

Reading: Acts 2:36-47

*“The Lord added to the Church daily those who were being saved” (Acts 2:47)*

New believers are usually advised in follow-up talks to attend a “spiritual” Church. How to identify a “spiritual” Church?

Churches can be broadly divided as Pentecostal and non-Pentecostal. The main difference is on how one understands the experience of the Baptism with the Holy Spirit. It is wrong to say that the Pentecostal Churches are all “spiritual” and others are not. In the Biblical sense, the word “spiritual” is the opposite of “carnal” or “natural.” Hence a spiritual Church would mean a Church without carnality. It is not the style of worship, the form of government, the mode of baptism or the method of breadbreaking that decides whether or not a Church is “spiritual.” The deciding factor is its character as a group and the lifestyle of its members. In spite of the fact that all the gifts of the Holy Spirit were in operation in the Corinthian Church (1 Cor 1:7; 14:12a), Paul calls it a “carnal” Church (1 Cor 3:1-3). If we honestly analyse today’s situation, there is always a mixture of spirituality and carnality. The percentage, of course, varies!

After rebirth one should choose a local Church where he can “grow” into maturity. Some of the characteristics expected of a spiritual Church—

1. It should believe the Bible as the Word of God. It must provide solid Bible teaching which helps believers to grow steady and strong.
2. Worship should be rich in the “truth” content and enthusiastic in “spirit” (Jn 4:23,24).
3. There must be a healthy relationship among the members of the Church. Upholding one another and sharing material blessings with the needy must be practised in the Church (Js 2:14-17).
4. It must be a Church where leadership is not vested on one man but responsibilities are shared.
5. The Church must keep missions and evangelism as its top priority. The Church must not be a clutch. Members should have the freedom to associate themselves with evangelistic agencies and involve themselves in any ministry of their choice.

Since no single Church has all these characteristics, do visit other Churches for enlarging your vision and expanding your knowledge. Don’t expect too much and get disappointed. If disappointed, don’t get discouraged!

**A Prayer for the Need for Men and Women of God**

- O God, give us *another MOSES*  
who would say no to the pleasures of the world  
in order to suffer with Your people for their deliverance.
- O God, give us *another JOSEPH*  
who would patiently put up with injustice  
and would never compromise on his holy convictions.
- O God, give us *another JOSHUA*  
who would exercise positive faith on Your Word  
and fight the enemy with Your victorious presence.
- O God, give us *another DEBORAH*  
who would speak forth prophetic words  
to challenge and encourage leaders to rise up to the occasion.
- O God, give us *another GIDEON*  
who would come out of his inferiority complex  
and go forward stamping out fear counting on Your might.
- O God, give us *another SAMUEL*  
who would wait before You to hear Your voice  
in holy intercession and guide Your people.
- O God, give us *another DAVID*  
who would walk according to Your heart  
remembering his lowly past and Your lovingkindness.
- O God, give us *another ELIJAH*  
who would aggressively act on Your Word  
and put to shame the false prophets and ungodly rulers.
- O God, give us *another JOSIAH*  
who would follow the footsteps of his godly forefathers  
and boldly cleanse the Church and reform it.
- O God, give us *another EZRA*  
who would teach Your Word with due heart preparation  
and intercede with tears for the backsliders.
- O God, give us *another NEHEMIAH*  
who would ignore the threats of the opponents  
and go on rebuilding the broken walls.
- O God, give us *another ESTHER*  
who would risk her life  
in order to save Your people and bring them joy.      *(Continued)*

*(Continuation)*

- O God, give us *another ISAIAH*  
who would get his tongue cleansed and anointed  
to cry aloud Your message to the nations.
- O God, give us *another JEREMIAH*  
who would lament for the backslidden Church  
and deliver Your forthright message without fear or favour.
- O God, give us *another DANIEL*  
who would stay firm in his faith on You  
and would not buckle under anti-Christian governments.
- O God, give us *another JOHN THE BAPTIST*  
who would humble himself in order to exalt Christ,  
and prepare people for His coming and judgment.
- O God, give us *another STEPHEN*  
who would dare to die for the Gospel  
and bless the persecutors, with a vision of Your glory.
- O God, give us *another PAUL*  
who would not count his life dear  
but walk into enemy's territories to snatch souls from darkness.
- O God, give us *another LUTHER*  
who would stand for the truth of the Scriptures  
that Salvation is by grace and through faith alone.
- O God, give us *another WESLEY*  
who would spearhead an earthshaking revival  
so the dead bones would become a dynamic battalion.
- O God, give us *another FINNEY*  
who would preach red-hot messages  
to bring folks to tear-filled repentance.
- O God, give us *another CAREY*  
who would challenge our Churches  
through a missionary revival to attempt great things for You.
- O God, give us *another BILLY GRAHAM*  
who would move masses with the unadulterated Gospel  
to impact our cities and towns.
- O God, give us *another MOTHER TERESA*  
who would show the world that Christianity is charity,  
through faith in action to bless the suffering.
- O God, give us *another IDA SCUDDER*  
who would keep reminding us thro' sacrificial service  
that we are called to serve, not to be served.

In Jesus' Name, Amen!