

Home Group Notes - welcoming the Holy Spirit - Sept 2018 session 3

Opening ice breaker - has anyone got a great experience of hospitality to share, or a terrible one? What are the marks of great hospitality?

Biblically speaking, when we become Christians, we become hosts of the Spirit of God. Jn 14.17 and 23. God makes his home in us. Can your marks of great hospitality apply also to welcoming the Spirit into 'the house' of our lives?

Read John 14 together, set the scene in terms of the context of the passage. How are the disciples likely to be feeling and thinking? Does anything in the chapter stand out for you or need clarifying?

From the start of human history, the bible teaches us that the God who made us desired to be at home with us, to dwell with us, to set up camp in our midst and abide with us.

But there was an enormous obstacle that prevented God's people from having full access to God – the obstacle of sin that brought about a separation between the Holy God and his people.. So The primary meeting-place for God and his people was the temple in Jerusalem. Here, there was literally a barrier separating the manifest presence of God and the people of God. The temple was divided by a curtain - seventy feet high, several inches thick, and covering the whole front of the worship space.

But when Jesus died the curtain of the Temple was torn in two from top to bottom.

What does that signify and why is it relevant to our understanding of the coming of the Holy Spirit?

St Paul explains the completely new reality to the Christians in Corinth - "your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God" 1 Cor.6.19

You dont go to the temple any more , you are the temple. You dont go to church, you are the church. You are a living breathing temple of God in which he dwells.

Do you find it easy or hard to believe this about yourself? Why?

See in John 14 verse 17 – the Spirit will live with you and be in you– verse 23 – God will make his home with you.– how welcome is the Spirit in the mansion of your life? If God has chosen to make his home in us, to what extent do we welcome him in, to what extent do we ensure it is the kind of place that is fit to be called a house of God?

In the last book of the bible Jesus speaks to a church and says this – revelation 3.20. *"Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in."* Rev.3.20 Jesus doesn't force his way into our lives. It is up to us to *choose* to let him in. *Is there anyone in the group who would not yet describe themselves as a Christian - anyone who senses that Jesus is at the door of their lives but they have yet to open the door to him? What is stopping you? Is anyone who is a Christian happy to recall what it was like for them to 'open the door' to Jesus for the first time?*

In welcoming the Holy spirit, we are not being visited by a debt-collector or someone intent on criticising. See John 14 again - *what does Jesus say the Holy Spirit is like and will do in us?*

Some Christians view the Holy Spirit as someone like a visiting friend. He is welcome, but He does not access all areas. Our Passage teaches that the Spirit is about Holiness - the Spirit comes to teach you, to bring you to obedience to everything that Jesus has commanded.

Paul says to the Corinthians – “you are not your own, you were bought at a price.” (i Cor 6.20)*What's the difference between the image of a visiting friend and the Spirit being the owner-occupier?*

None of us is fully surrendered to the Spirit. What would be the next step for you?

Pray for each other - if you want to, use the passage in John 14 or the prayer of Paul in Eph3.16onwards.