



Churches Together in the Merseyside Region

Praying together for the renewing of God's Spirit

We have a variety of traditions and experiences within our Christian community on Merseyside. For some, praying together for the renewing of God's Spirit will be a familiar and regular experience; for others it may not. This short liturgy is offered to be used by any who would find it helpful to have a framework to follow, others will have their own resources to draw on, or may prefer a more spontaneous approach. This resource does not seek to align with any particular Christian tradition, and can be freely adapted, changed or sections of it used in whatever way is most helpful.

Reader: (Acts 1:4-5) While staying with them, Jesus ordered his disciples not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for the promise of the Father. 'This', he said, 'is what you have heard from me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.

Leader: Living Christ

In response to your command and promise

We come together to wait upon you.

(response) Send your Spirit upon us again

We wait patiently

Living Christ, send your Spirit

We wait humbly

Living Christ, send your Spirit

We wait obediently

Living Christ, send your Spirit

We wait, aware of our shortcomings and failings

Living Christ, send your Spirit

We wait, in gratitude for your grace and mercy

Living Christ, send your Spirit

We wait in expectation and hope

Living Christ, send your Holy Spirit

(Brief silence)

(the following prayer could then be introduced by the leader as preceding a time of silence. Participants can be encouraged to use this time to reflect and allow the Holy Spirit to speak to their inner self; particularly bringing to mind those parts of their lives where there is

opportunity for confession and forgiveness. Try to stress that this is a positive intention –we invite God to ‘search us’ so that he can bring forgiveness and assurance.)

Leader: In your word O Lord, you describe your people as a temple of your Holy Spirit. Our desire is to be worthy vessels, ready to be filled; we seek your forgiveness and cleansing for all our failings. Search our hearts O God, test our thoughts and by your Spirit of truth, reveal to us where we have fallen short of your glory. Not that we might wallow in guilt but, assured by your redeeming love, be prepared to receive from you afresh.

(A time of silence can follow, in which individuals can confess privately before God and seek his forgiveness)

(During this time, it may be appropriate to play some quiet music, or a recording of an appropriate song that speaks of God’s love, grace, mercy and/or forgiveness)

Leader: (1 John 1:9) If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness

A shared prayer of confession

Loving God,

We have all sinned and fallen short of your glory,

In ways that are obvious to everyone,

And ways known only to ourselves.

We have failed you through words we have spoken and things we have done.

We have failed you through things left unsaid and tasks we have neglected.

Our world is not as you would have it be,

And at times we find it easier to conform to its standards

Than to walk in the ways of your kingdom.

**We do not come to you because we believe ourselves to be better than anyone else
But because we recognise that we are not.**

Cleanse us from our sinfulness

Forgive us for our waywardness

Embrace us in your mercy

Re-clothe us in your righteousness

And renew us with your love.

Through Christ our Saviour and Redeemer we pray

AMEN

Leader: (Luke 11:9-12) Jesus said:

“Ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for a fish, will give a snake instead of a fish? Or if the child asks for an egg, will give a scorpion? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!

Spirit of the Living God

**Fall afresh upon us we pray
Transform us into the likeness of Christ
Rekindle your fire within us
Empower and equip us for your service
Unite us afresh in your love
Make our hearts restless to seek the ways of your Kingdom
Grant us wisdom and courage to be faithful disciples.
Come Holy Spirit com**

Praying for one another as prayer companions.

Pray together in threes. If it is comfortable for everyone, you may want to use some physical contact – this might be by the other two placing one hand on the shoulder or head of the person being prayed for, or by holding the hand of that individual. You can pray while sitting together or by standing – whichever is the most comfortable and appropriate for the context in which you meet.

If you feel able, you can pray spontaneously using your own words, alternatively you may wish to use the prayers offered below, or combine these with prayers of your own.

Allow between 15 and 30 minutes for this, and divide the time available into three equal sections. The leader may wish to use an appropriate, audible signal to indicate when each of the time segments passes.

Identify the first person who is to be prayed for – place them in the middle of your cluster. The prayers below are intended for the other two to use in ministering to that that person.

Invite the person who is to be prayed for to indicate any specific requests or needs they may have. (For example this might be a particular ailment or condition, it may be anxiety over a specific matter, a general desire for a deeper experience of faith, strength to fulfil a particular responsibility or ministry etc. – if you feel able, include these specifically at the appropriate point in your prayers)

Prayer Companion 1: Holy Spirit in humility and obedience we wait on you. Anoint us all afresh as we offer and receive prayer together. We pray especially for *(persons name)* that he/she might be filled anew with your presence, peace and power. We offer our prayers in faith, trusting in your promise that in our coming together, you are here. You have promised the gift of your Spirit to those who ask, and so as your grateful children we make this request. Come Holy Spirit, come

(The other two repeat) **Come Holy Spirit come.**

Allow a time of silence. If either of the two praying wish to offer a spontaneous prayer, or an appropriate verse of Scripture, a verse or phrase from a hymn or similar that comes to mind, they can do so.

Do not feel you have to fill the silence – you can offer unspoken prayers from your heart, or simply allow this time for God to do his work within the person you are praying for. Be open to sense God's assurance that he is responding to your prayers. When they feel ready, the second person can pray.

Prayer Companion 2: Holy Spirit, gentle as a dove, as you rested on Christ in his Baptism come afresh upon (person's name) we pray. Pour your grace and love into her/his heart that she/he may be renewed within. Grant her/him a deep sense of your presence, that though your enabling he might become more the person you intend. Particularly we pray (*if you feel able and comfortable, list the particular needs that the person shared otherwise simply use the words that follow*) for those needs and desires that he/she has shared in your presence. Come Holy Spirit come.

(the other two repeat) **come Holy Spirit come.**

Allow a little more time to elapse, enjoy and receive God's presence together; when you feel ready change roles, and repeat these prayers again. Gently move around so that the person who prayed first is now in the centre as the one who receives prayer. The person who prayed second, now offers the first prayer, and the person who was prayed for, offers the second. As before, give the person who is to be prayed for, the opportunity to share any needs or concerns.

Repeat the sequence above for a third time, changing roles in the same rotation as before.

Allow God space to work – so do not be too prescriptive, but when the time feels right, the leader can bring this section to a close with the words below:

Leader: (Romans 5:5) Hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us

Together: So be it Lord, Amen

Leader: Holy Spirit

At the dawn of creation
You hovered over the face of the earth;
Poised above the chaos;
Ready to bring life and light, fruitfulness and order
At the Creator's every bidding

R: Spirit of life, Spirit of healing, Spirit of renewing – we pray for your coming

In Jesus, we see the heart of a God
Who weeps over a city,
Longing to gather her people anew
Into your Kingdom of healing and hope

Spirit of life, Spirit of healing, Spirit of renewing – we pray for your coming

We come together to pray for our community
With all its hope and aspiration
With all its pain and brokenness
With all its need and longing
We pray for your coming

Spirit of life, Spirit of healing, Spirit of renewing – we pray for your coming

We pray for those with influence and power
We pray for those who feel helpless and forgotten
We pray for those who endeavour for common good
We pray for those intent on their interests alone
We pray for your coming

Spirit of life, Spirit of healing, Spirit of renewing – we pray for your coming

We pray for your Church
Called to be Christ's body on earth
Inspired by visions of your coming Kingdom
Yet thwarted by our own humanity and division

Spirit of life, Spirit healing, Spirit of renewing – we pray for your coming

Yet you have chosen this broken vessel
As your instrument of grace and truth throughout the world
Renew us again, equip us afresh
And use us as channels of your blessing

Spirit of life, Spirit of healing, Spirit of renewing – we pray for your coming.

(Leave a time of silence. (perhaps playing some gentle music within it) Do not rush the silence but allow it for people to offer the prayers of their hearts. During this time, be open to the Holy Spirit speaking – and encourage people to share anything that they sense in their hearts. Try to discourage lengthy prayers – it may simply be that someone shares out loud the name of a place, organisation or individual that they particularly feel it right to pray for. It might be that the Holy Spirit brings to someone's mind a particular Scripture verse or statement about God that can be shared as a blessing to the group as a whole.)

Do not be concerned if there is a period of prolonged silence – use this to explore and experience a sense of God's Presence – recognising that many prayers will be being silently offered.

After an appropriate time (probably around 10 minutes) bring this to a close by repeating the shared refrain

Spirit of life, Spirit of healing, Spirit of renewing
R: we pray for your coming.

Final Prayer (together)

**Anointed by Your Spirit and united in your love
We offer ourselves in service of your Kingdom
Inspire us, fill us, send us
Make us channels of your renewing
And surround us with your presence and blessing we pray
Through Jesus Christ our Lord
AMEN**