

Acts 2:1–13: The Gift of the Holy Spirit

HOUSE GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE — IN (LOOKING BACK) · UP (LOOKING UP) · OUT (LOOKING FORWARD)

Before You Meet: This week we continue our series in Acts. On the Day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit arrives with the sound of a rushing wind and what looks like tongues of fire, and the disciples begin declaring the mighty works of God in languages they never learned. The Spirit is the same life-giving breath at work from Genesis to Ezekiel — now poured out to make God's own presence, not just his help, permanently at home in his people and to send them out with a message the whole world needs to hear.

The sermon content below is the **UP (Gospel)** portion of tonight's meeting — one third of the night. Don't let it swallow the whole evening. Give real time to IN and OUT as well; that's what makes this a House Group and not just a Bible study.

1

IN — Looking Back *(Community)*

Care · Worship · Celebrate Faithfulness · Motivation & Encouragement

Care

Go around the room and let people check in — highs and lows from the week, what's weighing on them, what they need prayer or practical help for. Take note of needs that might call for a meal, a text check-in, or a helping hand this week.

Worship

Take a few minutes to praise God together — a song, a moment of silence to reflect, or simply going around the room naming one thing from the week you're grateful to God for.

Celebrate Faithfulness

Before diving into the text, follow up on last week: did anyone take a step from last meeting's application — a conversation, a prayer, an act of obedience? Celebrate it out loud. Naming wins reminds the group that God is actually at work in each other's lives, not just in the abstract.

Motivation & Encouragement

Take a moment to encourage someone in the room — call out something you've genuinely seen God growing in them lately. This isn't flattery; it's naming grace at work.

2

UP — Looking Up *(Gospel — Sermon Discussion Guide)*

Feel free to reword questions or skip some — you don't need to cover them all. Pray through them and ask God to use them to create genuine conversation.

Background to Keep in Mind

- In both Greek and Hebrew, the same word is used for spirit, wind, and breath — the word used to describe the Spirit's arrival in Acts 2.

- Fire in the Old Testament repeatedly marks the very presence of God — a presence sinful people could not safely approach.
- Pentecost was the Feast of Firstfruits, the day Israel presented the first portion of the harvest to God — not a random date on the calendar.
- The tongues in Acts 2 let devout Jews from many nations hear the mighty works of God in their own language; the miracle points beyond itself to the message it carried.

Key Takeaways

- 1. Life-Giving Breath.** The Spirit is the same life-giving breath that hovered over creation in Genesis and breathed dry bones back to life in Ezekiel. He doesn't improve spiritual life that's already there — he creates it where there was none.
- 2. Presence, Not Power.** The Holy Spirit isn't an impersonal force or spiritual energy. Fire in Scripture marks God's own presence — a presence sinful people once couldn't survive near. Because of Jesus, that same presence now dwells personally in believers.
- 3. A Gift as Great as the Cross.** The giving of the Spirit isn't a footnote to the gospel story — it may carry weight equal to the death and resurrection of Jesus, since it's the Spirit who makes Christ's finished work personally and permanently ours.
- 4. Conviction Is Grace.** When the Spirit brings guilt over sin, it isn't condemnation — it's an invitation to turn, because in Jesus there's already no need to run. Conviction is the Spirit making us more like Christ, not building a case against us.
- 5. Ready for Harvest.** God chose the Feast of Firstfruits to send the Spirit — a deliberate signal that a harvest of souls was ready and that his people are sent into it, equipped to make Jesus known.

Opening (Choose One)

- Think of a gift you received that took time to fully understand or appreciate. What made it valuable once you understood it better?
- When you hear the word "power," what image comes to mind? How does that compare with how the Spirit's power is described in Acts 2?

Digging Into the Text

Read Acts 2:1–4. A sound like a rushing wind fills the house, what looks like tongues of fire rest on each person, and they begin to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gives them ability.

The sermon describes the Holy Spirit as the life-giving breath of God, drawing a connection from Genesis to Acts 2. In what ways have you personally experienced the Spirit bringing new life to areas of your heart or circumstances that felt spiritually dead?

Read Ezekiel 37:1–10 alongside this passage — the vision of a valley of dry bones brought to life by God's breath. What areas of your spiritual life feel most like dry bones right now? What would it look like to invite the Spirit's renewal there?

Fire in Scripture repeatedly symbolizes the very presence of God himself. How does knowing that the Holy Spirit is not merely a force or power, but the actual presence of God, change the way you relate to him in your daily life?

In the Old Testament, sinful people could not survive in the presence of a holy God — yet because of Christ, that same presence now dwells in believers. What does it mean to you personally that God would choose to make his home in you?

Read Acts 2:5–13. Devout Jews from every nation are bewildered to hear the wonders of God declared in their own native language; some are amazed, others accuse the believers of being drunk.

The sermon notes that the crowd's responses to the outpouring of the Spirit were divided between amazement and mockery. What do you think causes people today to dismiss or rationalize away evidence of God's work? How should believers respond to that dismissal?

The timing of Pentecost as the Feast of Firstfruits was intentional, signaling that a harvest of souls was ready. In what practical ways does your current way of living reflect an awareness that you're called to participate in that ongoing harvest?

Going Deeper

- The pastor argues that the giving of the Holy Spirit may be of equal importance to the death and resurrection of Jesus. Do you agree with that claim? How does understanding the Spirit's role change the way you think about salvation?
- The pastor describes guilt as potentially being a gift when the Spirit is using it to convict and purify us. How do you personally distinguish between guilt that draws you toward repentance and growth versus guilt that drives you away from God?
- The pastor challenges listeners to consider whether they are like an eight-year-old misusing a pocket knife, or an elderly person underusing a smartphone, when it comes to the Holy Spirit. Which of those two errors do you think is more common in your own faith community, and why?

Closing Reflection

What would it look like, in a concrete and observable way, for someone's life to clearly reflect that they are living in step with the Holy Spirit this week? Choose one specific situation where you'll intentionally rely on the Spirit rather than your own instincts or strength.

3

OUT — Looking Forward *(Mission)*

Preparing for the Mission · Going on Mission · Praying for the Mission

Preparing for the Mission

Set aside 30 minutes this week to honestly examine how you're relying on the Spirit. Ask: Am I living like someone who has this gift, or like someone who's forgotten it's there? Where have I been leaning on my own strength instead of his presence? Bring what you find to God in prayer, not performance.

- If you sense the Spirit convicting you of something specific, don't run from it — bring it into the light with a trusted believer this week.
- Standing question: Who's willing to share next week about a time the Spirit gave them courage, clarity, or comfort they didn't have on their own? Let your leader know if you're willing.

Going on Mission

Identify one person in your life who needs to hear that Jesus is the Savior they're looking for, and commit to praying for them by name this week. Ask the Spirit to open a door for a real conversation.

- Read Acts 2 again this week, slowly, and notice how ordinary language and ordinary people carried an extraordinary message.
- Look for one place this week to speak plainly, in your own words, about what Jesus has done for you — no need for polish, just honesty.
- Don't wait until you feel fully ready. Make one concrete, low-pressure invitation this week — a coffee, a call, an invite to House Group — and let the Spirit carry the outcome.

Praying for the Mission

Go around the room and share, by name, someone you're praying will come to know Jesus. Pray for them together — that the Spirit would open their eyes, soften their heart, and use you to help them see.

Closing

Close your time together by praying as a group for the postures we saw in this passage — that you would recognize the Spirit as God's own presence and not just his help, that conviction would move you toward Jesus rather than away from him, and that you would live each day aware that you've been sent into a ready harvest. This is what it looks like to enjoy him, stay with him, and walk together into a world that needs to hear of him.