

Helping Others to Receive the Baptism in The Spirit

Taken from *Receiving The Holy Spirit and His Gifts*, by Terry Virgo and Phil Rogers (published by Word Books).

Let us suppose that someone comes to you saying, "I want to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit." Can you lead them into the experience?

Here are a few guidelines:

Acts 2:38,39 is a key passage. The Holy Spirit is the promise of the Father to everyone who is called. Are they called? Then the promise is for them. Do they understand this? Answer these questions. Don't pray if there is unbelief.

Allow them to talk and ask questions until they are clear on the subject and say that they confidently expect to receive because of the clear teaching of Scripture and the clear promises of God to them.

Do not focus too much on tongues. You are not encouraging them to do strange things with their voice, or seek odd feelings. You should be exhorting them to reach out in faith to God.

Pray and encourage them to pray out loud. Listen to their prayer. Are they asking for the Spirit now? Make sure that they are and they are not simply praying around the subject.

There is sometimes a pause at this point. Ask more questions. What is happening? Be cautious – don't give tongues too much or too little importance. Differentiate between the baptism in the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues. If they believe they have received then don't allow them to get uptight about speaking in tongues. They may receive this gift later.

However, people who speak in tongues tend to have a greater sense of assurance. Don't tell them that they have received the Spirit, ask them. We cannot impose faith on them. They must be able to reply with faith even if they have not spoken in tongues.

If they begin to speak in tongues, encourage them not to be satisfied with a quiet mumble. Encourage them to open up their heart to God, to speak out, sing or even shout. They will then have much more opportunity to be aware of having received this dynamic experience.

The reason for this is that we are not advocating a nice little prayer language, but looking for praise which bursts out. Some people are satisfied with too little. They are not receiving a thing but God himself. So encourage them to open up, reach out more from God and give themselves to God in a new way. Don't let them be easily content. Encourage them to believe for spiritual gifts.

If they seem to be having difficulty, don't pressurise them. If there is time, go over any points of which they seem unsure. It is best to make sure that they have understood the truth and that their faith is rising. If you sense that they have not actually come to a place of confident expectation, you may have to postpone praying with them.

When they have been baptised in the Holy Spirit, follow through. Encourage them by reminding them of what has happened. Help them to be more involved and more expressive in worship – to pray and sing in tongues. Remember that this is all new to them and they need to gain in confidence.

Look for the development of spiritual gifts and be encouraging. Correct them if necessary. Look for changes in their life and relationship with God. Receiving the baptism in the Holy Spirit should have a powerful and lasting effect.