles in 1906, everyone was shocked when the biblical gift of speaking in tongues was restored to the church. In the charismatic revival of the 1960s, no one expected to see Presbyterians, Catholics, Methodists, Baptists and Mennonites filled with the Holy Spirit—in the same meeting!

The Holy Spirit never violates Scripture, but He loves to open up rivers of anointing to do refreshing new things we have not seen in our generation. He wants an outbreak of miracles. He wants to break racial barriers. He wants to reach immigrants—even those who are illegal. He wants to heal those who struggle with embarrassing addictions, psychological problems and gender confusion. He wants the gifts of the Holy Spirit to break out in churches that have never seen His power. Let's expect the unexpected.

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