

THE CREED: I BELIEVE IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

Apr-Jun 2017

ABOUT THESE NOTES

Although I hope that they will be useful also to individuals, these notes are intended to assist disciple group leaders as they prepare to lead a session for their group. They will serve you best if you DO NOT SIMPLY SIT AND READ THEM TO YOUR GROUP. I am anticipating that the leader will look at them prayerfully in advance of the session, using them as a prompt or guide to your discussions according to the particular circumstances of your groups. I hope that they will prove useful as you invite the Holy Spirit to lead you into a deeper knowledge of what Jesus wants for your lives.

INTRODUCTION TO THE SERIES

14 th May I believe in the Holy Spirit: Gift-giving Spirit 1	21 st May I believe in the Holy Spirit: Gift-giving Spirit 2	28 th May I believe in the Son: Who ascended into heaven	4 th June I believe in the Holy Spirit: Who wants us to be filled
1 Corinthians 12:1-11	Romans 12:3-8	John 17:1-11	John 7:37-9, Ephesians 5:18-20

The Nicene Creed

WE BELIEVE in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father.
Through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven:
by the power of the Holy Spirit
he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary,
and was made man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.
With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified.

He has spoken through the Prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

4. Gift-giving Spirit 2

ROMANS 12. 3-8

Humble service in the body of Christ

3 For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you. **4** For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, **5** so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. **6** We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; **7** if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; **8** if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

GETTING THE CONVERSATION STARTED

These questions can be used as ice-breakers in the beginning OR interwoven between the questions below to draw the group into the discussion.

- What is the most amazing gift you have ever been given?
 - Why was it so incredible?
 - What did it say about you? What did it say about the person who gave it to you?

QUESTIONS FOR YOUR GROUP

v3

God longs to give us good gifts, out of love and not merit, but we so easily get caught up in the idea that we need to *earn* the gifts of the Spirit somehow.

- How do you feel about the idea that God freely gives you gifts like those described last week and in this passage?
- Do you expect him to, or think this is for other people?
- What stops you from trusting and believing that these gifts are for *you*?
- Are you aware that you knowingly or unknowingly do particular things to try and earn favour from God?

See Ephesians 2. 6-9 for a further encouragement to get our thinking about ourselves 'sober'!

v4-6

We belong to each other, and need one another to understand and release the gifts that God has given.

One of the prayer ministry team had a picture before the service this week of each of us being like a bead, that were being strung together to make a necklace.

- Is it a comforting or uncomfortable idea that we 'belong to one another' as members of Christ's body? What might prevent you from being strung together?!
- How much a part of this body do you really feel? What would change how you feel?

- What are the blessings of being part of the body and having been given different gifts?

Give people a heads up about how the session will end at this point so they can get thinking- see 'Praying Together'

v6-8

Below are just some of the gifts that Paul lists in many of his letters. They are not complete!

- **Prophecy** that Emma talked about discovering last week
 - **Service** - ministering to some else, often in a self-sacrificial and hidden way.
 - **Teaching** - making clear and drawing out the truth of the gospel.
 - **Encouragement** - urging fellow believers to go on living out and trusting in this truth.
 - **Giving** - Not just money, but generous giving of any kind without ulterior motive.
 - **Leading** - playing an eager and diligent role of oversight and direction of the local church.
 - **Mercy** - providing material help for the poor, visiting the sick, caring for the elderly and disabled. Being able to do this with cheerfulness, not grudgingly.
- Do you recognise any of these in yourself or in other people at church?
 - What other gifts do you see around you? Can you describe how they impact on you or the church as a whole?

God puts some of these in us from conception - they are who we are! But the power of the Holy Spirit ignites our gifts into something quite amazing that benefits the whole body.

- What do you think your 'natural' gifts are?
- Have you ever asked God to ignite or 'connect' these things through the Holy Spirit? What might happen if you did?

PRAYING TOGETHER

Leave enough time to do this properly!

Remind people that we belong to one another and need each other to understand and use the gifts God has given. This is one of the most bonding and uniting things we can do for each other.

Focussing on one person at a time, invite members of the group to share what they appreciate about this person - are there particular character traits, gifts or abilities that people have noticed?

Go through the whole group doing this and then simply thank God and commit these gifts to his service.

- Make clear that this is not about flattery or compliments, it is about recognising what God has put in them and appreciating it.
- Make clear that some people might be much better known than others and that's fine - God knows them and you are getting to know them.
- It may well fall to you as the leader to lead the way, particularly at the beginning or with more challenging or private people.