

position paper

APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF ELDERS – DECEMBER 19, 2024

The Ministry and Gifts of the Holy Spirit at Calvary Church

Calvary Church is united around its Statement of Faith, mission, vision, and core values, while exercising liberty on secondary matters. That said, there are a few secondary issues that we believe are sufficiently important to clarify for the health and unity of the church. These issues include our belief concerning the importance of the ministry and gifts of the Holy Spirit.

The following statements reflect the position of the Board of Elders of Calvary Church. These position statements are dynamic, in that they may be modified by the Board at any time and at their discretion to promote understanding and unity within the church. As long as members affirm Calvary's Statement of Faith, the Board acknowledges that there is room for diversity of thought on secondary issues, while expecting all members to respect our church's position.

We affirm Calvary Church's Statement of Faith and first core value regarding the role of the Holy Spirit:

STATEMENT OF FAITH

Section 5. The Holy Spirit

We believe in the Holy Spirit, who came forth from the Father and the Son to convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment, and to regenerate, sanctify, and empower all who believe in Jesus Christ. We believe that the Holy Spirit indwells every believer in Christ, and that He is an abiding helper, teacher, and guide.

CORE VALUE

Rely on God: *Humbly infuse every action with Holy Spirit-led prayer.*

All decisions are nurtured in prayer as we seek the direction and wisdom of the Holy Spirit. In response to our requests, the Spirit of God directs us in the decisions we must make to carry out our ministry. His direction is always in keeping with biblical principles. Therefore, we desire to always be prayerfully devoted to seeking this guidance from the Holy Spirit (Jude 20; Rev.2:7).

In keeping with these statements, we desire as a church and individual members to be passionately and prayerfully pursuing the power of the Holy Spirit and a healthy biblical use of the gifts of the Holy Spirit in ways that express the unity of the body.

We affirm the following:

- That every believer in Christ is indwelt and baptized once with the Holy Spirit at the time of the new birth (1 Cor.12:13).
- That every believer in Christ is commanded to be repeatedly filled with the Spirit for power in ministry and faithfully living the Christian life (Eph.5:18-21).
- That when it comes to the gifts of the Spirit, we are not cessationists, but theologically continuationists.
- That God has graciously provided every believer with one or more "manifestations of the Spirit" so that we might encourage, edify, strengthen, instruct, and comfort one another, all with a view to an ever-increasing, incremental transformation into the image of Jesus Christ.
- That while God may give guidance, encouragement, and comfort through impressions, dreams, and visions, only the Bible is the inerrant, authoritative Word of God. Therefore, the accuracy of any impression or dream, for example, must be tested by Scripture. God will never lead us to engage in an action that contradicts that which is expressly asserted by the Bible. Our final authority for determining what we should believe and how we should live, including ethical and moral decisions, is the Bible, not our experience based on such things as impressions and dreams.

Several beliefs and practices within the broader pentecostal/charismatic world are unacceptable to Calvary Church. Instead, we affirm the following:

- We affirm that our theology is grounded in the sovereignty of God and the sufficiency of Scripture, rather than any teaching that promotes “word of faith” or “name-it-and-claim-it” ideologies regarding healing or physical health.
- We proclaim that the gospel is centered on Christ’s redemptive work and spiritual transformation, not on the so-called “prosperity” gospel.
- We emphasize that the sign of the baptism in the Holy Spirit is moral transformation (Gal.5:22-23), rather than one’s initial speaking in tongues.
- We affirm that the governance of Calvary Church is under a plurality of qualified elders, in line with Scripture (Phil.1:1; 1 Tim.3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9), and not dependent on the implementation of the “five-fold ministry” (Eph.4:11) that functions as authoritative, hierarchical offices of leadership.
- We trust in God’s sovereignty in spiritual warfare. Our approach to spiritual battle is prayerful, rooted in faith, and guided by Scripture.
- We value all spiritual gifts as given by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor.12:11) and affirm that no single gift is more important or universally expected of all believers.
- We ensure that any public expression of tongues is accompanied by interpretation, in accordance with biblical teaching, to maintain understanding of the message and edification within the church.
- We trust God’s will and timing in matters of healing and affirm that while we pray in faith, we recognize that healing is not always guaranteed this side of eternity.

INTERCESSORY PRAYER MINISTRY

We affirm the following practices:

- We humbly submit our requests to the Holy Spirit, trusting in His perfect wisdom and timing, rather than dictating or demanding specific actions.
- We seek clarity and evidence of God’s work before declaring someone healed, ensuring that our words reflect truth and avoid causing confusion or harm.
- We encourage believers to discern God’s guidance individually through Scripture, prayer, and wise counsel, rather than issuing directives that suggest a course of action must be followed.
- We affirm that all believers’ experiences of prayer, spiritual gifts, and listening to God are valid and equally significant when they conform to Scripture. No single experience is considered superior or more spiritual than another.
- We approach situations involving potential demonic oppression or possession with prayer, compassion, and reliance on the authority of Christ, discerning spiritual realities carefully without attributing issues to demonic influence prematurely.

