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The Gift Of Tongues

By Brother David Jardine

I received the gift of tongues in August 1988. It happened when I was staying at the Christian Renewal Centre in Rostrevor. On the Tuesday afternoon there was a healing service. I did not have anything physically wrong with me, but I received a prayer for the deepening of my spiritual life. That evening I knew that something had happened to me, and next day, quite naturally, I began to speak in tongues. That was many years ago, and today I am more grateful than ever for this wonderful gift.

Tongues may be used in public worship, in which case an interpretation should always be given, or the gift may be used privately. I have never spoken in tongues in public worship. For me the gift has always been used in private. In fact it is the only one of the gifts of the Spirit which is specifically for the edification of the believer.

The use of tongues allows me to pray for much longer periods than I was able to before, alternating between English and Tongues. If I am interceding often what I do is bring the petition before the Lord in English and then start to pray in tongues. As I do this I may keep a picture in my mind of the person or situation being prayed for.

This method allows me to pray for an hour to two hours without becoming bored or tired; in fact, praying in tongues can be physically refreshing. Certainly, if I have to preach three or possibly four times on a Sunday to pray in between sermons in tongues keeps me fresh, and indeed

allows me to preach the fourth time with the same vigour as I showed in the first sermon.

I remember being at a Wholeness Through Christ School of Prayer and one of the leaders said that when he conducts a prayer school in England he is absolutely exhausted at the end of three gruelling days. He has a four-hour drive to get home and he prays in tongues the whole way. By the time that he arrives he is completely refreshed. This has also been my experience - that praying in tongues can be physically as well as mentally and spiritually uplifting. On one occasion when I had to write an article for a magazine I had an hour's drive home from a preaching engagement. I prayed in tongues the whole way. When I sat down to write the article words seemed to come to me very easily. The same has often happened when preaching.

If I have been able to pray in tongues for an hour before a sermon I seem to preach more fluently. The real explanation for this lies in the fact that the closer we are to God the better we do things and praying in tongues brings us closer to God. I have sometimes heard it said that your mind can be elsewhere when you are praying in tongues. This may be some people's experience, but I don't like my mind to wander too far from Jesus. So I keep interspersing prayer in tongues with prayer in English.

St Paul encouraged us in the sixth chapter of Ephesians to pray in the spirit at all times, to pray without ceasing. Tongues does enable us to do this. For instance I love to pray in the car. Even if I have a religious CD playing, I will still be praying in tongues at the same time. If I am writing an article and I get stuck, or the right words are not coming or I don't know what line of thought

to continue I sometimes put down the pen and pray in tongues for a few minutes. Often this is enough to show me the way ahead. I recently heard a preacher say that, although he had no biblical evidence to back it up, he felt that those people who are being used powerfully by God spend a great deal of time each day praying in tongues. It is not a cure-all; it is certainly not a substitute for a full commitment of our lives to God, but it is a very powerful gift. In fact at the beginning of the fourteenth chapter of the first letter to the Corinthians, it is one of the gifts that Paul encourages us to seek

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