

Way of Discipleship Small Groups

Mission and the Holy Spirit



Touching base (5 minutes)

Open in prayer as is helpful for your group.

If this is your first session take time to introduce yourselves and set any ground rules you want to for your time together.

If you met previously take the opportunity either as a group or in pairs to check in with each other about how your response from last time has gone.



Opening question(s) (5 minutes)

What can hold us back from wanting to be involved with God's mission?



Understanding the information (20 minutes)

Share these thoughts in your own words or read them together:

A tour through the whole Bible shows just how much the “chief actor in the historic mission of the Christian church is the Holy Spirit. He is the director of the whole enterprise. The mission consists of the things that he is doing in the world”. (Bishop John V. Taylor) The incredible gift is that it is not our job to do God's work for Him – we just get to join in! As one writer put it, “I used to ask God to bless what I am doing. Now I find out what God is blessing and go there.”



If Jesus is our model for mission, it is instructive to see how much He saw Himself as being led by His Father in it: “...the Son can do nothing by Himself; He can do only what He sees His Father doing.” (John 5:19) and how His whole life and ministry are in the power of the Spirit. Jesus did all that He did as a human being empowered by Holy Spirit. Just the same as us. He is the anointed one, whom Isaiah prophesied would anoint to bring good news (Isaiah 61). Famously, Jesus quoted these words about Himself at the start of His ministry.

It is not surprising that for the early Christians it was natural that they “prayed for the new believers there that they might receive the Holy Spirit” (Acts 8: 14-17), that Ananias prayed for Saul (who became Paul) saying “the Lord...has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 9: 17), that they saw the gift of the Spirit being poured out on those who were not expecting it (Acts 10:45) and that Paul said all the fruit of His ministry came from God: “I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth.” (1 Corinthians 3:6)

The Spirit works to help us to **want** to join in with His mission. If we struggle because of all kinds of pressures or fears these thoughts may help.

We don't engage with God's mission because it is a task to be done, but because it is the outworking of who God is. By looking at the nature of the Holy Spirit, we can see that God is in Himself a God who always overflows to others, always goes to them. He is a missionary God. The poem "The Coming" by RS Thomas describes God looking at the brokenness of the world and ends like this: "...On a bare / Hill a bare tree saddened The sky. Many People / Held out their thin arms / To it, as though waiting / For a vanished April / To return to its crossed / Boughs. The son watched / Them. 'Let me go there,' he said."

The more we keep company with a God whose nature is to go to the darkest cross to reach those in need, the more we will want to share in His mission.

The Holy Spirit is the best, and most necessary, gift we can receive. Jurgen Moltmann writes that, "The Spirit is more than just one of God's gifts among others; the Holy Spirit is the unrestricted presence of God in which our life wakes up...the greatest and most wonderful thing which we can experience...We feel and taste, we touch and see our life in God and God in our life." Jesus spoke about the Holy Spirit as the best gift anyone can receive saying, "... how much more will the heavenly father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him?" (Luke 11)

The philosopher Kierkegaard asked, "What is a Christian? A person who has caught fire from God's...presence...a Christian is a person set on fire." The story is told of a young monk seeking advice from an older monk about his spiritual life. "Abba," he said, "as far as I can I say my little office, I fast a little, I pray and meditate, I live in peace and as far as I can, I purify my thoughts. What else can I do? Then the old man stood up and stretched out his hands toward heaven. His fingers became like ten lamps and he said to him, "If you will, you can become all flame."

Discuss: What are the best ways to grow in confidence in joining in with God's mission?

Reading the Bible (20 minutes)

Read Acts 2: 1-21 which describes what the Holy Spirit did to the disciples at Pentecost.

Discuss the Discovery Bible Study questions:
What does this passage teach me about God?
What does this passage teach me about people?
How does this passage call me to obey God?
What might I do in response to this this week?



Seeing how it looks in real lives (10 minutes)

There is no video, but you are invited to discuss your experience of being inspired to take part in God's mission.



Responding to God's leading (5 minutes)

Give people an opportunity to think about, "What might God be showing me and how might I respond?" They may like to write this down and/or share it with the group and/or share it with one other person. A friendly question is to ask each other, "Is there anything that would be helpful to ask you next time?"



Group prayer (5 minutes)

O gracious and loving God,
you work everywhere
reconciling, loving, and healing
your people and your creation.
In your Son and through the power of your Holy Spirit,
you invite each of us to join you in your work.
We ask you to form us more and more
in your image and likeness,
through our prayer and worship of you
and through the study of your scripture,
that our eyes will be fully opened
to your mission in the world.
Then, God, into our communities,
our nation, and the world,
send us to serve with Christ,
taking risks to give life and hope
to all people and all of your creation.
We ask this in Jesus' name.
Amen.





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