

How to Pray with People to Be Filled with the Holy Spirit



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INTRODUCTION¹

I was in Kisumu, Kenya, preaching a Holy Spirit Conference. The Saturday evening service had ended gloriously with many people being filled with the Spirit. It was a grand finale to several long days of teaching and preaching on Holy Spirit. I was elated, yet exhausted. After the service I was led into the pastor's office so I could rest a few moments before being driven back to the missionary's house, where I was staying. As is common in Africa, I was graciously offered a soft drink and some snacks with which to refresh myself.

After only a few brief minutes of rest there came a tapping at the door. One of the church elders stuck his head into the office and said, "Pastor, I have two men with me who have just come. They were unable to attend the services today because they were working. They are hungry for the baptism in the Holy Spirit and want you to pray with them." I thought to myself, *Oh no, I'm too tired for this.* I immediately felt a twinge of conviction in my heart. So, reluctantly, I said, "Tell the men to come in and I will pray a brief prayer for them. The prayer will help to prepare their hearts for the

¹This booklet is an adaptation of chapter 13 of the author's book *Power Encounter: Ministering in the Power and Anointing of the Holy Spirit.*

service tomorrow morning. I will then pray with them to receive the Holy Spirit.”

Two well-dressed businessmen stepped into the office. We joined hands, and I began to pray. I had hardly uttered a complete sentence when, to my surprise, both men began speaking fluently in tongues. *Hallelujah!* God had graciously filled these two hungry seekers with His Holy Spirit.

In my travels across Africa I have taught and preached on the baptism in the Holy Spirit many times. It has been my great privilege to pray with and witness thousands of Africans being filled with the Spirit, just like these two men. How blessed I have been!

Being baptized in the Holy Spirit is an essential experience in the life of every believer— especially if he or she desires to be effectively used by God in ministry. In this booklet I will talk about how you can lead others into this vital Christian experience.

I will do this by recommending a practical “how to” model for praying with people to receive the Holy Spirit. I have used this model in praying for people both in the United States and in Africa, and have personally seen hundreds filled with the Spirit. I hope that it will be of benefit to you, too, as you seek to lead others into the Spirit-filled life.

Chapter 1 PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

Before we discuss the actual process of leading seekers into the baptism in the Holy Spirit, let’s first address three pertinent considerations: (1) who can be filled with the Spirit, (2) who can pray with others to be filled with the Spirit, and (3) elements involved in receiving the Holy Spirit.

Who Can Be Filled with the Spirit?

Anyone who has been truly born again can and should immediately be filled with the Holy Spirit. This wonderful experience is not just for special Christians who have reached a certain level of holiness or spiritual maturity in their lives. Nor is it only for a certain class of people belonging to a particular church group or denomination. This promise is for all Christians of all ages (Acts 2:17-18; 38-39).

Who Can Pray with Others to Be Filled with the Spirit?

Anyone who has been filled with the Spirit can lead someone else into this marvelous experience. The chief requirement in praying for others to be filled with the Spirit is a sincere desire to see others blessed and used by God.

Elements Involved in Receiving the Holy Spirit

It is helpful for the Christian worker to understand five important spiritual elements involved in a person's being filled with the Holy Spirit. These are desire, faith, prayer, obedience, and yieldedness to God. Let's look briefly at each of these elements:

1. Desire. The Bible often stresses the importance of desire in seeking after God. God once said to Israel, "You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart" (Jer. 29:13). Jesus said, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled" (Matt. 5:6). In another place, while teaching on how to receive the Holy Spirit, He said, "Seek [literally, "keep seeking"] and you will find" (Luke 11:9). Persistent seeking is a fruit of desire. The seeker must know that God will only give His Spirit to those who ardently seek His face.

2. Faith. Faith is the prime ingredient in receiving anything from God, including the Holy Spirit. Paul reminded the Galatian Christians that they had received the Holy Spirit, not by the works of the law, but "by believing what [they] heard" (Gal. 3:2). Jesus said that the Spirit would flow through "whoever believes in me" (John 7:38). One aim of the person leading others into the baptism in the Holy Spirit must therefore be to inspire faith in the heart of the seeker. We will speak more about this later.

3. Prayer. The Holy Spirit is given in answer to believing prayer. Jesus said, "Ask, and it will be given to you" (Luke 11:9). In another place He taught,

"Whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours" (Mark 11:24-25). When Jesus was anointed by the Spirit, He was praying (Luke 3:21-22). Before the disciples received the Spirit at Pentecost, "they all joined together constantly in prayer" (Acts 1:14). Before Paul was filled with the Spirit he spent time in prayer (9:11). Anyone desiring to be filled with the Spirit must earnestly seek God's face in prayer.

4. Obedience. An obedient heart is essential to receiving the Holy Spirit. Peter said that God gives the Holy Spirit "to those who obey him" (Acts 5:32). He was talking specifically about those who will obey God and preach the gospel (v. 29-32). The primary purpose for receiving the Holy Spirit is to receive power to witness (Acts 1:8), and God is ready to empower those who are ready to obey His command to share the gospel with the lost.

5. Yieldedness to God. Yieldedness to God is another vital element in receiving the Holy Spirit. Just as one being baptized in water must yield to the pastor, the one being baptized in the Holy Spirit must yield completely to Jesus. The seeker should therefore be instructed to yield his or her entire being to the Lord. This yieldedness should include their entire being: spirit, mind, and body (Rom. 6:13; 12:1). It is through such yieldedness that the Holy Spirit will fill the person, take control of his vocal organs, and begin to speak through him in other tongues.

Chapter 2
THE PROCEDURE:
HOW TO PRAY WITH SOMEONE TO BE
FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

Here, I will suggest a three-step “pastoral model” for praying with people to receive the Holy Spirit. This three-step model includes an interview, prayer engagement, and post-prayer guidance.

Step 1: The Interview

In the initial interview with the candidate you will seek to accomplish four things: First you should seek to establish rapport with the candidate. That is, you will seek to build an initial warm relationship with him. Next, you will seek to affirm and inspire the candidate’s faith. Third, you should try to discover the candidate’s level of desire for God, as well as his or her spiritual condition. Finally, you will instruct the seeker as to exactly what he or she must do to be filled with the Spirit.

1. *Establishing Rapport.* Goal number one in the interview process is to establish rapport with the candidate². If you already know the person, this is, of

²To establish rapport (pronounced ra-poor) with a person means to begin a relationship with him. It means that we begin to be comfortable in each other’s presence.

course, unnecessary. However, if you are not acquainted with the candidate, begin by introducing yourself. Say, “Hello, my name is [YOUR NAME]. What is your name?” Listen closely to what he has to say. Repeat his name back to him, and then use his name during your time of ministry with him.

2. *Affirmation and Inspiration.* Next, seek to the affirm the candidate and to inspire his faith.³ You might say to him, “I am so glad you came to receive the Spirit; you did the right thing.” You could also say, “This could be one of the greatest days of your life. God has something very special for you.” Remember, the candidate is probably nervous at this point. These words will help set him at ease and prepare his heart to receive the Holy Spirit.

3. *Discovery.* One goal at this point is to find out why the seeker has come forward, and to discover precisely where he is in his spiritual experience. You might ask such questions as follows:

- “*What do you want God to do for you today?*” or “*Did you come to be filled with the Spirit?*” Don’t assume he has come to be filled with the Spirit; he may have come for another reason. If he has come to be filled, it is good for him to say so. Doing this will strengthen his resolve to be filled.

³To affirm someone is to say things to him that will make him feel good about himself and what he has done.

- “*Have you ever been filled before?*” If the candidate has been filled before, he may need little more than brief encouragement to be refilled. If he has never been filled, he needs more instruction.
- “*Have you ever seen anyone filled with the Spirit?*” If the candidate has seen others filled with the Spirit, he may have a good idea of what to expect. If not, he will need a more detailed explanation.

Once you have asked these questions, listen very closely to the candidate’s responses. These discoveries will help you to know how to proceed to the next step.

4. *Instruction.* At this point in the interview process the Christian worker has two primary goals: to stir up expectant faith in the heart of the candidate, and to bring him into an accurate understanding of what he must do and what he can expect to happen when he is filled.⁴

One way to stimulate the seeker’s faith is to remind him of the promises concerning the Holy Spirit. Assure him that if he is truly born again, God is ready now to fill him with the Holy Spirit. Remind him of the promises of Jesus: “Ask and it will be given you” and “Everyone who asks receives” (Luke 11:9-10). The seeker must believe that God will, the moment he asks, fill him with the Spirit. We sometimes call this *expectant faith*. The candidate should therefore expect to be filled with the Spirit, and expect to speak with other

⁴Many of these instructions could, of course, be given in a sermon preceding this time of ministry.

tongues as the Spirit enables. Further, he or she should be prepared to act on those expectations.

Next, you will seek to bring the candidate into an accurate understanding of what he or she must do to be filled with the Spirit, and what he can expect to happen as he is being filled with the Spirit. He needs to know that being filled with the Holy Spirit is not a difficult nor extraordinary thing for a believer. It is, in fact, the normal thing for a Christian to do. He should know that he will not be filled with “another Holy Spirit” but the same Holy Spirit who already indwells him since his new birth.

You can tell the seeker, “Receiving the Holy Spirit is easy! It is the natural thing to do. In fact, for the born again Christian, it is as easy as breathing.” And it’s true! Remember what Jesus did with His disciples: “He breathed on [or into] them and said, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit’” (John 20:22). Receiving the Holy Spirit is much like breathing. Just as breathing is a natural thing for a person, receiving the Holy Spirit is a natural thing for the child of God.

Next, let the candidate know exactly what you plan to do, and what will happen to him. You could say something like this:

First, we will pray together. Then, I will lead you in a prayer in which we will ask the Lord to come and baptize us in the Holy Spirit. The Lord will hear and answer our prayer. I know He will because we will be praying according to His will (1 John 5:14). At this point you should be very sensitive to the Spirit. You will sense His coming upon you.

After this, I will ask you to take a step of faith and receive the Holy Spirit. I will lead you in another short prayer. It will go something like this, “Right now, in the name of Jesus, I receive the Holy Spirit.” Then, by faith, you must “believe that you have received” the Spirit (Mark 11:24). The instant you believe, the Holy Spirit will fill you. You will sense His Presence deep within—in your innermost being.

You will then begin to speak, not from your mind, but from your spirit, where you sense the Presence of God inside. As you speak, you will begin to say words you don’t understand. When this happens, don’t be afraid, just continue to speak. God is filling you with His Spirit.

Then ask, “Do you have any questions? Are you ready to be filled with the Spirit?” If the seeker has questions, answer them. If he has no questions, proceed to the prayer engagement.

Prayer Engagement

In the prayer engagement you will do two things: You will lead the candidate in a prayer asking for the Holy Spirit, and you will lead the candidate in his step of faith in receiving the Holy Spirit.

1. *Lead the Seeker in Prayer.* Much as you would lead a sinner in the sinner’s prayer, you now lead the new believer in a prayer asking God to fill him with the Spirit. The prayer may proceed as follows, with the candidate repeating each line:

Lord I come now to be filled with the Holy Spirit . . . Right now, there is nothing in my life I want more . . . You have promised that everyone who asks, receives . . . I am asking, therefore, I expect to receive . . . When I begin to speak, I will act in faith . . . I will begin to pray in tongues as Your Spirit gives me utterance . . . I will not be afraid.

After you have prayed, assure the candidate that God has heard his prayer, and that He is ready now to fill him with the Spirit. Encourage the candidate to be spiritually sensitive to the presence of the Spirit who will come upon him. You might want to take a few moments to quietly worship the Lord together and respond to His presence.

2. *Lead the Seeker in His Step of Faith.* You may now ask the seeker to lift his hands toward heaven and pray this simple prayer of faith with you, “Lord, right now, in Jesus Name, I receive the Holy Spirit.” This prayer provides a definite point in time when the seeker can focus his or her faith to receive the Holy Spirit. He should, at that moment, “believe that he has received.” The moment he believes, the Spirit will come and fill him. Encourage him to be aware the Spirit’s coming into his spirit. He may sense Spirit’s presence deep inside.

He should now act in bold faith and begin to speak, not from his mind, but from deep within, from where he senses God’s presence inside. As he yields to the Spirit flowing into and through his being, he will begin to speak words he does not understand. This speaking will not be a forced effort, but a natural flow of supernatural words. Encourage him not to be fearful but to cooperate

fully with the Spirit by boldly speaking out in faith.

If the candidate does not soon begin to speak in tongues, encourage him to continue yielding his entire being to the Lord. You may want to worship with him, allowing the Lord to refill you with the Holy Spirit. This will often provide encouragement to the candidate to keep seeking until he too is filled.

If the seeker seems to have difficulty responding to the Lord, I have found that it is sometimes helpful to repeat the above procedure. As you do, point out to the seeker how he may more perfectly respond to the Spirit. Once he begins to speak in tongues, encourage him to continue on. Remain with him as long as he continues to pray in the Spirit.

Post-prayer Guidance

It is important that post-prayer counseling be given to the candidate. If he or she has been filled with the Spirit, you will give one kind of counsel, if he has not been filled, you will give another kind.

If the Candidate is Filled With the Spirit. If the candidate is filled with the Spirit and speaks in tongues, the following advice is appropriate: Tell him that receiving the Spirit is not an end in itself; it is a means to a greater end. The purpose for receiving the Spirit is that one may receive power for life and service. You may want to say, "This is not the end; it's just the beginning. God will now begin to use you in new and powerful ways. Expect to have new power in your life. Go out right now and tell someone about Jesus." You will want to add, "You should also spend time each day praying in the Spirit (i.e., praying in tongues). This will

give you strength and will remind you of the Spirit's presence within."

If the Candidate is Not Filled With the Spirit. If the candidate is not filled with the Spirit, you will want to give the following advice and encouragement: Tell him to not be discouraged because he did not receive the Holy Spirit at this time. Assure him that the promise of Jesus is still true: "Everyone who asks receives" (Luke 11:10). Tell him that he should keep asking and he will receive, keep seeking and he will find, and keep knocking and the door will be opened unto him (literal translation of Luke 11:9). You may want to ask him if he would like to pray again. If he does, repeat the procedure above, encouraging him to act in faith.

Chapter 3
OTHER IMPORTANT
CONSIDERATIONS

As we conclude this booklet we will briefly mention three other things that are worthy of our consideration when leading others into the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

Know What the Bible Says on the Subject

First, if one is going to help others be filled with the Spirit it stands to reason that he or she should seek to know all they can on the subject. Most importantly, he should study the Word of God, especially the book of Acts, to see what it says on the subject. Also, he could read and study good books on the subject. The more one knows about the Holy Spirit and His working in the lives of believers, the better able he will be to help others experience His blessings.

Don't Let Spiritual Laziness Disqualify You

Secondly, if you would help people receive the Spirit of God, you must not let spiritual laziness disqualify you. Because it is often hard work to pray with people to be filled with the Spirit, some shy away from teaching on the subject and seeking to lead others into the experience. If that is the case with you, repent of your spiritual laziness, and give yourself wholeheartedly to this vital ministry.

Watch Your Intensity Level

Finally, when praying with others to be filled with the Spirit, it is important that you watch your intensity level. By this I mean you should be upbeat and positive when praying with them. Let your enthusiasm show! At the same time you should beware of being too pushy. Wisdom will show you the right balance between intensity and reserve in encouraging people to be filled with the Spirit.

We have now completed our study on how you can be effective in leading people into the baptism in the Holy Spirit. We hope that you will now dedicate yourself to this important task. There is nothing more satisfying than helping others personally experience the Spirit's power and presence in their lives.

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