

Come Holy Spirit

Call to Worship

We have then, brothers and sisters, complete freedom to go into the Most Holy Place by means of the death of Jesus. He opened for us a new way, a living way, through the curtain – that is, through his own body. We have a great priest in charge of the house of God. Let us come near to God, then, with a sincere heart and a sure faith, with hearts that have been made clean from a guilty conscience, and bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold firmly to the hope we profess, because we can trust God to keep his promise. (Hebrews 10:19-23 GNB)

Prayer

Father, we are here to worship you who gave us our Saviour Jesus, who gave us the Holy Spirit. Give us a desire to be filled again and again with your Holy Spirit so that his fruits may abound among us, his gifts empower us to change at least our part of the world. Come Holy Spirit, fill us again for worship, fill us for mission to tell others of Jesus. Amen

Song: Anastasis (Resurrection) *by D Ussher, M Sampson, B Hastings*

1. I cast my mind to Calvary where Jesus bled and died for me.
I see his wounds, his hands, his feet, my Saviour on the cursed tree.
2. His body bound and drenched in tears they laid him down in Joseph's tomb.
the entrance sealed by heavy stone, Messiah still and all alone.
*O Praise the Name of the Lord our God, O praise his Name for evermore.
For endless days we will sing your praise, oh Lord, oh Lord our God.*
3. Then on the third at break of dawn the Son of heaven rose again.
O trampled death where is your sting? The angels roar for Christ the King.
4. He shall return in robes of white, the blazing sun shall pierce the night,
And I will rise among the saints, my gaze transfixed on Jesus' face.
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Prayer of Intercession

Father God, we pray for our world, this place you gave us to care for and protect and to show your grace to the people in it.

Forgive us that we have messed it up, and we pray for those affected by the sin which is a cancer in this world.

We pray for the civil wars which are tearing countries apart, leaving their people in danger and facing hunger – we pray for the Congo, Sudan, Somalia, Myanmar, Nigeria, Niger, the Middle East.

We pray especially for the Christians in these places, the most persecuted people in the world, whose suffering is unrecognised in the media. Christians whose courage is such that we don't hear complaints, but of their desire to be faithful so that their persecutors will learn of the grace of Jesus.

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We pray also for our brothers and sisters in our home church – for those with health issues, for those making decisions about their future because of age, and for those raising a family in these challenging times. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen

Bible Reading:

- Acts 2:1-4

When the day of Pentecost came, they were altogether in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

- Acts 10:44-48

While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. The circumcised believers were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on Gentiles. For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God.

Then Peter said, "Surely no one can stand in the way of them being baptised with water. They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have." So he ordered that they be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ.

Song: "Spirit Song" (J Wimber)

1. Oh, let the Son of God enfold you with his Spirit and his love;
Let him fill your heart and satisfy your soul.
Oh, let him have the things that hold you, and his Spirit like a dove
Will descend upon your life and make you whole.
2. Jesus, O Jesus, come and fill your lambs.
Oh, come and sing the song with gladness as your hearts are filled with joy.
Lift your hands in sweet surrender to his name.
Oh, give him all your tears of sadness, give him all your years of pain,
And you'll enter into life in Jesus' name.
3. Jesus, O Jesus, come and fill your lambs. Jesus, O Jesus, come and fill your lambs.
Oh, let the Son of God enfold you with his Spirit and his love;
Let him fill your heart and satisfy your soul.
Oh, let him have the things that hold you, and his Spirit like a dove
Will descend upon your life and make you whole.

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Message: "Come Holy Spirit"

Many of you no doubt have read Colin Thiele's classic "Sun on the Stubble". It is the story (partly autobiographical) of a boy called Bruno growing up in the Barossa in the 1930's. It is a delightful read, reminiscent of life in the country, and many of the stories are "laugh

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out loud” funny! Bruno lived in a farmhouse with his mother and father and older brothers and sisters. His bedroom, shared with an older brother was separate from the main house and built over a cellar. The self-sufficiency of the day, and particularly of the German community, meant that the cellar was packed with cured meat, strings of sausages and various ‘wursts, and dozens of bottles of home-made ginger beer. Bruno would lay in bed at night and hear the occasional bottle of ginger beer blow its top and the cork would hit the floor of his bedroom. It was Bruno’s dream that one day, all the bottles would blow their tops at the same time and lift the bedroom off its foundations!

A bottle blowing a cork like that reminds me of what happens when somebody is filled with the Holy Spirit. It is described variously like being flooded with rivers of living water, like a powerful change taking place, like being filled with a deep sense of joy. Sometimes there is a feeling of deep warmth, sometimes like an electric shock, sometimes there are tears, sometimes laughter, sometimes speaking in an unknown language, sometimes even falling down. Most importantly, it is obvious that the Holy Spirit is working in that person and there is a refreshing of their relationship with God.

It is wonderful when this happens in our church family. We may have a dream, similar to Bruno’s, that more than one of the bottles will blow their corks, that more than one in our church will experience the coming of the Holy Spirit with power. Could it happen that everyone in our church was filled with Holy Spirit at the same time and the church was “lifted off its foundations”? That couldn’t happen, could it? We couldn’t wish for a revival like that could we?

Well, it has happened. Our readings from Acts describes 2 occasions when that very event happened. The Pentecost event saw a group of people dispirited, powerless, grieving, and hiding – perhaps like some of us in our churches. Then the Holy Spirit came – a sound like a wind, an appearance of flames of fire, an outpouring of other languages, even the appearance of having had too much to drink. And the immediate result of all this - the gospel was shared, the good news about Jesus was preached, and 3000 people joined them! The church was born. And then in the other reading above, no huge crowds, just those who could squeeze into a centurion’s house. But the Holy Spirit came of his own volition. More corks! A revival!

Have you ever wished for, prayed for, a revival in your church and community? Have you ever thought that these things only happen in big churches? Have you ever thought that these things might happen if you had a new pastor (or even a pastor at all!), if only you had bigger and better facilities, if only you had a bigger and better worship team, more resources, more leaders, more people to carry the load, provide the finances?

None of these things are requirements for the Holy Spirit to come and fill you and those in your church. None of these things are a condition for revival. There were no grand cathedrals and great resources anywhere in the New Testament churches. Meetings in homes seemed the most common. In one meeting in Troas (Acts 20) there wasn’t even enough chairs. One young man was sitting in a window and fell out! But the power of the Holy Spirit swept across the Mediterranean. The Holy Spirit has fallen on rough buildings and tent meetings across the continent of Africa. We hear of a powerful move of the Holy

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Spirit in underground churches in Eastern Europe and East Asia. The Wesleyan revival in England in the 1700's took place in small meetings in houses, and in big meetings in the open. Similarly, the Welsh revival took place in the depressed economic climate of the coal mining towns. A current revival began recently in Asbury University, Kentucky, when a few students stayed behind after chapel to pray. Nothing was planned but the Holy Spirit came and filled and refreshed many thousands of people across the United States.

When we seek renewal in our in our local church it is good to keep in the mind some words that Jesus spoke. **Matt 6:33: Seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness and all of these things will be given to you.** That is a call to get first things first. That is a call to prayer. That is a call to develop a deep desire that others, our family, neighbours, acquaintances, and colleagues will come to know Jesus. When our heart is seeking the Kingdom of God, that is when the Holy Spirit will come with power.

When the Holy Spirit comes and brings revival to our churches, no matter how small or insignificant, there are a few things we should see change. Jonathan Edwards, a great 18th Century American preacher and revivalist outlines several things we will notice.

- We will love God more. We will be overwhelmed with by his glory, his majesty, his power, and his love. This moves the emphasis away from ourselves and onto God – there is less of what God can do for us and more of what we can do for God. And this will translate into a desire to worship him. We have all had times when our hearts overflow with praise and our worship in church has been transformed. It gets better and better!
- We will love Jesus more. Sometimes we fall into the trap of thinking, as we become older Christians, that Jesus is for kids and new Christians, and we have moved on to speak more of God. So, the name of Jesus gets used less and less. A few years ago, I attended a service at one of our more progressive churches where the name of Jesus was not uttered once in the whole service, hymns, prayers, or sermon – except for a young African boy, hosted by a congregation member, who was asked to share something of his life at home. He spoke of the difference Jesus made in his life and in his village. What a pleasure it was to hear the name of Jesus. When the Holy Spirit fills us, we overflow with thankfulness for the new life he gives us, and overflow with a desire to follow and obey him.
- We will love the Bible more. The Holy Spirit gives us a hunger for reading God's word to find the truth about him, and the truth about how we should live our lives, particularly in this time where truth in our society is being abandoned for all sorts of lies about sexuality and marriage, about love, about power and ambition, and so much else.
- We will love other people more. The Holy Spirit fills us with a desire for other people to know Jesus, a desire for unity in the church, and a love for our enemies, those difficult to love, and those that make life difficult for us.
- We will love Satan less and sin less. Gal 5:19-26 pulls no punches with what succumbing to Satan's wiles looks like but is clear about what the Holy Spirit brings when he fills us (love, joy, peace, etc) and these are so life-giving there can be no

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argument against them. Our desire is towards righteousness, and away from sin.

What a wonderful thing, personally and in our churches, when the Holy Spirit fills us, blesses us, baptises us, refreshes and renews us. I may have used this illustration before, but when the Holy Spirit fills us it's a bit like pouring a glass of Coke. There is the wonderful fizz and froth sustained by the substance of the drink underneath. There are many outward signs of the coming of the Holy Spirit, and there is the long-lasting substance of faith in God which changes us daily into the likeness of our brother and Saviour Jesus, into righteousness that is the abundant life in the Kingdom of God.

Yet, when the Holy Spirit falls on us and our church we shouldn't fall into the trap of thinking, "Now we can have some really good and uplifting services"! The Holy Spirit comes with power so we can obey Jesus' command to "go and make disciples (Matt 28:19). Go, tell the Good News about Jesus so that lives can be changed just as Jesus has changed yours.

Isn't that a revival worth praying for?

Song: "Song for the Nations" *by Chris Christensen*

1. May we be a shining light to the nations, a shining light to the peoples of the earth,
Till the whole world sees the glory of your name.
May your pure light shine through us.
2. May we bring a word of hope to the nations, a word of life to the peoples of the earth,
Till the whole world knows there's salvation through your name.
May your mercy flow through us.
3. May we be a healing balm to the nations, a healing balm to the peoples of the earth,
Till the whole world knows the power of your name.
May your healing flow through us.
4. May we sing a song of joy to the nations, a song of praise to the peoples of the earth,
Till the whole world rings with the praises of your name.
May your song be sung through us.
5. May your kingdom come to the nations, your will be done in the peoples of the earth,
Till the whole world knows that Jesus Christ is Lord.
May your kingdom come in us.

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Benediction

Now may the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, equip you with every good thing for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. (Hebrews 13:21)

Amen.

This service was prepared by Ron Tiller, HopeNet SA