

Opener

“If God does not enter your kitchen, there is something wrong with your kitchen. If you can’t take God into your recreation, there is something wrong with your play. We all believe in the God of the heroic. What we need the most these days is the God of the humdrum, the commonplace, the everyday.” So said Peter Marshall. Do you agree with him? To what extent are you aware of the presence of God in the normal run-of-the-mill activities of life? Can you give any examples?

Worship

Ask each person to recall the time when they have most been aware of the presence of God. Where were they at the time? In what way did they sense His nearness? Encourage them to put into words how it felt, or the emotions that accompanied that moment. Leaders, please reassure anyone who does not feel able to share, that God is present with them also. We all experience His nearness in different ways. Read Psalm 139:7-10 and then spend some time in prayer thanking God for his presence with us.

Bible Study

Read Acts 2:1-21 and discuss together:

- What reasons had Jesus given his disciples for looking forward to the promised outpouring of the Holy Spirit? (You might want to review the following verses: Acts 1:4-7; Mark 13:11; John 14:26; John 15:26-27; John 16:7-16; John 20:21-22) In what ways do we see the things Jesus spoke of beginning to be fulfilled on the day of Pentecost?
- In both the Hebrew language of the Old Testament and the Greek used in the New, the word for wind or breath and the word for Spirit are the same. Jesus himself used this analogy more than once (see e.g. John 3:8), and when the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost He did so with the sound of a mighty wind. What can we learn from this picture language about the nature or activity of the Holy Spirit?
- What can we learn from the experience of the early disciples that will be of help as we seek to be filled with the Holy Spirit?
- The message that the Holy Spirit gave in so many different languages was a declaration of the “wonders of God”. When we seek to witness to others, to what extent do we speak in this way rather than, say, focussing on questions of doctrine or the wrongness of other people’s points of view?
- Luke writes that “All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues...” (v.4). Joel’s prophecy similarly related to all people, young and old, men and women. Peter reiterates this again later in his sermon: read verses 38-39. Do you think that we share the same expectation that God wants to pour his Spirit out on all believers without distinction, or do we sometimes act as though He is reserved for just a few?

Reflection and Prayer

In pairs, read Acts 2:38-39 again. The promise of the gift of the Holy Spirit is for all whom the Lord our God will call, says Luke. That means us! For some people this is an immensely exciting prospect, others find it rather a frightening one. In your pairs, discuss together your reactions when you hear or read about people’s experience of being baptised in the Holy Spirit, speaking in tongues or receiving other miraculous gifts of the Spirit. Do you share the sense of “eager desire” that Paul encourages in 1 Corinthians 12:31 for a greater openness to and experience of the working of God’s Spirit in your life? Take some time to pray for one another. If someone in the group is wanting to ask God to do something new in their life, it may be appropriate for the whole group to gather around and pray for them. Allow the Spirit to guide your prayers, and expect Him to speak to you as you pray.