

Demystifying Praying in Tongues

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Introduction

Praying in tongues is at the same time 'a bit different' and 'wonderfully releasing'. There have been a lot of myths developed over the years about it, and a lot of needless fears entertained because of it. Let's look at what the Bible has to say about it, and explore it for ourselves!

1. Historical Background

There was a time when the whole of the then habitable world spoke with one language. It was a time of expansion, experimentation and rebellion against God. Their unity, both in language and in rebellion, placed them in an unhealthily powerful position within their own contexts. God's response was to 'confuse their languages', which broke down communication, between groupings, and caused confusion.

Gen 11:1-9

By the time the Day of Pentecost arrived in Jerusalem, there was a situation of great diversity in ethnicity with 16 different language groups, but were united in their worship of God.

Acts 2:5-11

God used the 'miracle of different tongues' to announce the outpouring of His promised Holy Spirit, and the birth of the church, uniting them in a common experience of His personal presence, and the supernatural dimension of His life in and through them.

Acts 2:1-4; 37-47; 11:15-18

2. Spiritual Significance of Languages

- The creative power of words Gen 1:3; Prov 15:1-4; 18:21
- Our words reveal the nature of our hearts Mat 15:15-20; 12:33-37
- The fallen human heart is deceitful Jer 17:5-10
- The tongue can cause so many problems! Jam 3:1-12

3. Practical Applications of Praying in Tongues

So what does all this mean for us in the 21st Century???

A whole lot!!! Let's explore!

- 'Praying in tongues' releases us from the limitations of natural language into the realm of the Spirit. Our tongue is liberated from 'troublemaker' to become a 'divine

communicator'.
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1Cor 14:1-5, 14-

- Can reveal hidden or clouded truths to us 1Cor 2:6-12
- It releases a direct line of communication with God 1Cor 14:2a
- We speak mysteries with our spirit 1Cor 14:2b
- We build up our inner spiritual life 1Cor 14:4; Jude 20-21

4. Differentiating between the Sign of Tongues and the Gift of Tongues

The simplest way to think about this is in terms of the direction of the communication!

- i. The Sign of Tongues – Our prayer language - us speaking to God Mk 16:17

This is the believer praying to God. No interpretation is required, because God understands it! God may reveal the mystery to us if we need to know, but it is not for the church, it is for personal building up of faith and insight.

- ii. The Gift of Tongues – God speaking to the church

The Gift of Tongues operates when God wants to speak to his church through that avenue. It will always be accompanied with the Gift of Interpretation.

1Cor 12:10-11, 30; 14:5, 13, 26-28

5. Different but Wonderful!!!

Speaking in tongues is certainly different, but it is a practical means he has given us of bypassing our limited, natural mind, and learn to soar in the Spirit, discovering his healing freedom, and exploring his amazing grace as we journey with him!!!

Anyone who has been born again has the Holy Spirit dwelling within them and has the capacity to pray in tongues if they choose to. This is a wonderful blessing that God has made available to us to benefit from.