

The Essentials of Discipleship 4: Living in the Power of the Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the means by which God makes himself real in our lives. The focus here is on two things: (i) understanding the amazing range of things that Spirit does in us and for us; and (ii) sharing about and deepening that reality in our lives.

Part 1: Sharing about the Holy Spirit

In small groups of three or four ask people to share:

- Have you experienced the Holy Spirit?
- What difference has it made to your Christian life? Or: When you think about the Holy Spirit, what do you think of?

Part 2: Thinking the Spirit in the Ministry of Jesus

Read Luke 3.15-17; 3.21-22; 4.1-2; 4.14-21.

- What does John predict that Jesus' ministry will be?
- How does Jesus time in the desert affect his empowering with the Spirit?
- As Jesus applies the prophetic commission of Isaiah 61 to himself what does tasks does he say the anointing of the prophetic Spirit calls him to? How are we meant to continue these tasks?
- To what extent does this pattern of anointing, testing and mission meant for us? Or: What can we learn for ourselves from Jesus' experience of the Spirit?

Part 3: Thinking the Spirit in the lives of believers

Romans 8.1-27 is a major piece of Paul's teaching about the Spirit and rewards detailed study. We are looking at it only briefly for the range of things it tells us about the Spirit's work.

- Either.** Read Romans 8.1-27 through slowly as a group stopping to note all the things that it says the Holy Spirit does in us and for us.
- Or.** Divide into two or three groups giving one group each a section of the passage: (It can be divided in two after verse 17 or in three after verses 11 and 17). Get each group to list the things that the Holy Spirit does in us and for us and feed back to the whole group.

Part 4: Thinking about Spiritual Gifts

Read 1 Corinthians 12.1-11.

- Who is to exercise spiritual gifts?
- How can we tell that spiritual gifts are authentic?
- What is the purpose of the charismatic gifts?
- What other gifts can you think of? Or: What gifts have you exercised?
- Which do think God might be calling you to exercise? Or: How do you think that each of us could contribute to cell and church life in this area?

Part 5: For Further Study

John's Gospel has some special teaching about the Holy Spirit, which Jesus gives to his disciples just before his death. In John it is quite clear that the Holy Spirit is not in believers during Jesus ministry. The Spirit is with them in Jesus and will be given to them and be in them after the resurrection (John 7.37-39; 14.15-17; 20.22).

Read John 14.15-17; 14.25-27; 16.12-15

- What names are given to the Spirit here?
- What is his relationship with Jesus?
- What will the Spirit do for the disciples? How does this happen in practice today?