

Time for God – Take 2

Purpose: To assist the congregation with further reflection on the theme of the Sunday service and in particular with the Congregational Bible passage.

Week beginning Sunday 4 June 2017

Birthday of the Church

Pray Pray that we would recognise the Holy Spirit as the Holy Spirit of Jesus and not in any way opposed to or simply an extra to Jesus. Pray that we would be alert to where and how the Spirit might be working in our midst and open to cooperating.

Read Read the passage (preferably in an easy to understand version). Acts 2:1-21.

Background The Holy Spirit comes in power on the people of God (from all the known world) gathered in Jerusalem. Peter recognises this as a fulfilment of Joel's prophecy and boldly defends the believers and openly proclaims Jesus as Saviour. There is a massive transformation in the disciples from scared individuals hiding from the authorities in fear of their lives to become bold proclaimers of the risen Jesus.

It is not our normal practice to have Take 2 material following an all age service but I offer a few notes this week for discussion.

Possible questions/points to consider

1. It is fair to say that until relatively recently the person and work of the Holy Spirit has been "played down" in mainstream churches in the western world. How much teaching on the Holy Spirit did you receive a) growing up (if you did) in the Church b) as an adult in the Church? To what extent would it be fair to say that you knew less about the Spirit than about the Father and the Son? How has this affected your view of the Spirit? Your readiness to talk about the Holy Spirit?
2. Acts 2 suggests very clearly that God intends the Holy Spirit to be given generally to believers young and old, male and female etc. There is often a view nowadays that the Spirit is only for very special spiritual people. How would you react?
3. The coming of the Spirit was linked to the equipping of the disciples to take the good news of Jesus out into the world. How significant is this today?
4. The phrase the birthday of the Church isn't the end of the world but in a way the coming of the Spirit did give fresh life to the early Church. What is the role and place of the Spirit in the Church today? How are we to see the Spirit's (and our) role in mission?
5. Given that the Spirit is the Spirit of Jesus and is given as a gift to the Church to keep us in fellowship with our Lord and to equip us to continue his ministry how can we imagine that we can do without the Spirit? How can we allay people's fear of the unknown or fear of losing control?
6. Another aspect we considered on Sunday was that we, as believers, as also gifts to the Church – that God equips us to serve one another (in different capacities) and serve the world as his agents. How might we view our fellow Christians differently if we took this more to heart?
7. Anything else that arises from the passage or the service?

Prayer Thank you Lord for the gift of your Holy Spirit. We are encouraged by the dramatic change in the lives and witness of the early disciples though if truth be told we are often rather wary of the Spirit's activity in our midst. Help us to welcome and celebrate Jesus' gift of the Spirit to the Church and one another as God's gifts too and to be prepared to work with and not against your work among us, for your glory's sake. Amen