

FIREPLACE 1 – We Need Fire

When you hear the phrase, ‘Lord, we want more,’ what does *more of God* actually mean to you?

- What would you love to see God do more of in your own life?
- What would ‘more’ look like in our church?

KEY INSPIRATION (attributed to John Wimber)

“You must have a FIREPLACE that is CAPABLE of CONTAINING the FIRE.”

The BIG CHALLENGE QUESTIONS

- * Who’s REALLY running the show?
- * What could the Holy Spirit do if we REMOVE the (inadvertent) HINDRANCES on His work?
- * What do we EXPECT on a Sunday? Is it a NICE morning ... or is it ENCOUNTER leading to TRANSFORMATION?

What do you honestly expect when you come to church on a Sunday?

- Have your expectations changed over the years?
- What causes our expectations of God to grow – or diminish?

What do you think it means for the Holy Spirit to be genuinely ‘running the show’ in a church?

- How would we know the difference between a service that is merely well-organised and one that is genuinely Spirit-led?
- Is there a danger in either extreme: too much control or too little structure?

The THREAT = ‘ULTRA-PROCESSED church’

- * LIKE the real thing, but full of MIMICKING ALTERNATIVES.
- * UPFs: The tongue ENJOYS it, but the body isn’t NOURISHED.
- * UPC risks CLOSING the DOOR to the Holy Spirit.

STRUCTURE: Friend or Foe?

- * Is the STRUCTURE serving the HOLY SPIRIT ... or are we trying to SQUEEZE the Holy Spirit into the STRUCTURE.
- * The Danger: The Holy Spirit is not FROZEN out, but SQUEEZED out. Not REJECTED so much as EXCLUDED.

What are some things that could unintentionally squeeze the Holy Spirit out of the life of a church?

Think beyond obviously negative things. Could good things – programmes, structure, tradition, time pressure, excellence, familiarity – ever have that effect?

LESS to MORE

Question is not, ‘Have we been doing it WRONG?’ but ‘Is there MORE?’
Not ‘How do we FIX our church services,’ but ‘Lord, what must we do to FACILITATE MORE?’

Why do you think churches can become reluctant to make room for the unfamiliar work of the Holy Spirit?

- What legitimate concerns might lie behind that reluctance?
- When does healthy caution become an unhealthy resistance?

What are we currently *not asking God for* because we have stopped expecting Him to do it?

The CHURCH of MORE (1 Thess 5:16-22)

The message is healthy PRACTICES lead to a healthy LIFE & a healthy CHURCH.

3 WARNINGS

1. QUENCH not → LIT: Do not PUT OUT the FIRE.
HOW?
 - a) Inadvertently SQUEEZE & FREEZE the Holy Spirit out.
 - b) Become so WARY of the fire that NOTHING is allowed.
 - c) Failing to EXPECT (James 4:2, Luke 11:13).
2. DESPISE not → Regard as WORTHLESS, treat with CONTEMPT.
Quenchers say, ‘We DON’T do that HERE.’
We say, ‘SPEAK, Lord, your servant is LISTENING.’
3. TEST & DISCERN everything → Don’t quench, don’t despise, but equally, don’t SWALLOW everything UNCRITICALLY.
Paul’s way: OPEN yet DISCERNING.

→ How do we ‘quench’ the moving of the Holy Spirit when we gather? Is there anything that you do personally that holds Him back, inadvertently or otherwise?
→ What is the Barn’s current stance on prophetic words? Do you think our view is balanced? Suspicious? Too cautious? Wide open? And what should it be?
→ What does ‘testing’ something look like practically? How can we be open without being gullible, and discerning without becoming cynical?

FAN into FLAMES (2 Tim 1:6)

The GIFT needs to be STIRRED.

The FLAME needs to be FANNED.

We have a responsibility to NURTURE the flame & STEWARD the fire.

HOW do we GET THERE?

Ask God what we need to do as a church to:

- * OPEN the door WIDE
- * Remove any HINDRANCES
- * Stir our FAITH & EXPECTATION
- * Learn the WAYS of the Holy Spirit

Which of those four do you think is most important for you personally right now – and why?

Which one might be most important for us corporately as a church?

PRAY: “Holy Spirit, is there anything in me – or anything about the way we do church – that is inadvertently making it harder for You to work?”