



Network for Revival Prepare Issue 44 - March 2023

An important question in preparation for Revival

Have we received all the spiritual blessings God wants us to receive before the special blessing of revival?

It is not really appropriate to ask for God's special blessing (Revival) if we haven't, through prayer and faith, received all his normal blessings, namely, all that the New Testament says we should be experiencing.

Can we honestly say we are experiencing the fulness of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8)?

I'm well aware of the controversy about "second blessings" - the "Baptism in the Spirit," etc. But that's not the real issue. The real issue is that many believers (myself included) have experienced a dynamic, life-changing anointing of the Spirit, subsequent to their conversion. Maybe it should have happened at conversion, but that is not always the case. Also, Paul says "Be filled with the Spirit" (Eph 5:18) which, in the Greek, is a present continuous imperative, meaning literally: "Go on being filled with the Spirit." Being filled with the Spirit is something we should seek repeatedly. But I think it isn't always high on the agenda of Christians (or even on it at all). When was the last time we asked for the filling of the Spirit? Also, many people (including myself) have found asking someone else pray for us to be filled with the Spirit is really helpful. I urge you to seek the fulness of the Spirit, and recommend asking someone to pray with you about it.

One of the effects of being filled with the Spirit is heartfelt worship – "being lost in wonder, love and praise." Paul said "Be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord" (Eph 5:18-19). This clearly goes beyond hymn singing and liturgy. I have found heartfelt worship so uplifting and inspiring. It is the Holy Spirit taking over our worship. Are we experiencing such worship "from our hearts"?

The New Testament says we should be manifesting the fruit of the Spirit: "love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control" (Gal 5:22-23). Are we really manifesting those characteristics strongly? And are we regularly seeking a greater fulness of the Spirit to manifest them more?

The New Testament also says we should each manifest one or more of the gifts of the Spirit e.g. healing, miraculous powers, prophecy, special faith, supernatural wisdom, supernatural knowledge, distinguishing spirits, tongues etc. He adds that, unlike love, which is eternal, the gifts of prophecy, tongues and knowledge will pass away (1 Cor 13:8-10). But that is at the end of the age when "completeness/perfection comes" i.e. the return of Christ. Yes, of course, there have been some unbalanced approaches to the gifts of the Spirit. But the fact is that some Christians and churches have benefited enormously through the manifestation of the gifts. I personally think that the argument that these gifts are no longer available is an argument from lack of experience of them.

It is clear from the NT that the Christian life is meant to be supernatural, in an obvious way. We need to be experiencing this as a preparation for Revival.

Preparing for a church which is radically biblical in the power of the Spirit 3: Encouraging members to go on being filled with the Spirit, manifesting fruit and gifts

What I have written above applies to our churches as well as to us personally. It's part of preparing the church to be radically biblical in the power of the Spirit. So, let's set an example, teach and pray about it, including praying for individuals to experience it.

Receiving the fullness of the Spirit is covered in Session 6 of the “Called to serve” course. Go to:

[CalledToServeChurchDevelopmentBook.pdf](#)

For an audio recording of my teaching Session 6 of the “Called to serve” course, go to: [Called-to-serve-Session-6-Receiving-the-power.mp3](#)

Preparing for a church which is radically biblical in the power of the Spirit 4: Forming a Ministry Group or Ministry Groups

In the previous issue of Prepare, I referred to possible hindrances to the church becoming radically biblical in the power of the Spirit and made suggestions as to how to overcome them. Then I referred to sharing the 12-point biblical Vision with leaders, teaching it to the leaders perhaps using the Called to Serve course.

What is a Ministry Group?

Now, we are able to look at a good context in which the Vision [Vision-Long.pdf](#) can be worked out, which we certainly found very helpful. I recommend setting up one or more Ministry Groups which are housegroups of, say, 12 people, which function like a mini-church, in many ways. They are not only a context for Bible Study, prayer and fellowship but also for people to discover their gifts and ministries and to use them, and a context for evangelism. A Ministry Group can be set up as part of a church. But those not (or no longer) in church leadership can set up such a group as an independent, private fellowship in someone’s home.

A biblical church is meant to manifest unity in diversity and ministry delegation

According to the New Testament, a church will not be a congregation who employ and allow one person to do all the ministry, i.e. an omniscient Minister. A truly biblical church will discern the gifts and potential ministries of its members. A church leader will have one or possibly two of the following gifts: apostle (with a wider than local ministry), prophet, evangelist, pastor, teacher. Then there are numerous other gifts, listed in the NT, amongst congregation members., which need to be discerned and affirmed so that people can use them within the Ministry Group, and, hopefully, the congregation.

How do we discern people’s gifts and ministries?

I recommend the following approach:

- The individual member concerned spends time privately in prayer, asking God to show what gift or gifts they have.
- At the same time the rest of the Ministry Group privately pray about what gift or gifts that individual has.
- The group come together (with the individual present) and the other group members share first what gift or gifts they believe the individual has. Then the individual shares.
- We found this a rewarding and encouraging approach, and they started with discerning what gifts they believed I had (as the Rector).
- Then the group should seek to facilitate the individual using their gift or gifts, and perhaps seeking to delegate any ministry for which they are not gifted (which I personally sought to do as much as possible).
- A situation developed in our church where each Ministry Group had a teacher, a worship leader, a prayer coordinator, a pastoral coordinator, an evangelism coordinator, and, of course, a host. They all took a lead in their area of ministry.

You will find a lot more advice about Ministry Groups, Discerning Gifts and Ministries, etc on pages 22-24 of [MinistersGuidetoChurchDevelopmentStrategy.pdf](#)

We’ll look next time at how the Ministry Groups carried out evangelism, pastoral care and discernment in prayer.

What if someone doesn’t want to make the Act of Dedication?

You will note in the Vision that one of its aims is “to achieve a unity of heart and mind in which the church moves enthusiastically as one in obedience to God.” So, it is essential that the members of Ministry Groups are really committed to the Vision. We need to pray that everyone will be so. If someone comes to the initial group teaching the Vision but doesn’t want to make a commitment to the Vision, then it would be unhelpful to have them in the Ministry Group. If these folk still want to be in a fellowship group then I think (as we did in our church) you will need to provide a general fellowship group to meet their needs. This is a challenge but

it is essential to avoid undermining the great potential of Ministry Groups, which really need to be one in heart and mind, having made the Act of Dedication at the end of the “Called to serve” Course.

The church becoming unbiblical on sexuality makes it even more urgent to pray for Revival

Sadly, we have seen the Church of England, and other denominations seriously depart from biblical teaching on the issue of sexuality. We have to take this seriously. My paper [Response-to-the-recent-C-of-E-decision-about-blessing-gay-marriage.pdf](#) makes the following points:

- We are to love our homosexual neighbour, whilst following biblical teaching on sexual behaviour.
- The General Synod has effectively approved committed, sexually-active, homosexual relationships, and those who think it hasn't are confused by the confusing messages given by some church leaders.
- The NT teaches us to separate from serious error, and we need to take that very seriously.
- But there are different ways of doing this. I have outlined several of them with hyperlinks to sources of assistance.
- We should, however, be positive in praying for Revival for the church, which is the only hope.

The paper also includes hyperlinks to my several papers on the homosexual practice issue. It is largely relevant to those in other denominations facing the same problem.

God bless you,

Tony

PS. A NEW ARTICLE I HAVE WRITTEN

My new article “**Israel ‘facing dictatorship ... civil war ... war with Iran’**” summarises the present very dangerous situation in Israel, encouraging prayer for God to bring a solution. It refers to the fact that God still has a purpose for the Jewish people, namely, a massive turning to Christ. See [Israel-facing-dictatorship-...-civil-war-...-war-with-Iran.pdf](#).

In Network for Revival God has called us to “make ready a people prepared for the Lord.” This includes:

- Encouraging people to seek holiness and true biblical discipleship.
- Encouraging people to major on prayer for Revival.
- Encouraging churches to be radically biblical in the power of the Spirit (see [Church Development](#) for information and resources).
- Encouraging people to “Watch!” for the return of Jesus (Mk 13:32-37 – see [Eschatology](#)).