

# SPIRITUAL EXERCISES

## in uncertain times

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### 4. Praying with the Holy Spirit

This exercise is the fourth in a series for use by a group of Christians praying together, and looks at how to invite the Holy Spirit to participate in your meeting.

Begin your meeting by turning to Revelation 3.15-20. Ask one of the group to read this passage out loud.

Point out from this passage that asking the Holy Spirit to come begins with repentance. To repent means to begin again:

- We begin again in our attitude to sin, promising God that whatever is wrong in our lives we will turn from it.
- We begin again in our attitude to Jesus, making him Lord of every aspect of our lives.
- We begin again by recommitting ourselves to the gospel, promising to live by faith in Jesus, to trust in what he has done for us on the cross, and to put our hope in the resurrection.

Say that today we will each make these commitments, we will pray for each other that the Holy Spirit will come, and we will then pray together, asking for the Spirit's help as we pray.

The following notes assume a group of 4 people, but can be easily adapted if the group size is smaller or larger.

#### Praying for one another

Andrew sits in a chair and Beth, Chris and Diane stand around and pray for him in turn. If you have his permission and it seems appropriate, lay on hands as you pray. The prayer begins as Andrew recommits his life to Jesus.

**Andrew:** 'Lord Jesus, I believe in you. I believe you lived as a man. I believe you died for my sins on the cross. I believe you rose again from the dead. I believe you are alive now. I trust that your death is sufficient for all my sins. I trust in you that you will take me through all the difficulties of my life and bring me safely to a place with you in heaven. I trust in your instructions for my life. I will try to live by your priorities. I will be unashamed of you to my friends. I will not willingly do wrong. Lord I open my heart to you and pray that you will send to me the gift of the Holy Spirit.'

**Beth:** 'Andrew, God loves you so much that he has given his son, Jesus, to die for you. In the name of Jesus, receive forgiveness for all your sins, large and small. As the heavens are high above the earth so great is his love for you. So far has he removed your transgressions from you. As a father has compassion for his children, so the Lord has compassion for you.'

**Chris:** 'Andrew, Jesus died and rose again. He is seated at the right hand of the Father in glory. Now that you have turned to Jesus you belong to him always. Because you belong to Jesus, the person you used to be has died with Jesus. In his name receive new life, the same resurrection life that Jesus himself has, eternal life that will never come to an end.'

**Diane:** 'Andrew, in the name of Jesus, receive from him the promised Holy Spirit, who guarantees the gift of eternal life and forgiveness for all your sins. As you journey through life the Holy Spirit will make you a better person, filling you with love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. The Holy Spirit will give you the power to become a child of God, to love the Father, know the Father, and hear the Father speaking. May your love for God exceed all other loves.'



The Holy Spirit will give you the power that Jesus had, enabling you to do the things that Jesus did. May the words of Jesus flow from your lips and the healing of Jesus flow through your prayers. Amen.'

Everyone should now change places so that Beth is prayed for next, then Chris, then Diane.

## Listening to the Holy Spirit

Now explain that the presence of the Holy Spirit with us should make a big difference to our prayers together. This is because when the Holy Spirit is present, he often speaks – so we must learn to listen. Say that you will listen together in silence for 10 minutes, in the expectation that the Spirit will wish to speak to the group. As each person to make a note of anything the Holy Spirit seems to be saying, but not to share it straight away.



Explain that the Holy Spirit may speak in any of the following ways:

- By putting into your mind a scripture for the group to think about and respond to
- By giving you a song for the group to sing
- By putting into your mind a picture for the group to interpret
- By giving you an instruction for the group to follow
- By giving you a word of encouragement for the group
- By giving you faith to pray for an outcome that the group desires, for example, the removal of a mountain from one of the members' lives

But reassure them that they do not need to try and make any of this happen; they should just listen and ask the Spirit to take the initiative.

Pray together in silence for ten minutes. Then ask each person to share anything they have heard. If they aren't aware of anything, explain that this is perfectly OK. If they are unsure, then ask them to say what they think they may have heard.

Finally have a time of spoken prayer when each member of the group takes it in turn to say something to God, basing their prayers on what the Spirit has said.