

# Pat Sczebel

## MAKING ROOM FOR THE SPIRIT'S LEADING

### I. Intro

Gordon Fee writes, "A student once told a colleague of mine: "God the Father makes perfectly good sense to me; and God the Son I can quite understand; but the Holy Spirit is a gray, oblong blur."

"We tend to think of the Spirit in non-personal terms and refer to him as "it." Listen to our images: dove, wind, fire, water, oil. No wonder many regard the Spirit as a gray oblong blur and find him difficult to understand and relate to." Fee

### II. The Spirit and Our Worship

- A. We worship by the Spirit of God (Phil. 3:3, John 4:23-24)
- B. We are participants in the life of God through Christ because of the Spirit
- C. Without a theology of the Spirit we'll most likely drift into prioritizing subjective experiences or the opposite, a complacent but dead orthodoxy

"For Paul the gathered church was first of all a worshipping community; and the key to their worship was the presence of the Holy Spirit." (Gordon Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, pg. 884)

One of the Holy Spirit's "primary purposes in the new covenant age is to *manifest the presence of God*, to give indications that make the presence of God known." (Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, pg. 641)

"The Spirit makes known the personal presence in and with the Christian and the church of the risen, reigning Saviour. . . . He empowers, enables, purges, and leads generation after generation of sinners to face the reality of God. And he does it in order that Christ may be known, loved, trusted, honored and praised... The distinctive, constant, basic ministry of the Holy Spirit under the new covenant is . . . to mediate Christ's presence to believers." (J. I. Packer, *Keep in Step with the Spirit*, pp. 47, 49)

### III. The Everyday Work of the Spirit

- A. Be continually filled (Eph. 5)

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1. This is not speaking about when we gather
  2. Apart from me you can do nothing (John 15)
  3. Every day we should be asking for more of the Spirit
- B. Be continually aware.
1. Ordinary times
  2. Extraordinary times

#### IV. The Lord's Day work of the Spirit

- A. God is present with his people when we're gathered in a way that he isn't when we're scattered (1 Cor. 14:26; 1 Cor. 5:4-5; Heb. 12:22-24)
- B. Before the Meeting
1. Anticipating and expecting
    - a. The living God is present
    - b. Planning prepares us for greater listening while gathered
    - c. Lack of preparation or laziness is not being Spirit led
 

“The man should prepare his two sermons and put all his abilities and knowledge into them; but he should realize that unless the Spirit comes upon them, they will be of no avail. **The Spirit generally uses a man's best preparation.** It is not the Spirit [!] or preparation; it is preparation plus the unction and the anointing and that which the Holy Spirit alone can supply.” Martyn Lloyd-Jones (The Sacred Anointing Pg. 61)
    - d. Our focus should be 'we're going to meet with God versus hoping everything runs smoothly'
    - e. We have heart work to do before we gather
    - f. Going over the song list, praying through it, singing through it
    - g. Reading the text in advance and expecting the Lord to meet you and possibly use you to exhort the church afterwards
    - h. Spending time in prayer for the meeting asking that Christ would be glorified in all things and that you could be used in whatever way to see that accomplished
- C. During the Meeting
1. Understanding Spiritual gifts
    - a. The Spirit gives gifts for the common good of the church (1 Corinthians 12:7). These can be as normal as gifts of

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- administration, leadership, or as abnormal as prophecy or a tongue with an interpretation
- b. He has given gifts to each one of us for the building up of his church
- c. Do you enter the building on Sunday aware that God has given you gifts that he calls you to use?

2. Ready and willing to be used

- a. Giving and receiving
- b. Listening and responding to the truth
- c. We come to submit ourselves to God, not critique
- d. Singing truth that affects our emotions and affections

3. Coming aware of others

There's a right and a wrong way to be aware of others

- a. Right way – You are watchful and observant... the Lord directs your attention to people and their needs
- b. Wrong way – Fear of man that paralyzes you and cause you to move away from people vs. towards them
- c. Plan, but leave room for spontaneous contributions

EX Avoid two extremes: "It was a great meeting. Everything went *exactly* like I planned. or "It was a terrible meeting. Everything went *exactly* like I planned."

- d. Allow space between verses, songs
- e. Responding to impressions. Lead through them humbly.
- f. Prayer times after the meeting

**V. Conclusion**

The fruit of the Spirit will be manifest in the lives of those who love the work of the Spirit

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