

# BRMC Small Group Study: Holy Spirit Session 8

## Leader's Guide

Please note that the suggestions below are not model answers but to help guide your study. Feel free to adapt the questions for your group.

### Scripture Passage:

Focus: 1 Corinthians 12:7-11

Supplementary: 1 Corinthians 14:1-5, Matthew 10:8 and Ephesians 6:12

### Open to the Spirit:

Focus chapter: 21

Supplementary chapters: 22 and 23

#### Context:

In the focus and supplementary chapters, McKnight broadens our understanding of the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Triune God. The Holy Spirit has no boundaries. He makes impossible things possible, the irreversible reversible, and He works supernaturally. The work of the Holy Spirit transcends all human imagination. In order to experience the fullness of His great work, we must be open to whatever He can do, not limiting – whether in thoughts or words – His power, which always points us to the loving God and to loving others. As McKnight emphasised, “[w]e are called by God to be open to the Spirit, because it is the Spirit who is working to transform us and who is bringing the world to Christ ... those who are open to the Spirit are to be open to whatever the Spirit may do, and the Spirit may very well – following the New Testament pattern – prompt you to evangelize, pray, speak, or sing in a tongue you do not know.” (p 179)

The focus passage (1 Corinthians 12:7-11) read with the supplementary passages provide a framework from which we can better understand the gifts of the Holy Spirit (speaking in tongues, healing and spiritual warfare), how they are distributed, their purpose, and in light of their purpose, their role or use in the body of Christ. For example, the gift of speaking in tongues is never to be used for one's personal agenda but always for the common good. Each part of the body of Christ is gifted by the Spirit individually, as He wills, so as to function for God's glory, edifying other members of the body.

#### Lesson Objectives:

- The gift of speaking in tongues, healing and spiritual battles are part of the works of the Holy Spirit in and through the believer.
- Being open to the Spirit allows us to fully experience all that the powerful God can do.

## Introductory

1. In your own words, try to explain or describe the following:  
(This may help the leader assess each member's understanding of the topics. Perhaps in this section, questions and clarifications should be entertained. You may address the questions using some of the explanations taken from the book.)

a. *speaking in tongues* (1 Corinthians 14:1-5)

- A form of communication to God. "The big picture must be kept in mind: tongues are a gift of communication; and it is the kind of communication that gives us victories over our inability to communicate. Anything that detracts from communicating with God and with one another in the power of the Spirit needs to be diminished." (p 179)
- o Always needs to be interpreted in public. "...if an interpreter of tongues is not present, the tongues speaker is to speak to God in silence or at least to pray for an interpretation." (p 179)

b. *healing (death, sickness)* (Matthew 10:8)

- o "Sometimes God, in the power of the Spirit, turns back the powers of death but not always. That's our reality." (p 180)

c. *spiritual battles* (Ephesians 6:12)

- the existence of this supernatural phenomenon might be strange to many. Thus, a careful and deliberate explanation may be necessary.
- McKnight described this phenomenon clearly, he writes: "How can human beings create, establish, systematize, participate in, contribute to, and then ignore, rationalize, or diminish the consequences of such widespread systemic evil? The Bible points out that humans are not alone in creating and sustaining such evil. We are assisted by what the Scripture refers to as 'principles and powers' ... The Powers." (p 188)
- "The Powers... include *the Flesh*, portrayed as a controlling agent; *Sin*, shown to be an active power; *the Law*, which serves as a prosecuting lawyer; and *Death*, as a prowling beast seeking our destruction." (p 191)

2. Can you cite instances in the Bible where Jesus and the Apostles healed people and conquered the power of evil? (Example references: Matthew 8:1-9:34, Acts 3:1-10, Matthew 4:1-11)

- This question seeks to help us realise that the Holy Spirit is always active in many parts of the Bible, especially through Jesus and His Apostles – working supernaturally.

3. What does the Apostle Paul mean when he said in 1 Corinthians 12:7 that the manifestation of the Spirit is for the common good?

- This question points us to the core of this entire study – loving through the power of the Holy Spirit manifested in us. It is also the key to understanding how each of us can be transformed by the love of Christ, through the power of the Holy Spirit.
- It may be useful to review the discussions in Session 5.

## Reflection

4. Having considered the focus and supplementary passages, how would you describe your attitude or receptivity to the gift of speaking in tongues or healing by the Holy Spirit?
  - This is an opportunity for people to share and describe any shifts in mind-sets which occurred within the period of this study.
  - McKnight used the phrase “plausibility structure” to describe the paradigm one creates in himself/herself. He writes: “Our plausibility structure has been shaped to allow healing to be determined by science and medical professionals and pharmaceuticals and diet. We often don’t pray when we get sick or when others get sick. That’s the evidence of our plausibility structures... The Bible’s plausibility structures are otherwise! The people of the Bible not only believe in a world that was open to God’s miracles, but they also accepted miracles as a rather common occurrence. We will get nowhere in a victory over disease and death until our plausibility structures change, and it begins by being open to the Spirit.” (p 181)
  - A fundamental question that can be asked: “...if the Spirit has been unleashed *in our bodies already*, isn’t it true that we need to be open to the Spirit’s work in healing us and healing others?” (p 184)
  
  - In relation to speaking in tongues, McKnight writes: “The Holy Spirit often takes our fumbling, somewhat incoherent attempts at communication and ramps them up into full clarity. Occasionally that form of Spirit-prompted communication goes beyond anything we are capable of putting together.” (p 175)
  - McKnight identifies from scripture, four ways the Holy Spirit clarifies our words and non-words:
    - o Public missionary tongues – speaking in a previously unknown discernible language for purpose of evangelism (p 175).
    - o Private praying in tongues – where the Holy Spirit takes our inability to communicate with God, to directly communicate with God (p 176) (citing 1 Corinthians 14:2, 4, 14, 18).
    - o Public church revelation in tongues – public manifestation of tongues which requires interpretation (p 177) (citing 1 Corinthians 14:5, 13).
    - o Singing in tongues – a Spirit-prompted song (p 177-178).
  
  - In relation to the Spirit-prompted song, McKnight writes: “a song that is sung in a language not known to the congregation... can be, when done properly, a victorious communication of humans who need a Spirit-prompted boost in their worship of God.” (p 178)
  
  - It is hoped that by this last session, we may have greater openness towards the work of the Holy Spirit in each of us.

## Application

5. Now that we have learnt the importance of being open to the Spirit, what will be your next step? How can you translate what you have learned into definite action steps?
  - This question seeks to give an opportunity for people to take steps to be more open to be willing to experience the work of the Holy Spirit in them. Allow the members in your group to identify some practical steps they could take.
  - It may be useful to review the steps that previous sessions suggested:
    - o Spirit-prompted Bible reading in Session 2.
    - o Self-assessment for openness for transformation into Christlikeness in Session 4.
    - o Spiritual gift survey in Session 5.
    - o Resisting work of the flesh and walking in the Spirit in Session 6.
    - o Spiritual disciplines in Session 7.
  - It may also be useful to review the church vision video:  
<https://player.vimeo.com/video/383236709>
6. Being aware that a spiritual battle is present in a Christian's life, how then will you prepare for your daily battle, for victory in your life?
  - You may have this as a suggestion: "Four elements to Paul's strategy" (pp. 195-196)
    - a. Prayer - "Prayer arms us when we pray in the Spirit."
    - b. Spirit-prompted armour – belt of truth, breastplate of righteousness, shoes with the gospel of peace, shield of faith, helmet of salvation, sword of the Spirit (Ephesians 6:14-16)
    - c. Obedience – Christlikeness ("A life like this makes our witness more credible because it becomes incarnate in an individual and in a community of faith that demonstrated an alternative way of The Powers.")
    - d. Common witness to the Gospel – "Truth and Word are the ways to penetrate the realm of The Powers and take back territory."

## Prayer

7. Write out a prayer for yourself based on what you have heard and learned from this session and in reviewing the other 7 sessions.
  - It may be useful to break into smaller groups and allow some time for people to process what they have heard and learned from the Holy Spirit. The encourage them to share with one another what their prayer is for this session, and for themselves for the week.
  - It is always useful to collate these prayers and to refer to them for thanksgiving and sharing next week.

- If it is appropriate, suggest to members to write down specific instances when they feel the Spirit at work in them and through them. This aims to help them become more aware of the Spirit's presence in their lives.
- If possible, it would be useful to follow-up the prayer points at your next meeting as a form of encouragement to continue their openness to and walk with the Holy Spirit.