

# Answers to Frequent Questions About Speaking in Tongues

## 1. What is it?

It is speaking in languages NOT KNOWN to the speaker through the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit. The words are given by the Holy Spirit to our spirit and do not come from our mind like normal speech (1 Corinthians 14:13). Thus the speaker does not understand what he or she is saying (though there are cases someone hearing the language understands it). 1 Corinthians 13:1 tells us that they can be earthly languages or languages spoken by angels.

## 2. What is it for?

**Firstly**, as part of our private devotions, it is way to EDIFY OURSELVES and build ourselves up in our faith (1 Corinthians 14:4 and Jude 20). **Secondly**, in church gatherings, when accompanied by interpretation, it has the same purpose as prophecy – to bring edification, exhortation and comfort to the church (1 Corinthians 14:3-5). **Thirdly**, it can act as a SIGN to unbelievers, in order to bring them to salvation (1 Corinthians 14:22). This happened in Acts 2: 4-12, when people understood the tongues spoken by the disciples on the Day of Pentecost, and it resulted in the salvation of about 3,000. There have been recorded cases in modern times when a tongue has been understood and it has led to the salvation of the hearer.

## 3. How does it come to us?

The ability to speak in other tongues is released when we are baptised with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4, 10:45-46, 19:6). For some people, the Holy Spirit Baptism comes with such a powerful experience that they burst into tongues immediately. However, for many others, it is a much quieter experience, and THEY initiate speaking in tongues without such a powerful anointing.

## 4. When can we speak in tongues?

We can use tongues in our private devotions at any time. Paul himself told the Corinthian church that he thanked God that he spoke in tongues more than them all (1 Corinthians 14:18). However, in church gatherings, public speaking in tongues must be accompanied by interpretation, and is only to be initiated under the specific direction and anointing of the Holy Spirit. Paul taught that unrestrained speaking in tongues brings disorder, and could lead visitors to say that that the people in the church are out of their minds (1 Corinthians 14:23-28). He laid out specific guidelines for the public use. His overall teaching was “let all things be done decently and in order” (1 Corinthians 14:40).

## 5. Do all speak with tongues?

In 1 Corinthians 12:30, Paul asked “Do all speak with tongues?” whereas in 14:5 he said that he wanted them all to speak in tongues. At first sight this appears to be a contradiction, but it really isn't. In 12:30 Paul is talking about public speaking in tongues accompanied by interpretation. Only some people are used by the Holy Spirit in this way to edify the church. In 14:5, he is referring to speaking in tongues without interpretation, which is only for private devotions. Paul wanted ALL believers to practise this, as we all need to be edified on a daily basis.

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### 6. Can we speak in more than one language?

Yes. Clearly “tongues” is PLURAL and indicates more than one language. As we practise in our own devotions, we will find that we can move into additional languages. This leads into greater freedom, anointing and edification in the spirit.

### 7. What about singing in tongues?

Singing in tongues adds another dimension to private worship. In [1 Corinthians 14:15](#), Paul said that “I will sing with the spirit and I will also sing with the understanding” indicating that he sang in tongues himself. Today, congregational singing in tongues is also common in public gatherings. As this edifies the church and results in a wonderful sense of the presence of God, many regard it as an acceptable use of tongues in the light of Paul’s guidelines.

### 8. What do we say when we speak in tongues?

In Acts 2:11 the disciples spoke about “the wonderful works of God”, when they spoke in tongues. [1 Corinthians 14:13-17](#) tell us that we can pray, bless and give thanks in tongues. Also, when accompanied by interpretation it can consist of edification, exhortation and comfort.

### 9. What is interpretation of tongues?

Some believers are used by the Holy Spirit to interpret when someone speaks in tongues during a public gathering ([1 Corinthians 14:27](#)). It is not a translation, because the interpreter does not understand what is spoken in tongues. It is done under the specific direction and anointing of the Holy Spirit, in a similar manner to prophecy ([1 Corinthians 12:10](#)). The interpreter can be the same person that speaks in tongues ([1 Corinthians 14:5 and 13](#))

***Speaking in tongues is a God-given way to move into the supernatural, and to build yourself up spiritually. Don't miss out!***

***“But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.”***  
***Jude 20-21***