

## The Work of the Holy Spirit

---

### Being filled with the Spirit

- In a letter to the Ephesians, Paul tells believers to be 'filled with the Holy Spirit'. Accounted in Luke is Jesus telling his disciples that God is ready to give the Holy Spirit to those who ask.
  - Pentecostals, a specific 'modern' denomination say that being filled with the Holy Spirit should not be a one-off thing, it should be a regular part of 'discipleship' or their relationship with God.
  - Some Christians argue that this is a wrong assumption, they say that at conversion, God gives his full Holy Spirit to that person, hence it is so revelation-based. They say that the Holy Spirit is not consumed, but that revelations after conversion are because of God having more influence.
  - These Christians also say that Glossolalia is not real and that when God gave the apostles the ability to use 'tongues of fire' it was a reference to them being given the ability to speak other human languages rather than one used specifically to communicate with God.
- 

### Pentecostal Experiences of God

- Pentecostalism is a new denomination in of itself, it is often regarded as one of the fastest growing denominations, many fast growing churches have embraced the views of Pentecostalism including the Assemblies of God (AOG), Hillsong and Vineyard churches.
  - The focus of Pentecostalism is on a specific era of Christian revival. The first Pentecost after Jesus's ascension is regarded to have started this era as the 12 Apostles were given the ability to speak in 'tongues' (unclear views depending on Christian) and they also went on to commit healings in the name of God as well. Using tongues they could spread the word of God faster.
  - This is what they call Evangelism because it is a fast growth of Christianity which focuses specifically on the word of God and its spread via mouth. The idea is that the Holy Spirit drives people to do things of active work rather than thinking and ritual as tradition holds.
- 

### Ecstatic Experiences

- Ecstatic experiences are based on the belief that when Jesus spoke to people as recorded in John, they 'drew back and fell to the ground' as if they had been 'slain in the spirit'.
- This type of experience is also found in the Old Testament as a man called Balaam saw God with a sword in his hand and reportedly 'bowed his head and fell flat on his face'.
- Most Christians deny this because they say that nowhere in the Bible is it described that Jesus or the Apostles laid their hands upon people and they fell, it is only once they see God

must they turn their face, as his presence is so great. This also happens to Abraham when he is shown God's face while on Mt. Sinai, this could be the meaning of 'God-fearing'.

- Theologian John Edwards argued that religious ecstasy could have been caused by several explainable causes, but if it had come from God then it would be bringing them in line with Godly characteristics rather than giving them a revelation about the Bible.
- 

## Worship

- Christians believe that by participating in worship they give praise to God and are therefore able to communicate with him, and it is usually two-sided rather than just you speaking to him.
  - In the book of 1 Kings, the prophet Elijah is spoken to in a 'still, small voice' that guides him. But many Christians say that God's communication will not necessarily come in the form of a voice.
  - While meditation is not a taught practice for Christians, thinking is, a meditative state is often used as a time for creating a still and understanding environment, and an opportunity to communicate with God alone rather than in a church where a personal message may not be received as well as during private prayer.
  - Liturgical Worship is a traditional structure for services and for Christians to be guided in God's presence they are advised to follow it, at least in traditional denominations.
  - In traditional services, people are more likely to appreciate liturgical structure as it allows a person to communicate with God without having the pressure to come up with something to say to the most powerful being in and out of the universe.
  - However, in less traditional 'charismatic' services (generally Pentecostal) the structure is less appreciated because it restricts their personal expression to God, it allows them to connect better if they have less restrictions on what they can pray or do during the service.
  - Catholic and Orthodox churches disagree with 'charismatic' churches and say that sacraments are the best way to worship God because they provide structure and teach people to worship God correctly. A sacrament is usually an expression of something that has already happened on the inside, but has to be shown. Such as a baptism, communion or confirmation.
  - Sacraments in these churches are thought to make a person more holy and in tune with God.
- 

## Sacraments

- **Sacrament** – A traditional 'ritual' practice in the church that gives someone a next step in their faith such as a marriage, baptism or as a routine such as communion.
- **Transubstantiation** – The Catholic church traditionally believes that the power of the Holy Spirit in the priest allows the said priest to transform the bread and wine into the literal body and blood of Jesus Christ. Orthodox churches agree with this presumption.

- **Consubstantiation** – The Church of England believes that while the presence of God is present during the Eucharist service, the bread and wine are not literally changed into the body and blood of Jesus.
- Other Protestant Churches say that the Eucharist is symbolic, the idea that the bread and wine is changed is entirely unfounded in the Bible and that the Eucharist should be a time to experience God in prayer.
- **The Sacrament of Penance** – It is a strictly Catholic tradition and is also called ‘Confession’. It involves telling a priest (confidentially and through a grate) about your sins. The priest is then able to provide absolution to the person so that their sins are forgiven. The person confessing must be genuinely remorseful in order to be drawn closer to God, it is used to relieve guilt.
- Protestants argue that the Sacrament of Penance is not actually a sacrament at all because they believe that every believer should have priesthood and so must confess their sins to God and God alone through the act of prayer rather than the traditional confession.