

## Small Group Meeting on

### Celebrating the God who Sends his Spirit

#### Review (20 mins)

Reflect together on your experiences over the past couple of weeks. Did you engage with an audit of your time, money and gifts; or review your environmental impact? Share how that has worked out, and what next steps you will take as a result.

#### Read (10 mins)

Recap on the sermon from last Sunday. Try to give a summary to those who were not able to be present.

#### **Acts 2:1-21**

Read the Bible passage for this week, slowly and prayerfully. It might help to use your imagination to picture the scene. Below, you will find helpful background information in our 'Setting the Scene' section.

As you read, look out for *shockers* and *blockers*.

*Shockers* – a phrase, word, image or something from the text that resonates, stands out or connects with you.

*Blockers* – something from the text that raises questions for you.

#### **Setting the scene:**

- Pentecost (literally the 50<sup>th</sup> day (after Passover)) was a celebration of the wheat harvest, an opportunity for giving to

God the first-fruits of the harvest. Jerusalem would be packed with pilgrims.

- Joel (quoted by Peter in Acts 2) was not alone in seeing the coming of the Holy Spirit. Ezekiel 37 has a picture of dry bones being brought to life by the Spirit; while Jeremiah 31 (vv31-34) expresses the wider picture of a new covenant where God works on the 'inside' through minds and hearts.
- In Acts 1, Jesus has told the disciples to 'wait to receive power from on high ... to be witnesses.' The waiting is now over.

## Reflect (20 mins)

After you have all had time to read the text, pause and be still to listen to God through the Scriptures.

Begin your reflection time by each naming your *shockers* and *blockers*. Listen carefully to each other, share your thoughts and reflect on this passage together.

You might also like to explore these questions:

Q1. In what ways have you encountered the Holy Spirit in your own lives? Have a time of shared testimony and turn that into praise.

Q2. How would you answer Tom Wright's question: 'Has anything happened which might make people think you were drunk? If not, is it because the Spirit is simply at work in other ways, or because we have so successfully quenched the Spirit that there is actually nothing happening at all?'<sup>1</sup>

Q3. What opportunities do you see in your personal life, the life of your small group and the life of Christ Church to be still before the Spirit of God? What might be done to create more opportunities?

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<sup>1</sup> Tom Wright *Acts for Everyone – Part One* London: SPCK 2008 p30

## Respond (20 mins)

As you draw near to the end of your session, consider how you might respond to your reading and reflection by “walking the talk”. What are you going to be doing this week that will help you walk in the power of the Spirit?

### Some new challenge ideas

#### 1 Silence

Our prayer times (individually and corporately) are so often filled with noise. Make times of silence a regular part of your quiet time – to allow the Spirit of God to get a word in edgeways.

#### 2 Discernment

Joel lists ‘prophesying’, ‘visions’ and ‘dreams’ as part of the Spirit’s work. All of these can help in discerning what God is calling us to in daily actions. Intentionally pray for the Spirit’s discerning power in the decisions you make in the everyday – a meeting in the workplace, a family decision and so on.

#### 3 Globalisation

The Acts passage indicates the Spirit is for all peoples by both the list of nations in vv8-11 and across gender and age in vv17-18. Continue (or begin) to pray for parts of the world or local community to come to recognise God. If you want to commit to pray for an area of ministry in Christ Church contact the church office and we can put you in touch with appropriate people.

## Group Prayer

As a group, pray for one another this week as you explore a deeper life with God empowered and guided by the Spirit.