

**Meditation**

*You will need: a bowl of different kinds of fruit; some little side plates and knives (they might come in handy). Pass a bowl of fruit (or fruit bowls if you have a large congregation) around the church and let people choose for themselves. Have a good selection of many different types, ranging from the large to the very small (such as grapes) and from the mundane to the exotic. Then appoint a good reader to read the following.*

***The Fruit Script.***

Take your fruit and look at it carefully. Look at the colours within the fruit and notice how they vary according to the light and shadows. Touch it and feel its skin. Is it smooth or bumpy?. Look around at the other fruits you can see. So many different types. So many colours and textures. Yet they are all still fruit. Jesus said, 'I am the vine: you are the branches. If a person remains in me, and I in them, they will bear much fruit, apart from me you can do nothing'.

Think now for a minute about the sort of fruits you might bear. Love? (*pause*), Joy? (*pause*), Patience? (*pause*), Kindness? (*pause*).

Perhaps your fruit might not be the sort of thing you would think of straight away as being fruit. It might be exotic. It might be mundane. Maybe it's making tasty meals for others, providing a listening ear or sharing a computer program that helps other people do their accounts. Cut into your fruit now, and taste a little. Notice its sweetness.

What do you do that makes life a little sweeter for others? Maybe that's your fruit. (*long pause*).

You might be feeling a little fruitless at the moment. Or like you used to bear fruit in the past, yet somehow you're feeling a little dry and uninspired. Or maybe you want to grow some new fruits.

Jesus compared God to the gardener who prunes the fruit tree to bear more fruit. Are there any branches of your life that seem to be going nowhere, projects you should be cutting back on? These might just need to grow a little more, or need a little more patience and love. Or maybe it's time for something new. Ask god to prompt you now, to show you the difference. Where should you be shedding old branches, old projects, and beginning new ones? (*pause*)

Where should you just be asking God for more help to grow, and patience to wait for the growth to happen? Ask God to send the Holy Spirit to inspire you and bring new fruit into your life now. (*long pause*)

Finish by spending some time eating your fruit. Perhaps you'd like to pass your fruit around and taste someone else's fruit too.

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At home I have a vine growing on the fence outside the kitchen. The vine has large heart shaped leaves. Every year it bears fruit. Brown furry fruit the size of an egg. I'm never quite sure when to pick it, but the currawongs seem to know when it's ripe. Brown, furry, unattractive, when you slice it open you see a marvellous bright green, with tiny black seeds – a sight to behold, and the taste is sweet and juicy. I like kiwi fruit.

If you were a fruit, how would you describe yourself? A banana, an apple, a grape, or perhaps a pawpaw or mango, or even a strawberry, pineapple, pear, orange or kiwifruit perhaps? Such richness and variety. So sensual and mouth watering – I love fruit.

But what's all this to do with the wildness, and fire of Pentecost? It's about what follows, it's about gifting.....

It's a very different symbol for the work of God's spirit in our times – evokes moisture, stickiness, sweetness, delight, a feast of colours. It's about who we are and how we respond to the swell of love....

This is the richness we share in this place, this community, such a garden of fruit, at all stages of development. Some are still unformed, buds on the tree, others unripe. Some are ripe, or even rotting, nurtured by love...

If you were to ask God's spirit to breathe in you, to inspire you and bring new fruit in your life ... what would your life look like? Taste and see.

On the day of Pentecost, all the disciples were gathered in one room. Frightened and fearful. Unsure of what to do. Unsure of who they were. Confused and anxious. They were praying or trying to pray, no doubt....when there was a great movement of spirit – familiar signs of theophany, wind, fire,.....indescribable.

These fearful, anxious ones were empowered, they came alive, they knew who they were and what they were meant to do. Some became preachers, some prophets, some teachers, healers – they bore fruit. They were empowered with faith, hope and love.

Empowered to speak out against injustice.

Empowered to stand up for what they believed, to care for the poor, to dream dreams, to see new visions, to live the good news.

And people listened, and people heard, and peoples lives were changed.

The people gathered at the festival of Pentecost, one of three pilgrimage feasts when all Jews who were able worshipped at the temple....'The crowd gathered in the Acts story are listed by the author in geographic order...from East to West. Also included are some groups no longer in existence. At that time in history – another metaphor to show that the Spirit's coming is not bounded by geography or even time (Seasons of The Spirit p136). Which is the greater miracle – speaking in tongues or the hearing that results?. The Spirit makes it possible to understand God's word and one another.

The Babel story of Genesis 11 is reversed ... the judgement of scattering there was not simply the confusion of language – it was the lack of understanding that would result.

This Pentecost crowd scenes as a microcosm of these scattered peoples. This gathering now is made possible because of language that is understood.

The book of Acts will soon narrate the scattering of the church, not as judgement but in mission. Peter is the central character in this narrative. He is so bold, so soon after his denial of Jesus, and timidity at the tomb....

The spirit cannot be contained

Gods spirit breathes life

Empowers community

The mission of the church is to share the good news, to empower, to enliven, to love ...

So here we are today, enfolded in the madness, the chaos. The empowerment of Pentecost, here we are, all together in this place. Look around you. There are red sheets of paper on the walls. These are some of the ways you might express you gifts, your fruits for the building up of this community.

Sit a while. Walk around, look, noticing what attracts you, where are you being drawn?

Maybe what is calling you is not written there ...

There is some paper on the font up the front, write it down there....

Prayer vine? Outreach team? Reading roster? Help with childrens church or youth group? ...

Breathe in the breath of life

Fire of the spirit

Allow yourself to be enlivened, encouraged, enfolded by love ...

How do we share the gift of Spirit this Pentecost?

How do you experience the movement of spirit in your life?

What fruits are you bearing?

Gather us in as those who wait

To know you more deeply Holy spirit

Speak to us in ways that know each heart and mind

Light the fires of your life in us

And nurture the fruit of our being

Then scatter us into the world

As bearers of your sacred word

The fruits of your spirit

And of a joy that cannot be contained

Within these walls

Encircle us with your grace and gather in

All that we have received and become, we pray.

AMEN (Seasons of The Spirit Resources)