

# The Holy Spirit

## session handout

Then afterwards, I will pour out my spirit on all flesh;  
your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men will dream dreams,  
and your young men will see visions.  
Even on the male and female slaves, in those days, I will pour out my spirit.

Joel 2. 28-29

## The promise of the Holy Spirit

In Old Testament days the Holy Spirit was not given to every believer. The Spirit of God rested on great national leaders (like Moses); great prophets (like Elijah); great kings (like David) and on other special individuals.

The coming of the Holy Spirit on these people was a definite event that made a real difference to their lives.

But the prophets foretold a time when God would pour out his Holy Spirit upon all people.

The Holy Spirit came down upon Jesus at his baptism in the Jordan (Luke 3.22).

According to Luke, after Jesus rose from the dead, he met with the disciples over 40 days before he was taken into heaven – the event the Church calls the Ascension. Jesus promised that, after his ascension, the Holy Spirit would be given to his disciples.

This is what happened on the day of Pentecost. The disciples' lives were completely transformed.

The same promise of the Holy Spirit is given to every Christian today.

Jesus ordered them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for the promise of the Father. 'This', he said, 'is what you have heard from me; for John baptized with water; but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.'

Acts 1. 4-5

## The work of the Spirit

### **The Spirit dwells within us**

The Holy Spirit fills that space in our lives that no one else can fill. The Spirit comforts, teaches, counsels and guides us and reveals Jesus to us.

Look at these passages from John's Gospel together. In small groups, make a summary of what the passages teach us about the Holy Spirit's work:

John 14.15-27

John 16.5-16.



## **The Spirit makes us more like Jesus**

When you become a Christian you don't become perfect. There's still a lot to put right in your action and character.

The Holy Spirit works within us, transforming us so that we reflect more and more the character of Jesus.

He brings out in our lives the fruits of the Holy Spirit.

Look them up in Galatians 5.22-23 and make a list together.

## **The Spirit gives us gifts and empowers us for ministry**

Jesus invites us to proclaim the gospel. But we can't do that on our own. The Holy Spirit empowers us to share in this work.

As an important part of that empowering we are given spiritual gifts. Some gifts mean that we have God's anointing in a special way on our natural gifts (in such things as hospitality, teaching, administration or evangelism).

Others are supernatural gifts such as praying in tongues (a special prayer language God gives), prophecy (speaking God's word into different situations) or healing.

Gifts are given to every Christian who desires them and seeks to build up the life and mission of the Church.

Lists of gifts of the Spirit are given in 1 Corinthians 12.1-11 and Romans 12.6-8. Look at the passages in small groups and make a list of the gifts here. Put an asterisk by any you don't understand. The greatest gift of all is love (1 Corinthians 13).



## **For reflection**

Spend time this week thanking God for the gift of the Spirit. You may want to make the prayer your own: Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.

Continue your reading of the Gospel of Luke. Aim to finish the Gospel this week if you can.

