

## QUARANTINE REFLECTION 18 - PENTECOST

🎵 Let the flame burn brighter, In the heart of the darkness. Turning night to glorious day, Let the song grow louder as our love grows stronger.....

- Graham Kendrick (We'll Walk The Land)

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I woke this morning with those words running in my head and there it has stayed; I was awake for a good couple of hours before I'd realised how very apt the words and indeed the whole song is for today.

Today is Pentecost Sunday, a day in the church when we remember, reflect and celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit to Jesus' early followers- the advocate the promise that Jesus had before his ascension told them he would send- descended, washed over them and filled them anew. It was from this day fifty days from the resurrection (well 49 really as it's 7 weeks since Easter) that the early Christian church was born and so many of us Christians consider Pentecost to be the Church's birthday.

That first Pentecost changed things dramatically for all those novel Christians especially the disciples and it sort of in a roundabout way echoes slightly what most of us have been experiencing. The disciples after being told to stay in and wait, wait and something wonderful will happen to you they were told were waiting for this advocate (Holy Spirit) that Jesus had promised. Many of you have been staying in and waiting only leaving for your daily exercises, the disciples went to the temple to pray and exercise their faith through prayer, praying and hoping for their expectations of God and the promise their teacher had left them with.

When at that first gathering the Holy Spirit fell and filled the hearts of the people there for them that was the first day of their new normal and while at the gathering there was many languages being spoken and understood and I imagine it might have been and felt a bit like a really good concert of a really popular band where people from different nations knew what was being sung and what the feeling was even though the languages were different. ( A bit simplistic but I hope you get my drift)

The disciples new normal was going out into the world and I'm sure they did that a little tentatively whilst filled with excitement of what lay ahead of them. The birth of this new church the three thousand that had been added to the new church on that first Pentecost (Acts 2:41) began to share the gospel message and grow Christ's kingdom. The disciples ventured out after being 'locked in'. Most of the country are being told they are allowed to venture out after a period staying in. For some it will be really frightening and some will be very nervous. Some will go at it enthusiastically and rush around wanting to meet and greet loved ones. I guess for most of us we approach this new freedom, the beginning of the new normal with some caution but with I imagine excitement and anticipation.

It would be lovely to be going to church and celebrating with my fellow brothers and sisters in Christ to share in the joy and singing celebrating the Church's birthday. We will celebrate we will share together but we will be doing it from the comfort of our homes.

And as our country relaxes the lockdown rules and people return to in some part how life was but will never likely be as it was we as a church and Christians should be perhaps taking the opportunity to consider how we are going to move forward in faith, with our advocate to be Christ in our communities and to continue to be Church with some of how we used to be but inclusive of how we are now and how we will be in the future.

Challenging times ahead but I hope exciting and fruitful too and I think I am looking forward to exploring how my new normal moving forward with the Holy Spirit for and with Jesus might be. I hope and I pray that you will journey with us and we can find our new normal together.

*They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire  
that separated and came to rest on each of them.  
All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit  
and they began to speak in other tongues as the  
Spirit enabled them.*

Acts 2: 3-4

But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. John 14: 26