



The way forward: A time to reflect

As the lockdown begins to ease and we cautiously return to a life without the restrictions of the past year this also gives us opportunities to prepare for the first steps of being an in-person gathered church community again. We have travelled a long and hard road through the pandemic, and it is clear that this journey is not over for all. We will have no doubt experienced much, both helpful and challenging, so it is wise to take time and reflect on these experiences. This new season has afforded us a great opportunity to begin again - starting from scratch - so what can we dream? What is God saying to us about the ministry and mission of GBC? What can we, what should we, do differently?

Over the next 4 weeks we invite you to listen, reflect and pray together, and to seek God's guidance as we begin to emerge into this new world and contemplate how our church can share the good news of Jesus Christ and connect to a world finding its way in this time of recovery.

Beginning on Pentecost Sunday Micky and Gill will share 4 weekly messages at our online services. Each message will focus on a picture and passage of scripture to help us focus our thoughts. Following the message we'll send you a brief study so you can put aside time to reflect and pray. Micky and Gill would love to hear from you - perhaps you could forward us your notes so we can collect them together and look for God's guiding through them.

WEEK ONE

Picture one – THE COMPASS - an instrument that shows the direction

The Holy Spirit comes at Pentecost

Read: Acts 2:1-21

Study & reflection

- Q. What do you think it must have felt like to be in Jerusalem on that particular Pentecost? Do you think you would have recognised God at work in all the noise, or would you have been on the side of the cynics (verse 13)?

- Q. Have you recognised God at work during the pandemic? If yes, in what ways?

The verses from our passage point to Jesus, the focal point of God's purpose and plan. As we look to Jesus we can draw strength for ourselves, but if we are honest, all of us have periods in our lives when we may feel terribly alone, perhaps even abandoned by God to fend for ourselves.

Q. Which group of people in the world and our local community might think that God has abandoned them? How can we help them?

A compass can show direction but not what the terrain ahead looks like. We could be heading over a cliff or entering a fruitful orchard!

Q. If we think of God's spirit as a our guiding compass how can we be confident of our direction of travel? What steps can we take to ensure this?

Q. In what ways can we do this as a church?

At Pentecost nearly 2000 years ago, the Holy Spirit gave the disciples the ability to speak in the language their listeners needed in order for them to hear and understand. We too have a message to deliver. We need to find the language that will speak to people today, that will reach out and touch their lives and their hearts. If we try to do it in our own strength, we will almost certainly get it wrong. We may try to hold on to things we ought to change, or change things we ought to hold on to.

Q. What steps can we take to trust in God and let his Holy Spirit guide us, so we can give God's unchanging, eternal message of love in a way that is new and fresh?

Prayer

*Move among us, Spirit,
and gather us together with you.
Take our many selves -
our lives, our loves, our ideas,
our questions, our speech, our silence
and unite us as your people.
Give us the gifts of perception and understanding,
so that even as we dream your dreams and see your visions,
we may be able to witness to your presence
in our common life. Amen.*