

# PRACTISING THE POSTURES OF PENTECOST

Not a Crowd, But a family - Week 1

Jonny Grant

## PRAY

Lord, we thank you that you are the creator, sustainer and restorer of everything, including us. We thank you that you have made each of us a unique 'one-off' and that you know us personally by name. Show us your creativity, design and creativity at work within us individually and collectively.

## WHAT IS THE BIG IDEA AT THE CENTRE OF PENTECOST?

At the beginning of Acts, when the Spirit comes, we see an unprecedented dispersal of God's anointing through the Holy Spirit. Instead of working through a few specially appointed people like throughout the Old Testament, God's presence now fills and inspires all believers as a diversely gifted priesthood. Read Acts 2:1-21 aloud, each person reading out a few verses at a time.

## CHRISTIAN PENTECOST IS KNOWN AS THE "BIRTHDAY OF THE CHURCH" ...

Because it imprinted the universal DNA of the church for all times and in all places. So, as the church of Pentecost today, how do we embrace its rhythms and postures?

## POSTURE 1 - BIBLICAL HUMILITY

For the church to fulfil its potential, we all need to step into the radical inclusion embraced by the early church, with each of us understanding and bringing our unique contribution in an environment of mutual support.

## SO - WHAT IS BIBLICAL HUMILITY?

Well, put simply, it's a posture with three dimensions.

1. First, we need to understand who we are and what gifts and sense of calling we carry. How might that translate into a contribution within our church community?
2. Secondly, we need to humbly acknowledge that we are limited in what we can do alone; that God has designed us to find our fullness and fulfilment as part of the collective of his spiritual family.
3. Thirdly, we need to understand that the church is not a project that is made by human hands; it is the work of the Creator and only the Spirit can give the church its life.

## READ

As a group, read 1 Corinthians 12, each taking turns to read a few verses.

## REFLECT

Take 5-10 minutes alone with a piece of paper and a pen. Ask God to give you clarity and then revisit Question 1 above. What are your clearest giftings (don't feign humility here!), and how might each one translate into a practical contribution within the church or this group? Now, in pairs or threes, share your lists, letting others reflect on what you've written.

## POSTURE 2 - BRAVE SPIRITUALITY

Tim Keller, in his commentary on the Book of Judges, uses the term "Brave Spirituality" to sum up the essence of the Christian Life. He says: "God's call to his people (then and now) is to combine spirituality with bravery. True discipleship is radical and risk-taking, because true disciples rely on God to keep his promises to bless them, and not on their own instincts, plans, or insurance policies."

## READ HEBREWS 11:1-12

The author of Hebrews describes our genealogy of faith or spiritual whakapapa through these "ancients," who show us the timeless characteristics of faith.

## REFLECT

In pairs or threes, can you describe an event or time in your life when you experienced bold faith or "brave spirituality" as Keller describes it? What helped you to sustain the journey and how did it end? What did you learn about God, faith and yourself through this experience? Is there a situation now where you need to bravely trust God?

## CLOSING PRAYER

Lord, fill us with courage to follow you with the eyes of faith, knowing that you are the good Shepherd who has already gone before us and made a way forward. Help us to keep our eyes fixed on your good plans and the future you have prepared for us.  
Amen