



Gift of Tongues

Characteristics of the Gift of Tongues

- Manifests as different kinds/‘species’: human, angelic(?), divine
 - Paul’s context (for the local church): supernaturally inspired divine language meant for prayer, praise and thanksgiving
- Benefits the church corporately only if there is an interpretation
 - ...otherwise, benefit is retained individually. (Speaker urged to remain quiet.)

1 Corinthians 14:2 (ESV)

"For one who speaks in a tongue speaks not to men but to God; for no one understands him, but he utters mysteries in the Spirit."

“This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.”

1 Corinthians 14:9–11 (ESV)

So with yourselves, if with your tongue you utter speech that is not intelligible, how will anyone know what is said? For you will be speaking into the air. (10) There are doubtless many different languages in the world, and none is without meaning, (11) but if I do not know the meaning of the language, I will be a foreigner to the speaker and the speaker a foreigner to me."

1 Corinthians 14:23 (ESV)

“If, therefore, the whole church comes together and all speak in tongues, and outsiders or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are out of your minds?”

1 Corinthians 14:27–28 (ESV)

"If any speak in a tongue, let there be only two or at most three, and each in turn, and let someone interpret. (28) But if there is no one to interpret, let each of them keep silent in church and speak to himself and to God."

"The one who speaks in a tongue builds up himself, but the one who prophesies builds up the church. (5) Now I want you all to speak in tongues, but even more to prophesy. The one who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in tongues, unless someone interprets, so that the church may be built up."

"We who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves. (2) Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to build him up."

1 Corinthians 14:14–15 (ESV)

“For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays but my mind is unfruitful. (15)What am I to do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will pray with my mind also; I will sing praise with my spirit, but I will sing with my mind also.”

1 Corinthians 14:16–17 (ESV)

“Otherwise, if you give thanks with your spirit, how can anyone in the position of an outsider say ‘Amen’ to your thanksgiving when he does not know what you are saying? (17) For you may be giving thanks well enough, but the other person is not being built up.”

"I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you. (19) Nevertheless, in church I would rather speak five words with my mind in order to instruct others, than ten thousand words in a tongue."

Purpose/Outcome of the Gift of Tongues

- Prayer/communication with God that He understands, and not necessarily the speaker. (1 Cor. 14:2,14-15)
- A *praise language*, enabling the speaker to engage in unique worship of God (1 Cor. 14:15)
- An expression of *thanksgiving* to God (1 Cor. 14:17)