

# **God's Empowering Presence Week 1**

These weekly studies are loosely based on the previous Sunday's sermon. If you missed it, you will find a recording on our website ([www.knaphillbaptist.org.uk](http://www.knaphillbaptist.org.uk)). They are designed for both Home Group discussion and/or personal reflection. Don't necessarily try to cover all the questions and discussion topics in your group at one sitting. You may like to think about them later in your own time.



## **The Breath of God**

### **Read John 20:19-30**

It is most likely that the disciples continued to meet in the upper room where the Last Supper had been held. After Jesus' arrest and crucifixion, they were very afraid. They thought the Jews would come for them next.

They met in terror, listening fearfully for every step on the stair and for every knock on the door just in case the Sanhedrin came to arrest them as well. In the evening on the day of the Resurrection, John tells us that Jesus came and stood among them and said *Peace be with you*. This greeting is a normal everyday phrase, 'shalom to you'. It cannot just be translated as 'peace'. It means far more than, 'may you be saved from trouble'. It means 'may God give you every good thing'. The context in which it is used here is full of significant meaning. All that the Old Testament Prophets had poured into the term 'shalom' as the sum of the blessings of the kingdom of God have been realised in the redemptive acts of the incarnate Son of God on the cross for the salvation of the world. His 'Shalom' on Easter evening is the complement of 'It is finished' on the cross (19:30), for the peace of reconciliation and life from God has now been given. *Shalom* to you this Easter season.

## Questions and pointers for discussion/reflection

1. As he did with his first disciples, Jesus speaks peace into our anxious, fearful, stressed out and troubled hearts. How does the peace that Jesus gives differ from the peace of the world (see John 14:27; John 16:33; Philippians 4:4-7)?
2. After he again said, 'Peace be with you', Jesus breathed on them and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.' In both the Biblical languages the word for Spirit is the same word as for wind or breath. In Hebrew (OT) it is the word *Ruach* and in Greek (NT) it is the word *Pneuma*. Read John 3:1-8. What does Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus teach us about the Holy Spirit? What can we learn from this passage about the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer?
3. The breath of God theme runs right through the Bible. What can we learn about God's breath from Genesis 2:7 and Ezekiel 37:1-14? In the same way that we cannot create breath for life neither can we create spiritual life and breath in our selves – discuss.
4. Christ's death and resurrection has brought in a new age. When Jesus breathed on the disciples they became new creatures in him (2 Corinthians 5:17). In what ways have you become a new creature in Christ?
5. Thomas was absent when Jesus first appeared to his disciples and he missed out. He did not believe because he had not received the same experience as his friends. Do you feel that you have missed out on anything from God?
6. What is your understanding and experience of the Holy Spirit?
7. Have you ever had or still have major doubts about the faith that you feel hold you back? How can these be overcome?
8. The picture on the front was painted by a Tamil refugee in an Australian detention centre. How does it speak to you? What fears do you have? How does the Holy Spirit bring you peace?
9. Did anything speak to you especially from last Sunday's sermon?
10. Spend some time sitting quietly and become conscious of your breathing. Focus on this for a few minutes and sense God's empowering presence in the silence.