

Pentecost

discussion guide



based on **Acts 2** (Linked to sermon of 23/05/21)
which can be accessed at www.stjamesbythepark.org/talks

Intro: Before Jesus' death and resurrection, he made a promise to his disciples that he would "give you another Helper to be with you forever. This is the Spirit of truth". Acts 2 marks the fulfilment of this promise and the church annually celebrates this as Pentecost. But what does Pentecost mean to you? What difference does having the "Helper" make to your life and the life of the church? That is what we will be exploring in this study.

How does this passage speak to our desire to be a God-dependent, grace-filled, Bible-based, mission-focused, authentic community?

Up (Go deeper with God):

Begin with a time of prayer. So often we address our prayers to Jesus or God but rarely the Holy Spirit, who is part of the mystery we call the Trinity. You might like to experiment by praying for the Holy Spirit to come and fill you, to meet with your group. Use Psalm 139:5-16 as a reminder that God's Spirit is always with us.

Now read Acts 2:1-13.

Worth knowing that the Jewish festival of Pentecost (Shavuot) was primarily a thanksgiving for the first fruits of the wheat harvest. Can you see any links to this and God choosing this time to pour out His Holy Spirit on the disciples?

Consider some of these questions (as well as anything else which strikes you):

- 1. What is the situation in verse 1? Do you think it is significant that they are "all together"?*
- 2. What imagery is used to describe the Holy Spirit in verse 2-3? What else do you associate with these images and is this the way you view the Holy Spirit? (you might like to develop this by thinking of what imagery you might use when describing your experience of the Holy Spirit to someone else)*
- 3. What immediate effect does the Holy Spirit have on the disciples in verse 4? Why might this be particularly useful? (see verses 8-11)*
- 4. What effect does the pouring out of the Holy Spirit have on others gathered in Jerusalem in verse 6-7?*
- 5. What two contrasting assumptions are made by the people in verse 12-13?*

In (Grow closer to each other):

Spend some time on a short Bible study on the Holy Spirit, using the following Scriptures:

Ezekiel 36:27

John 14:17

Romans 8:9

Joel 2:28

Acts 1:8

Luke 12:12

1 John 2:27

What aspects of the Holy Spirit's character and gifting does we discover in these passages?

As believers, Jesus has promised us the gift of the Holy Spirit to enable and empower us in our Christian walk. To what extent have you experienced this? Share examples of the Spirit's work in your lives.

Ephesians 5:18 says "Do not get drunk with wine... but be filled with the Spirit". A more accurate translation would be "keep on being filled with the Spirit". With this in mind, spend time in small groups or twos praying for the renewal of the Holy Spirit in one another.

Out (Reach further with the good news):

Peter's gospel message to those Jews gathered in Jerusalem uses Old Testament prophecy to explain what is happening and to preach the gospel. He uses language and examples which were culturally relevant to his hearers. Discuss how we might need to adapt our language and use of example to reach those family, friends and community members. Instead of using the Old Testament, what examples might be helpful ways to illustrate to gospel to unbelievers?

You might like to get one or two members of the group to share their testimony. As they do try to listen out for "Christianese" and think of ways of telling the story using relevant language.

Close in prayer. You can use the following:

Holy Spirit, thank you for filling us, please fill us anew

Holy Spirit, thank you for comforting us, please help us to comfort others

Holy Spirit, thank you for helping us, please help us to help others

Holy Spirit, thank you for equipping and empowering us, please help us to reach out to others.

In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.