

STORIES OF FAITH

Pentecost: The Spirit of Adventure

Small Group Study Notes by Jonny Grant

READ

Read Acts 2 as a Group, each person taking turns to read a few verses at a time.

FOR DISCUSSION

1. As you read about this familiar scene, is there anything new for you that you hadn't noticed before?
2. Are there any questions or particular points of interest for you?

SETTING THE SCENE

The coming of the Holy Spirit during the traditional Jewish festival of Pentecost (50 days after Passover) is the moment when the church came into being, and it relates to the “tongues of fire” that rest on the gathered believers. In the Old Testament fire often represented the physical expression of God's presence. For instance, God led the Israelites through the wilderness with a pillar of fire at night, which then rested over his tent while they camped. Importantly, God's visible presence was only ever in one place, in specific Holy Places like the Tabernacle and then the Temple.

This is mirrored in how God led his people by choosing a few specially chosen people. This radically changes during the Pentecost described in Acts 2, when we're told that “They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them.”

Peter describes this significant shift as the fulfilment of God's promise to fill everyone who believes in him with his empowering presence. The church is birthed because now God's presence in the world is not just expressed through a few specially-chosen people, but through the diversity of gifts, callings, vocations and personalities of everyone in church. No-one is left out, whether young or old. This is often a truth that is hidden in plain sight within the church, which means that we can easily lose sight of just how radical the Pentecost-shaped church is.

DISCUSS IN PAIRS

- If Pentecost is a model of life for all Christians, then and now, how would you describe God's guiding, calling or prompting in your life? Are there any specific examples that help you to describe this?
- Do you sense that God has given you something specific to do now?
- Are there any situations where you need clear discernment or direction?

PRAY IN PAIRS

For the last part of this session, spend some time praying for each other, that God would speak clearly as you seek his guidance in the areas you've highlighted.

