

GUIDELINES FOR MANIFESTATION GIFTS

Inasmuch as the Apostle Paul encourages the church in 1 Corinthians 14:1 to “desire spiritual gifts”, and inasmuch as he teaches in 1 Corinthians 12 that giftedness in the Body is complimentary, it is important that the subject of “manifestation gifts” be understood because we believe in and encourage the exercise of spiritual gifts.

We recognize three categories of spiritual gifts in Scripture. There are the “oratory gifts”, or “five-fold ministry gifts”, that are resident in individuals called by, and gifted by God (see Ephesians 4:11-14). Secondly there are “motivational gifts”, also resident in individuals. Each member of the Body has at least one or more of these gifted areas, which help make the Body complete (see 1 Corinthians 12:18-28). Thirdly, there are the “manifestation gifts” which are resident in the Holy Spirit and given by the Spirit at His discretion and for particular points of need (see 1 Corinthians 12:7-10).

It is this third group, or “manifestation gifts”, that we wish to address. We are addressing the exercise of these gifts only in the context of corporate meetings of the church. With the recognition that Paul addressed the abuse in the Corinthian church by refusing (1) to allow the church to either throw out the gifts, or (2) to abuse them, we too, want to encourage that neither extreme be taken. With the above in mind, we wish to address this subject with the following:

TWO DANGERS OF WHICH THE CHURCH MUST BE CAUTIONED:

Quenching the Spirit – The danger here is a fondness for everything being controlled and ordered can lead to frowning upon anything different that may happen apart from the regular worship agenda. Although there is a call for order and discipline we are cautioned by Paul, in 1 Thessalonians 5:19: “Quench not the Spirit”.

Uncritical acceptance of everything – The danger here is that an eagerness for the unusual can lead to a fanaticism that creates havoc in the life of the church. Paul also cautions against this in 1 Thessalonians 5:21: “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.”

THE ATMOSPHERE FOR MANIFESTATIONS OF THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT IS THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT, PRIMARILY LOVE.

Anyone motivated to manifest a spiritual gift should do so only in the context of love and its attending characteristics as found in 1 Corinthians 13. Such a manifestation (publicly) that exudes a spirit of anger, envy, pride, etc. will be deemed inappropriate by church leadership and therefore, disallowed to continue. 1 Corinthians 13 is ‘sandwiched’ between two chapters addressing the gifts for a good reason. In 1 Corinthians 14:1, Paul shows us the connection between the two.

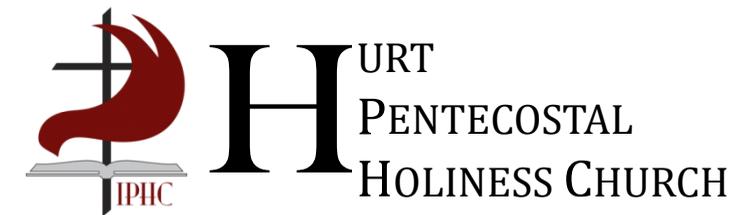
The leadership, which is responsible to God for the order of the church’s public worship services, must recognize OUR responsibility to administrate over those services with love as our primary motivation.



Manifestation Gifts

“There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all: for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.”

- 1 Corinthians 12:4-11 NKJV



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THE CHURCH LEADERSHIP WILL ATTEMPT, BY THE SPIRIT'S HELP, TO EXERCISE GOD-GIVEN AUTHORITY WITH THE FOLLOWING GENERAL GUIDELINES:

I. Guidance by a Holy Spirit-Led Atmosphere:

We will make room for the gifts as directed by the Holy Spirit. It is our responsibility to seek the Spirit's leadership and direction for each public service. Because pastors are committed to considerable prayer and preparation for our worship services, it generally follows that they have the mind of the Lord for the basic direction of each service. As prompted by the Spirit the pastor will encourage the operation of the gifts.

- For example, the pastor may direct prayer for the sick by asking, "Is there anyone here who senses a particular anointing to pray for healing? If so, please come and stand behind someone who has come for prayer and lay hands on them as we anoint them."
- Another example – At altar service the pastor might say, "Ask the Holy Spirit if He would have you minister to someone through one of His gifts, and if you feel so prompted, we encourage you to be obedient."
- Another example – The pastor may sense that the Spirit has "set the stage" during worship for a prophetic word, and he may, therefore, pause as the congregation is brought to quietness by the Holy Spirit and say, "Does anyone have a word from the Lord for the Body? If so, we encourage it to come forth." (Please note: there may be times that the pastor calls us to "be silent before the Lord". Please realize that such times are not to be viewed as times for gift manifestation unless indicated by the pastor. There are times when quiet and personal meditation are in order without interruption.)

II. Maintaining order in the Service:

Inasmuch as 1 Corinthians 14:40 indicates that there be "order" in worship services, the following are guidelines that we will attempt to follow regarding public manifestations to the Body:

Since "the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets" (1 Corinthians 14:32), we do not believe that a gift must "burst forth" uncontrollably. Therefore, unless called for, any individual who senses the prompting to prophesy or speak a tongue, word of knowledge, etc. should indicate this by submitting it to the pastor. This may be done during a prayer, offering, song, etc. but should never interrupt the flow of the service. One may also raise a hand if they feel they have something for the congregation. It will be the pastor's prerogative to recognize that indication only if he feels the timing to be appropriate. The pastor, because he is answerable to God, is the one who will determine whether to allow a gift to be manifested or not. If the timing does not seem appropriate, he may so indicate by asking that it be held until a future time.

Regarding prophecy and tongues with interpretation (which is tantamount to prophecy), the leader may lead the congregation in response, when appropriate. If, for some reason, the pastor feels that the word given was erroneous, or out of the flesh rather than the Spirit, the pastor may stop the individual from continuing, or if the pastor senses that no damage has been done, he may simply go on with the worship service and correct the individual on a personal basis at a later time.

Because prophecy is to be judged (1 Corinthians 14:29) for the purposes of response, the pastoral uses the following as a basis (we also encourage you to use the same for judging a personal prophecy that has been given to you):

Prophecy should always be conformational, not directional. Acts 13:1-4 is an example... The Spirit confirmed that He had already called Barnabas and Saul to a particular work.

Prophecy should never be self-serving. (where the individual stands to gain personally by what he/she is prophesying, or when it draws more attention to the person than the message). 1 Corinthians 14:12 says that we are to seek to excel in edifying the church.

Judgmental prophecy is not allowed. 1 Corinthians 14:3 teaches that prophecy is for the purposes of edification, exhortation and comfort.

It is our purpose to encourage the manifestation of spiritual gifts and to create a liberty for their exercise by setting forth the scriptural stance for government regarding such manifestations. We want people in the congregation to be confident that we are doing our best to not hinder the flow of the Holy Spirit in our services, and to be confident we are committed to operating by the Word and do not have the "anything goes" attitude.

Recognizing the fact that people are human and therefore may make mistakes, we encourage the congregation to recognize that pastoral leadership is given as a "safety factor". If disallowed, the responsibility rests upon the pastor and the person feeling that he/she is to manifest a gift is no longer accountable to God. Please realize that disallowing a gift is never meant to be a judgment against the individual manifesting the gift. We never want anyone to feel condemnation at such a time.

Recognizing pastors are human and may, therefore, also make mistakes, we encourage and request the prayers of the congregation that the pastor will always be sensitive to the Spirit's leading.