



Worship at home' May 19th 2024



On the day of Pentecost all the believers were meeting together in one place. Suddenly, there was a sound from heaven like the roaring of a mighty windstorm, and it filled the house where they were sitting. Then, what looked like flames or tongues of fire appeared and settled on each of them. And everyone present was filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in other languages, as the Holy Spirit gave them this ability. Acts 2:1-4

Today we celebrate **Pentecost**, and the gift of the **Holy Spirit**. You might **light a candle** as you invite God's Spirit to be upon you during this time of worship.

***Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful people;
and kindle in us the fire of your love.***

Pentecost falls fifty days after Passover. The word *Pentecost*, from Greek, means "fiftieth". The Feast of Pentecost was a Jewish festival, also known as the Feast of Harvest. Jews gathered together to give thanks for the first fruits of the spring harvests in ancient Israel, and to recall the giving of the Ten Commandments to Moses at Mount Sinai. It was also known as the Festival of Weeks, or *Shavuot*, in Hebrew, occurring 7 weeks and one day after the Passover.

Ten days after Jesus' ascension, his followers gathered together to observe this festival. The Holy Spirit came upon them, just as Jesus had promised at the time of his ascension. God's spirit, present since the beginning of time, guiding, prompting, healing,



saving, is now given for all, to renew and transform. Pentecost is sometimes referred to as the birthday of the Church, as so many people became Christians on that day.

Acts 2:1-8, 11, 12

On the day of Pentecost all the believers were meeting together in one place. Suddenly, there was a sound from heaven like the roaring of a mighty windstorm, and it filled the house where they were sitting. Then, what looked like flames or tongues of fire appeared and settled on each of them. And everyone present was filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in other languages, as the Holy Spirit gave them this ability. At that time there were devout Jews from every nation living in Jerusalem.

When they heard the loud noise, everyone came running, and they were bewildered to hear their own languages being spoken by the believers. They were completely amazed. "How can this be?" they exclaimed. "These people are all from Galilee, and yet we hear them speaking in our own native... languages about the wonderful things God has done!" They stood there amazed and perplexed. "What can this mean?" they asked each other.

New Living Translation

The two most common words used for spirit in the Bible are *ruach* (Hebrew) and *pneuma* (Greek). Both mean wind, air, breath, and spirit. For ancient Israelites, 'wind', 'breath' and 'spirit' are so closely related that they share the same word. When God breathed into Adam's nostril he became a living being (Gen 2:12): the breath of God brings life. At Pentecost, God's spirit was experienced as a wind, bringing new life and new opportunities. We are seldom aware of our breath, it cannot be seen, tasted or touched, however it is essential for life. So too, God's spirit cannot be seen, yet is essential for us to live in fullness of life.

Spend some time reflecting on God's spirit within you, essential for your being, as you pray this breath prayer:

***Come, Holy Spirit, fill me.
Come, Holy Spirit, fill me.
Come, Holy Spirit, fill me.***



Sit quietly and take some slow, deep breaths. As you do so, invite the Holy Spirit to fill you. Breathe in God's presence and love, and breathe out any concerns or worries. You might already have a favourite phrase you use as a breath prayer, or you might choose to use the words '**Come, Holy Spirit, fill me**' as you breathe slowly, in and out. Spend as long as you like sitting in prayer, being aware of the presence of God with you.

*Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on me;
Spirit of the Living God, fall fresh on me;
break me, melt me, mould me, fill me;
Spirit of the Living God, fall fresh on me.*



Daniel Iverson
Scripture in Song 303

Acts 2: 13-21

Then Peter stepped forward with the eleven other apostles and shouted to the crowd, "Listen carefully, all of you, fellow Jews and residents of Jerusalem! Make no mistake about this. These people are not drunk, as some of you are assuming. Nine o'clock in the morning is much too early for that. No, what you see was predicted long ago by the prophet Joel: 'In the last days,' God says, 'I will pour out my Spirit upon all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy. Your young men

will see visions, and your old men will dream dreams. In those days I will pour out my Spirit even on my servants—men and women alike— and they will prophesy. And I will cause wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below— blood and fire and clouds of smoke. The sun will become dark, and the moon will turn blood red before that great and glorious day of the LORD arrives. But everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved.' New Living Translation

The ancient Hebrew understanding was that only certain people were empowered by the spirit of God: only the anointed priests were allowed into the inner sanctum of the temple, and certain prayers could only be prayed through the priests. Prophets had a unique role because they had been anointed by God's spirit to speak God's word.



At Pentecost, the prophet Joel's vision that one day every person, old and young, men and woman, would know the spirit of God for themselves, becomes real. No longer was it only certain people who had a special relationship with God: the Holy Spirit came upon all of them.



God's spirit is powerful and dramatic;

God's spirit makes things happen;

God's spirit is transforming and empowering.

God's spirit continues to be present and active in our lives, our church and our world. God's spirit is here with us now, in the same way that God's spirit was with the group of disciples two thousand years ago. Sometimes we need to pause and make space in our lives to be aware and open to the working of God's spirit.

Reflect on how you might be more intentionally aware of God's spirit with you this week.

Prayer

Come, Spirit of Truth, fill our hearts.

May that which was of stone
be now transformed into life.

Come, Spirit of Life, change our hearts.

May we who receive your light dwell together in Your love.

Come, Spirit of Love, soften our hearts.

Bestow your compassion on those who suffer
in mind, spirit, and body.

Come, Spirit of Hope, heal our hearts.

Make us bold to bring light to the dark places,
warmth to the cold places, and love to the empty places.

Come, Spirit of Faith, strengthen our hearts.

Spirit of the Living God,
fill our hearts, minds, and souls to overflowing.

Come, Spirit of God, move in our hearts.

Our God—we, your people,
celebrate the mystery of your never-ending love.

Amen.

