

Lent (4) Fellowship and the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit, is this a question that has been answered? In the late 19th century, the opinion became that the Holy Spirit was a New Testament thing, and that in the modern era we should turn to science and logic. From the late 1960's the charismatic renewal began to take form and by the 1980's many considered this to be more about modernisation than spirituality. However, by the turn of the millennium forms of spirituality that looked back to Celtic times had been included in that renewal and most of the fears around losing our much-loved traditions had subsided.

Today the great majority of Christians in Britain accept the role of the Holy Spirit in our spirituality, prayer, and worship. Mission and evangelism seem so difficult that the idea of not praying, of not asking for God's help, of not needing the Holy Spirit, is for many Christians unimaginable.

But what about in our relationships as brothers and sisters in Christ?

In mission we often speak of showing God's love to the world and this is often achieved in remarkable ways and with real consistency. But is that same love always evident in our fellowship with each other?

Should we pray for the Holy Spirit's help before we boil the kettle to share a cuppa? After all, many people in many situations manage to share a cuppa without any kind of disunity so, surely, we Christians can do better still. Unfortunately, many Churches, including some in our own parish, find there is real tension around things like the coffee rota. This tension is far deeper than a lack of volunteers, it is often about control or ownership.

It's not just the little things either. Too often the fellowship of one Church lacks empathy for the fellowships of other nearby Churches. We meet as brothers and sisters through organisations like Churches together but, the idea of a smaller Church closing is as likely to invoke thoughts and conversations about what our Church might gain in people or finance as it is to cause any sharing of the pain felt by that fellowship.

As Christians we need the Holy Spirit in all aspects of our life, mission, prayer, worship, and building strength and depth into our relationships with each other.

Please pause for a while to think about and if possible, discuss.

What is the Holy Spirit's role in our Christian relationships?

What can we do to make this a greater reality?

Read Ephesians 4:1-16

In the reading we are encouraged to be completely humble, gentle, patient, and bear with one another in love. We are also told that we should grow to become a firmly rooted and confident fellowship that won't be blown around, strong in our unity and the love of Christ.

If we consider the first chapters of the book of Acts, we can see that before the Holy Spirit came, the disciples met together in prayer, unity, and for mutual support, but they were afraid. After Pentecost, filled with the Holy Spirit, their fellowship changed. It was still united but now it was full of energy, it was exciting, if it wasn't for God you might have said it was out of control as the Church exploded in activity and growth. This fellowship was no longer held back by fear or anything else, being together was being part of a dynamic and exciting new reality.

As a Christian and as a member of a Church fellowship, I hope that you have some friends, people that you like and want to spend time with, people that make you feel you belong and are valued. This is the way the early Church was even before Pentecost but after Pentecost the Church became dynamic, full of energy and creativity.

Our God is the creator God, the Holy Spirit is the creative spirit of the infinitely creative God. Our fellowship should be creative, full of energy, DYNAMIC.

Do you want our fellowship to be dynamic (full of energy) ?

Where do we need the Holy Spirit's creativity in our fellowship?

Prayer

What do we need to confess?

What do we need to ask for help with?