

Acts 2:42-27

Guided meditation

Let's take a journey back in time. In a moment I'm going to invite you to close your eyes and we're going to imagine ourselves back at the birth of the church, straight after the time of Pentecost.

Close your eyes.

In your imagination, take yourself back a couple of thousand years to Jerusalem, the Jewish capital. Imagine the Middle Eastern city on a hill, the buildings of clay and stone, narrow streets, city walls, the hustle and bustle – streets filled with locals and visitors, Jewish leaders and priests, Roman soldiers on top of city walls and in the streets.

You have been one of Jesus' followers for some time. You remember the day of Pentecost as if it was yesterday. There were Jewish people from many countries who had travelled to Jerusalem for the annual Feast of Weeks. The city was packed with people.

You remember being a house, in a large upstairs room, with the other believers, praying together. There was the sound of mighty wind, and what looked like flames dancing, and a sense of being filled to overflowing.

People jumped to their feet, speaking in languages that they didn't know. You remember everyone being overjoyed, full of a sense of the presence of God. Everyone ran down into the street, shouting and laughing like a bunch of drunks. People stopped and stared, and a crowd gathered.

You saw Peter jumping up some steps and address the crowd. He spoke a bold, powerful message about Jesus being sent by God, fulfilling old prophecies, and then being raised back to life by God.

Then Peter called people to repent, to be forgiven, to be baptised, and to receive the Holy Spirit. So many people responded. You were all amazed. You remembered Jesus' promises and you felt awestruck, humbled and thankful.

That was some weeks ago. Now there are many more believers. You've been gathering together almost every day outside the Temple, because that is the only place large enough to meet. As a group you, worship and pray there, but with a new sense and vitality of what that is all about.

Some have work to do, but you, like others, spend your day talking to anyone who will listen about Jesus, about how remarkable he was, about his teachings, about his dying and rising.

Each evening you gather in the homes of other believers. You share a meal and break bread together, just as you did with the Master. Each of the twelve is at a different household each evening, telling stories of their time with Jesus and repeating his teaching. There is singing and prayer well into the evening.

The households are bulging with visitors who have stayed in Jerusalem. There are newcomers to be fed and even clothed. Others hear of your hospitality and come seeking help. Who could say "No" to them in the name of Jesus? And so, those with more are selling what they have, even their goods and grain back home, so that everyone has enough in this new community.

It's not a secret. Friends and neighbours are asking about what is going on. "Come and hear!" you say. "Join us for a meal!" And they do, and some stay. It seems as if every day there are new people wanting to discover what has changed your lives so much.

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