

Dear Pastor _____,

We are glad you had such a wonderful Bible Study! We know all too well that it can be a challenge to have Bible Studies with people asking hard questions! Thank you for sharing your question with us as our hearts' desire is to encourage and strengthen Believers in the Word of God.

Your question is: IT IS NECESSARY FOR US THAT WE MUST BE SPEAK IN TONGUES IN ORDER TO BE FILLED WITH THE HOLY GHOST? WE WANT TO KNOW ALSO IF THE SPEAKING IN TONGUES IS ALL FOR BELIEVERS?

Let's first look at some different views on this question that you will run into in your time as a Pastor:

CHARASMATICS: THOSE WHO BELIEVE YOU MUST SPEAK IN TONGUES

There are many in the Church today who believe that the Gift of Speaking in Tongues is necessary to be a Believer - they see it as the initial sign that you have received the Holy Spirit. Among them are the Charismatics (including many Pentecostals and churches such as the Assembly of God). They believe that when we receive the Holy Spirit (at the moment we Believe in Jesus), speaking in Tongues is the evidence that the Spirit has entered us. If you tell them you are a Believer, but you don't Speak in Tongues, then they don't believe you have received the Spirit. They may get this idea from a quick reading of the book of Acts where new Believers are often described as speaking in Tongues immediately after receiving Jesus. However, this position – that you MUST speak in tongues to be a Believer and have the Holy Spirit – is unbiblical. The Bible expressly states that not every Believer has the Gift of Speaking in Tongues, as we shall see.

CESSATIONISTS: THOSE WHO BELIEVE THERE IS NO LONGER A GIFT OF TONGUES

There are also many in the Church who believe the opposite – that most of the Spiritual Gifts did not continue after the Apostles died. They are called “Cessationists” and would include some Baptist denominations and many of the Reformed churches (Calvinists and Lutherans for example). A cessationist believes that many of the Gifts of the Spirit “ceased” being given to mankind after the time of the Apostles. They believe that God gave the gifts to the Apostles and early Church for the spreading of the Gospel at that time, but that they were not needed after that time. This belief is also unbiblical as it would mean huge portions of the New Testament are worthless to us – for example, all of Paul's instructions on the Gifts of the Spirit would be pointless to us if God was no longer giving us the Gifts. This view would make liars of thousands of Believers who have the gifts of the Spirit. Cessationists ignore the countless testimonies of Believers who have performed miracles, healings, etc, throughout the entire Church age into the present day – Betsy TenBoom (the Nazi-concentration survivor) is a well-documented, recent example. HOWEVER, we also need to be very careful because there are a lot of frauds in the world today, claiming they have the Gifts of the Spirit and performing “signs” and “wonders” in order to draw large crowds – especially on television, so patience and discernment is necessary.

THOSE WHO BELIEVE THE BIBLE

We at Berean are not Cessationist and we are not Charismatic. We try to be Biblical. And from the Bible, we believe that the Church is the same Church yesterday as today, and God has not changed how He treats us (nowhere does the Bible say the Gifts would cease). So, let's look at some Scriptures about the Gifts of the Spirit.

“And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues. All are not apostles, are they? All are not prophets, are they? All are not teachers, are they? All are not workers of miracles, are they? 30 All do not have gifts of healings, do they? **All do not speak with tongues, do they?** All do not interpret, do they? 31 But earnestly desire the greater gifts.” (1 Corinthians 12:28).

Here, Paul explains that God has appointed many different gifts and roles in the Church. Not everyone is a Teacher or Healer, and we can clearly see from this verse that **not everyone has the Gift of Tongues**. There are many gifts of the Spirit, speaking in tongues is ONE of them, and Paul explains that not everyone is given the same ones. Just as not everyone has all the gifts of the Spirit, not every Believer has the gift of Speaking in Tongues.

We personally know many Believers who do speak in tongues (often privately in their own prayer life) just as we also know many Believers who do not speak in tongues. Now, Paul says love is the most important thing to seek, but that we should also seek the Gifts of the Spirit – some gifts more than others:

“Pursue love, yet desire earnestly spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy. 2 For one who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God; for no one understands, but in his spirit he speaks mysteries. 3 But one who prophesies speaks to men for edification and exhortation and consolation. 4 One who speaks in a tongue edifies himself; but one who prophesies edifies the church. 5 **Now I wish that you all spoke in tongues, but even more that you would prophesy;** and greater is one who prophesies than one who speaks in tongues, unless he interprets, so that the church may receive edifying” (1 Corinthians 14:1-5).

Here we see that Paul does desire that every Believer would speak in tongues (meaning that there were some Believers in the Church who did not Speak in Tongues). But he desires that they pursue the Gift of Prophecy more than the Gift of Tongues.

NOTE: the Gift of Prophecy is not simply telling future events or speaking God's will over people – there are many who claim to have the Gift of Prophecy who do not – they say things like, “God showed me that this woman is to marry that man,” or “God has told me He wants us to raise money to build a better building for the Church.” In these situations, we must be very discerning and ask God to show us if they are truly prophesying or not. The Holy Spirit and the Word of God will help us to see whether this is true or not. True Prophecy is what the Prophets of old did, which was speak the Words of God that He had given them (exactly as He had given it to them, not adding or

removing anything) into a situation at the prompting of the Spirit. For us, that could mean speaking the whole Word of God (Scripture) into situations where we see sin or wickedness at the prompting of the Spirit. Perhaps you see someone stealing from their neighbor. Speak the Word of God to them: “God says, ‘Thou shall not steal.’” We mustn’t speak our own words, but the Word of God. If this is at the prompting of the Spirit, it is the Gift of Prophecy.

“So then tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe but to unbelievers; but prophecy is for a sign, not to unbelievers but to those who believe. 23 Therefore if the whole church assembles together and all speak in tongues, **and ungifted men or unbelievers enter**, will they not say that you are mad? 24 But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or an ungifted man enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all; 25 the secrets of his heart are disclosed; and so he will fall on his face and worship God, declaring that God is certainly among you. What is the outcome then, brethren? **When you assemble, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification.** 27 If anyone speaks in a tongue, it should be by two or at the most three, and each in turn, and one must interpret; 28 but if there is no interpreter, he must keep silent in the church; and let him speak to himself and to God. 29 Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others pass judgment” (1 Corinthians 14:22-29).

We see here that there are “ungifted” Believers who do not have the Gift of Speaking in Tongues, nor any gift for that matter. This might mean immature Believers or new Believers. We also see that when Believers assemble in Church, the Gifts of the Spirit are all on display from different Believers – some have a psalm or hymn to share, some have teaching, some have revelation, some speak in tongues, some interpret those tongues, etc. Note that not every Church follows this exact pattern. No one at Berean, for example, speaks openly in tongues during the service and we don’t have any interpretations. We do not forbid the open speaking of Tongues; however, God wants orderly worship and peace, not confusion during the assembly of Believers in Church, for Paul tells us:

“Therefore, my brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and **do not forbid to speak in tongues.** 40 **But all things must be done properly and in an orderly manner**” (1 Corinthians 14:39-40).

“If anyone speaks in a tongue, it should be by two or at the most three, and each in turn, and one must interpret; 28 but if there is no interpreter, he must keep silent in the church; and let him speak to himself and to God. 29 Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others pass judgment. 30 But if a revelation is made to another who is seated, the first one must keep silent. 31 For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all may be exhorted; 32 and the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets; 33 for **God is not a God of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints**” (1 Corinthians 14:27-33).

This idea of proper worship, orderliness, and peace is the guiding principle for the Church. So, at Berean, no one speaks in tongues openly – they do it in their own prayer life, and that aids the orderly and peaceful time of our Church Service. But some churches do have people who openly speak in tongues, however, much discernment is needed here as there are a lot of frauds in the

world pretending to speak in tongues to draw attention to themselves and to cause disruptions in the Church. This is probably why Paul said people should only be allowed to speak in tongues if someone else can interpret them – to help discourage attention-seekers and charlatans.

We pray this letter helps you in answering the questions from the new Believers who visited you. Please let us know if you have any other questions or challenges.

In the Love of Christ,
Berean Lamp Ministries