

Why I Don't Attend a Charismatic Church

- A different viewpoint than the traditional argument -

By ChurchSalt.com

Please Note: This article is NOT intended to offend, enter into heated debate or cause division. It is simply a viewpoint that I have slowly come to adopt after researching both sides of the traditional arguments concerning spiritual gifts and after visiting charismatic churches (even attending one for a while). I would greatly appreciate your comments and views, and ask you please leave them on the "Comments & Answers" page of the website (ChurchSalt.com) as I would greatly enjoy some conversation with a few devout charismatics. I hope you enjoy!

I used to attend a charismatic Church, so why don't I now? Well, here is my line of reasoning, please tell me if I am not lining up with Biblical teaching and thought. As with all my articles, I will try to keep it short and to the point

Expectancy. Seeking. That is, in a word (maybe 2 words), my problem with the charismatic movement in the U.S. And already, with those two words the charismatic reader is exasperated and proclaiming, "What! Are we not to seek God and come expecting Him to come to us!???!?" To which I will answer, yes, we are. But that is not what I see in the charismatic movement. Much of the conversation and literature is along the line of seeking God, but what do we really see happening at the vast majority charismatic worship services? The true excitement is generated when something spectacular happens. When someone is proclaimed to be healed, or when some of the folks in the front fall down, knocked over by the Spirit.

These things bring about the true excitement in the service. When I talk to many of my charismatic friends, when they are asked how a particular service was or how well an outreach worked, the answers I receive are all based on these types of events. I hear things such as, "I heard three people were healed of back injuries and one person had a tooth healed." Or a response like, "The whole choir was slain in the Spirit, God was really at work! It was great!" The reports after a service or outreach seem to confirm what I detect when I attend, that being an air of expectancy going into a service or outreach. Expectancy and seeking. But not the seeking after God Himself, but rather the seeking after a sign from God or a supernatural event. The expectancy of seeing a miracle. Indeed, much of the preaching even tells us to seek after these things and to expect a miracle. It is often even on the advertising. So what is wrong with seeking after these things?

The passion, the drive and the result analysis after the event is based on something other than Jesus Christ. Now please hear me out. It seems to me the charismatic bride of Christ is not truly seeking her husband, but is rather seeking after her husband's things, His abilities and the results of His work. "Not so," a charismatic might reply, "excitement is just naturally generated when the husband shows up, bringing gifts with Him!" If that is the case, then why the "Expect a miracle" advertising? Why do the reports after a service inevitably focus on healings and wondrous works?

Why so little talk in these services of the denial of self and of sin (which grieves Him) through the Spirit living in us, but so much focus on the fact that if the Spirit is in us, we should all be performing miracles? Why has speaking in tongues become the flagship of the charismatic movement? Teaching a man a new language instantly is indeed a difficult thing, but a far more difficult task is changing a sinful life into one that reflects Holiness. Biblically speaking, the fruit of the Spirit is always taught to be observable in everyday behavior as a Christian lives his/her life in complete submission and servitude to Christ. Why is this teaching so minimized in most charismatic Churches, but a “Finding & Developing your Spiritual Gifts” class is often readily available?

Granted, I am painting with a broad brush, and many charismatic Churches do indeed spend some energies focusing rightly on some of the meatier issues. But it is evident looking at the vast majority of charismatic Church advertising and websites that these things of which I speak are the norm and not the exception.

So what does the Bible have to say about those seeking after signs and supernatural events from God with an air of expectancy?

Luke 11:29-31 **And when the people were gathered thick together, he began to say, this is an evil generation: they seek a sign; and there shall no sign be given it, but the sign of Jonas the prophet. ³⁰ For as Jonas was a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of man be to this generation. ³¹ The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation, and condemn them: for she came from the utmost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here.**

Matthew 12:39-40 **An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. ⁴⁰ For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.**

Jesus made it quite clear. He had no intention whatsoever of giving those seeking a sign what they were looking for. How powerful and reaching His ministry would have been if he had healed and blessed all who sought these things on that day! If He had exhibited His power! But instead He called them wicked and adulterous. I do not know about you the reader, but it makes me take great pause and reflect on what it is I seek Him for while in the prayer closet. Am I truly seeking after the Kingdom of God? Am I seeking after His Righteousness? Or am I seeking after blessing, healings, things, and proofs?

I see the focus and passion of the great majority of charismatic Churches as being horribly misplaced. So misplaced, I do sometimes question if many of them are in the faith or merely preaching another Gospel. It seems they are so enamored with chasing God, they do not notice His Word states we already have Him and are led by Him, if we have indeed been redeemed. The things of God are thought of as outward signs and spiritual experiences rather than His Spirit working on the inside and changing our desires and even our very nature.

Once the depths and consequences of sin are known, along with the Holiness of God, I see the Cross of Christ as being the only thing to get truly excited about. It is there I was redeemed, it is there I am being cleansed, it is there I die to myself and it is there I base not some, but all of my hope. Truly nothing else can approach my Lord on the Cross when it comes to “Wow” factor. Let us focus on these things and discuss these things, rather than whether or not the choir fell down.

As I stated at the beginning of this article, I did not write this to offend, merely to expound my views in the hopes of generating some conversation. The website it is posted at (ChurchSalt.com) is not a heavy traffic, high profile website, but it gets a few visitors & hopefully this article will cause some to reflect on these things. If I'm in error, then tell me.

Thanks for reading!