

# Open to the Spirit

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Is there more?

## Welcome, opening prayer and worship

Pray as you begin, asking God to be at work in your group. You may like to have a short time of worship too (singing, listening to some music, meditating on a psalm together etc.).

## Introduction

We have recently been sensing that God has been saying to us as a church that this is a season for 'Learning to live ordinary Lives WITH God.' Learning to do the ordinary things of life with God, and allowing God through that to do the extra-ordinary.

'Open to the Spirit' is a series of sessions which is designed to deepen your understanding of, and relationship with the Holy Spirit. Reflecting on His power to work in and through you, we will look at various Bible passages and discuss issues that may arise, seeking to understand how we can become more open to the work of the Spirit in our lives to empower us to be the people who God has called us to be, and to live 'ordinary lives with God.'

We all come from different backgrounds and with different experiences and so you may come to this series of small group sessions with a range of emotions... from excitement, to fear, to confusion, to disappointment, to apprehension... Whatever you are feeling, be open to what God has in store for you and be prepared to allow Him to work deeply in you through His Holy Spirit.

## Opening brainstorming

1) Take a minute to list some of your beliefs about the Holy Spirit – who the Holy Spirit is and what He does. (You might do this individually on pieces of paper and then share them, or you might brainstorm together).

2) Being as open as possible, do you think your beliefs are shaped more by the Scriptures or by what you've come to experience as the 'normal' Christian life? What makes you say that?

## Bible discussion time and video.

Have you ever felt like you're missing something? Like you're getting by, but your life, your faith lacks something crucial, something extraordinary? Could it be that we are not fully embracing the power of the Holy Spirit? Could it be that you have missed something really important?

### Watch 'Remembering the Forgotten God Session 1' (11 mins)

(This can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gJ2L3QGbRd0> )

- Spend some time together discussing the video. What struck you? What resonated with you? What questions does it raise for you?

3) We assume that we know what the Christian life ought to look like. But have we ever sat down and considered the way Scripture describes the Spirit-filled life? Between members of the group, briefly look up the following passages and identify some of the things that Scripture says the Spirit does (we will look at these in more detail later in later sessions so don't spend much time on them here)

Acts 1:4-8

Acts 2:1-13

Romans 8:1-17

Romans 8:26,27

1 Corinthians 2:12-14

1 Corinthians 6:9-11

Galatians 4:4-7

4) If you disregarded your own experiences and just read these passages, what would you expect to observe as the Holy Spirit entered a person's life?

5) For so many people in the church today, everyday life does not match these biblical descriptions. Why do you think that is?

Over these next few sessions we will unpack this more and discover more about how we can be more open to the Spirit and what the Spirit does in our lives.

But to finish off this session, let us look more at who the Holy Spirit is.

6) Look at the following statements about the Holy Spirit and where necessary, look up the scriptural references. Think about the practical implications of that particular attribute of the Spirit - what difference should that make in your life and the way we relate to the Spirit?

a) *The Holy Spirit is a 'Person'*. He is not an impersonal force or thing. Many people refer to the Spirit as an 'it' but the Bible consistently describes the Spirit as a Person (e.g. Matthew 28:19 where the Spirit is an equal member of the personal Godhead; Ephesians 4:30 where He is said to have emotions). Rather than using the Spirit as an 'energy boost' or 'force', we can actually talk to Him, relate to Him, cooperate with Him and make ourselves available to Him. See Him as God WITH us in the ordinary things of life.

b) *The Holy Spirit is God abiding with and in us (John 14:15-20)*. He is not less than the Father or the Son; He is consistently presented as equal (Matt 28:19), just like other members of the Godhead, the Spirit is sometimes referred to simply as 'God' (Acts 5:3-4).

c) *The Holy Spirit has His own mind and will*. He thinks and acts according to His own will and the will of God the Father (Rom 8:27, 1 Cor 12:11). The Spirit strategically enables and empowers us to fulfil our mission here on earth.

d) *The Holy Spirit is all-powerful, all-knowing and all-present*. (1 Corinthians 2:10; Psalm 139:7-8)

e) *The Holy Spirit is, since Pentecost, given to all believers (Joel 2:28-29)* whereas in the Old Testament the Spirit was only given to particular people for particular jobs at particular times (Exodus 31:2-3 – Bezalal was the first recorded person to receive the Spirit).

## Prayer ministry and closing prayer

In pairs or small groups share something new that you have discovered this session, something that you are finding difficult, and something that you could do differently this week because of this session.

Pray together about these things and pray that God will give you the humility to be open to whatever he wants to teach you and however he wants to transform you in the coming weeks.