

What is a Charismatic Church?

A charismatic church is a born again believing, Bible-based Christian church. It preaches that Jesus is Lord in resurrection power, manifesting gifts of the Holy Spirit to minister to the lost and edify the church. It is called full-gospel and New Testament emphasizing the completeness of the gospel message and the practice of spiritual gifts for today.

Where did the term Charismatic come from?

In order to answer this, it is important to understand the history of Spiritual gifts that manifested after the day of Pentecost:

1. The manifestation of the gifts declined after the apostolic age, due largely to the fact that the church had become lukewarm. This is evidenced by the Lord's warning to the church at Ephesus in Revelation 2:4-5.

2. In the second and third centuries they continued to more or less manifest. But shortly after Constantine's Edict making Christianity the national religion, at which time the church came into Imperial favor, the ministry of the gifts rapidly declined. *Although* it is important to note that the operation of the gifts *never* altogether ceased. The story of St. Francis contains thrilling incidents of miracles of healing.

3. Middle ages. The history of the persecuted sects of the Waldenses and Albigenses shows that the gifts of the Spirit were in manifestation even then.

4. 18th Century. John Wesley records remarkable Pentecostal phenomena in his journals in the meetings of the early Methodists. The Moravians and other contemporary groups also experienced many unusual supernatural manifestations.

5. 19th and 20th century revivals. When *at last* men began to earnestly to pray for their restoration to the Church, outpourings of His Spirit resulted. The Azusa street revival started in 1906, lasted three years with continuous services, and ignited spiritual gifts around the world.

In the early days of the restoration of the gifts of the Spirit the movement became known as Pentecostal, referring to the outpouring of the Spirit in Acts chapter 2 during the feast of Pentecost (A harvest festival):

Acts 2:1-4 When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

In the 1960's and 70's, to the surprise of some Pentecostal traditionalists, the Holy Spirit began to move among traditional denominational churches: Catholic, Methodist, Episcopalian, etc. This moved the Holy Spirit's presence among the middle and upper class people as well, becoming more main stream. The term "Charismatic Renewal" began to be applied to this new move of revival.

The word charismatic comes from the Greek word *charis*, which is often used for the word "gift" to describe the spiritual gifts. It means Grace, often interpreted and used in words such as favor, gifts, grace. One definition calls it a "gift of grace". As with salvation, the gifts are not based on our merit or personality, but on the grace and favor of God.

The dictionary defines "charismatic" as having or possessing great powers of charm or influence; to have a magnetic personality. A great leader and motivator can be known to have charisma, or a charismatic personality. While this definition is not negative, it does not

apply to a charismatic church. The world's definition is *man* centered. The Bible definition is *God* centered and resourced by Him.

A Charismatic Church is Characterized by:

1. Desire for a Manifestation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit:

1 Corinthians 12:7-11 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all: for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.

A charismatic church is open, and gives opportunity, to the manifestation of the Holy Spirit in its services. That manifestation could be a message spoken in tongues and interpretation, prophesy, laying on of hands, healing, or a miracle.

2. Exuberant worship

A charismatic church has responsive worship often marked by lifting of hands, verbal praise such as "Hallelujah", "glory to God", "praise You Jesus", "I love you Lord", "thank you Lord", and singing in the Spirit (tongues).

1 Corinthians 14:14-15 For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful. What is the conclusion then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding. I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding.

3. Spiritual Hunger

Zeal in the things of God and a desire to read, study and meditate on the Word of God.

Psalms 119:162 I rejoice at Your Word as one who finds great treasure.

2 Timothy 2:15 (KJS) Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth.

4. Desire to witness

Acts 1:8 "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

5. Desire for fruit of the Spirit and the greatest motivation of all: Love

1 Corinthians 12:31 But earnestly desire the best gifts. And yet I show you a more excellent way.

1 Corinthians 14:1 Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy.