

Pentecost (NOT) in Lockdown 3 (2020)

Dear Father

Thank you that I/we was/were made to your image;

Thank you for showing me/us that you value me/us as your creation and that you were impressed with the result;

Thank you that you did not refrain from me/us when I/we sinned against you;

Thank you, Lord Jesus, for stepping into my/our place and paying my/our debt by dying on the cross;

Thank you, Holy Spirit, for leading me/us to Christ and for giving me/us the guarantee that I/we am/are God's child/children.

Father thank you for loving us so much and for saving us from a fruitless life. Please fill me/us with the Holy Spirit that I/we can enjoy a fruitful life.

As your child/children, I/we would like to become the person that you want me/us to be and to understand what my/our true value is and how our relationship with you can add value to my/our life here on earth.

Amen

3. Gifts & Ministries (25-05-2020)

Picture yourself with a huge box full of stuff; it is too big to carry. What are you going to do? You would call someone to assist you. Jesus said in John 14:16 He will send us a *Parakletos* – a Helper – the Holy Spirit. The *Parakletos* was an occupation then to assist someone to carry his or her load – like a modern-day: Porter.



¹ Images accessed from: <https://careerplanet.co.za/careers-listing/hotel-porter/> & <https://jobs365.co.za/hotel-porter-2/> 22 May 2020

Picture something else: When we look in a mirror and you see yourself. Hopefully you only see one person! But the moment you put another mirror in an angle behind you, you could see forever people that resemble you.

The body of Christ is like Him being resembled in how we mirror Him in different settings:

- In your inner room, when it is only you and Him, then you resemble Him fully and all the gifts can work in and through you
- The moment you are within your family then the gifts are divided and different people resemble something of God, the body of Christ and we need to be open to see, hear, and feel God working through the other people in my family.
- The gifts become more specialised when we get to the Church as there might be more than one person with similar gifts and I need to share the responsibility to serve the bigger body.
- Within the Kingdom of God there will be thousands of people with the gifts and the chance to shy away from doing anything becomes easier as we think God can use someone else.

Let's first look at the purpose of the Gifts and Ministries:

1 Corinthians 14:3² to strengthen, encourage and comfort others; The gifts and ministries are for the purpose of others. It is not for me it is for serving others. It does not give us a position, nor for our glorification, but to glorify God!

Ephesians 4:12-13 to equip people for works of service and to build people up in their faith

1 Peter 4:10-11 to serve one another that God will be praised.

Being filled with the Holy Spirit also gives us a responsibility towards our personal relationship with God, our family, friends, fellow believers (in church & community), and to represent Christ in your world: family, church, work, sport, business, school, hostel, etc. It is then that being Spirit filled becomes more than a role to play in church but rather a way to live.

² You can read 1 Corinthians 12; Romans 12; Ephesians 4:7-16; 1 Peter 4: about the gifts and ministries.

Initially it becomes a challenge, sometimes very difficult, even impossible, but it is a lifestyle to learn, edify, strengthen you as you learn to listen to the Holy Spirit's guidance, His prompting, His calling, and us making a choice to take on the challenge, to do something and to evaluate the outcomes:

- If the outcomes are positive, it becomes easier to try something again or something new:

Working on the streets was not that easy as shearing the Gospel with drug addicts and prostitutes, mostly into the early Sunday mornings and then to meet them to take to church. But seeing people accepting Christ as their Lord and Saviour is rewarding and then next week you sacrifice your Saturday evening again, and sometimes Friday evenings you just put in another shift!

- If the outcome is negative, it is an opportunity to evaluate, to determine where it went wrong and to learn from the experience:

I was a part of ten students in our final year that were willing to go to the mission field. Out of a class of 93 ten were willing to go where God called us to. We attended an evening with a Professor from Stellenbosch that shared the need for a pastor in the north of Namibia and a congregation that was on the edge of the river between Namibia and Angola with members from both countries. [I must add that this was in the time of the war that was intensifying – 1982.] None of the others were willing to go and I thought that I am the chosen one. In my quiet time I even got word that God is in control of the weapon maker. But then days before I had to make my final choice, Rina was reading her Bible (at a time that she never does!). When I asked her why she was reading the Bible, she had a desire. When I asked her what she was reading she said she does not understand what God was saying to her. In Proverbs 'If a King does not listen to his advisers, he is a fool' – all my advisers had told me that I should not go and I had to decline the call – a very humbling experience but I learned from it.

Making mistakes in using your gifts and ministry, is merely a learning curve.

Most people are shying away from coming to the fore as we think we would be seen as arrogant and thinking too much of ourselves.

Many people think they first need a degree in theology or have served as a deacon before they can become an elder, etc.

Being Spirit filled is a responsibility that you need to discover and to learn as you use the gift.

Thus, being Spirit filled is not only a for your own spiritual formation, but mostly for the spiritual formation of others. The challenge is to share those gifts and ministries with the family, the congregation and the local community or even to the end of the earth.

For the Body of Christ to function we need to know who we can rely on to come to our assistance, who will be the *Parakletos* the helper to carry the load of someone else. In a sense you are in making your gifts and ministry available become the visual resemblance of the Holy Spirit as what you do is not of yourself but the result of the Holy Spirit working in and through you.

Heavenly Father, thank you for pouring out the Holy Spirit on all believers. Holy Spirit thank you for enabling us to be the body of Christ and

- for providing us with different gifts and ministries
- to build each other up in our faith,
- to equip us for our ministries,
- to be available to carry each other loads.

Thank you that we can in a time like this come to the fore and share our gifts and ministry to strengthen, encourage and to comfort one another. May we glorify you through our participation in Church. May your Gospel spread through our gifts and ministries where we represent you in our community. May your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. May your Kingdom come. May your name be glorified.

Amen