

Prayer for Sydney – Pentecost 2015

Transforming Sydney and Newtown Mission

Join together with Christian Leaders on the evening of 23rd May at Newtown Mission to stand together in faith and in the unity of the Holy Spirit to call out to God for the people of our cities and our state of NSW.

From Andy Collins, Newtown Mission:

*At our Sunday evening gatherings in January, we showed the “Son of God” DVD. After encouraging others to see if any one particular scene stood out, I found myself very convicted by the scene of Jesus overturning the tables in the Temple; **“My house shall be called a house of prayer!!!”***

As a result of this and other promptings, I made a decision to set aside an hour each day for regular, intentional times of prayer within my work week. It wasn't easy initially, the spirit was willing but the flesh was weak. However, it became so much easier. I found I was really looking forward to these times, and they seemed to fly by way too fast!

Soon after, others started joining me. It seemed as if others at Newtown Mission had also felt this hunger and prompting to spend time with God. And prayer wasn't just one-way traffic: making sure there wasn't one second of silence in our hour of prayer. We found that it was enough to simply be still in the Lord's presence.

The wonderful peace of God seemed to flow. Newtown may be the postcode in Australia in which more people identify themselves as “No religion” in every National Census, but not in this chapel... His house is indeed a house of prayer!

When I read Lilian's email about praying for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost Eve, I realised that we were not alone in our desire for God to pour out His Holy Spirit afresh on His people in Sydney.

We may all relate to Elijah: we remain zealous for God, even though the rest of the country seems to have rejected His covenant. It's hard work, sometimes discouraging, and we can feel like the only ones left. Then we spend time with God, and He declares, “There's 7000 more people just like you” (see 1 Kings 19).

It is amazingly encouraging to hear that so many of my brothers and sisters are also longing and praying for our Lord to do a new thing in our churches, denominations and ultimately this great city and beyond.

It is a great pleasure and honour to join with Transforming Sydney in inviting you to Newtown Mission chapel for a very special night of prayer and fellowship on May 23 as we are brought together in unity to call out to our God.

*A verse that has been particularly important in the past few weeks comes from John 17:3: **“Now this is eternal life: that they know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent.”***

One of the privileges of eternal life is that our relationship with God has already started. We don't have to wait. We don't have to earn it. It is a free gift that we receive when we put our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. We are now offered the same relationship with the Father that Jesus had with Him. And Jesus is right in the midst of us as we gather together and pray too.

But what's even more delightful is prayer from God's perspective: “The smoke of the incense, together with the prayers of God's people, went up before God from the angel's hand.” (Revelation 8:4) As we pray together, we have this promise that they reach God's very Throne Room, where the Son of God in all of His glory stands at the right hand of the Father!

Lord Jesus, be glorified afresh in our churches, just as You are right now in heaven. AMEN!

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According to Jewish tradition, 7 weeks (49 days – the ‘Counting of the Omer’) after Passover is the time of Shavu’ot, a commemoration of the giving of the Torah (the Law) by the Lord God to Moses at Mt. Sinai; when the Law of God was given to the people of Israel (and to the entire world). God’s glory was so great when he descended on the Mountain and spoke the 10 commandments that the people fell back in fear and asked Moses to be their mediator between them and God (Exodus 20).

In Deuteronomy 16, Moses reminded the Israelites of the three festivals that God asked them to keep each year (Exodus 23), the Festival of Harvest (or Weeks) is to offer to God the first-fruits of their harvest, and the 50th day is the Shavu’ot, when the priests would make a wave offering of leavened bread over the altar. Many Jews stay up all night reading the scriptures and praying.

Because of its significance, Shavu’ot is considered by many to be the day on which Judaism was born. The Talmud refers to Shavu’ot as the “marriage day” between God and the Jewish people. On Shavu’ot, Jews reaffirm their commitment to the Mosaic covenant, Jewish children are confirmed, and young adults recommit themselves to live as a Jew and to the study of the Torah.

When the Torah was translated into Greek this festival of “50 days” became Pentecost. For Christians this is a celebration of the day when the Church was truly born, the first-fruits of Jesus’ ministry, when we became “married” to God through the receiving of the Holy Spirit, and the New Covenant in Christ, begun on the Passover sacrifice of the Lamb of God, became substantial:

“This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel after that time,” declares the Lord.

“I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will they teach their neighbor, or say to one another, ‘Know the Lord,’ because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest,” declares the Lord.

“For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.” (Jer. 31:33-34)

John the Baptist prophesied of the first Pentecost when Jesus would baptise with the Holy Spirit and with fire (Matt. 3:11). Jesus confirmed this prophecy with the promise of the Holy Spirit to the disciples in John 14:26. He told the disciples to wait in Jerusalem for the Father’s gift of the Holy Spirit, *from whom they would receive power to be His witnesses to the ends of the earth* (Acts 1:3-8).

On the Day of Pentecost “when it had fully come” (i.e. in the morning after a night of prayer and reading the scriptures), just as promised, the sound of a violent wind filled the house, tongues of fire came to rest on each of them and all were filled with the Holy Spirit. They were given the power of communication, which Peter used to begin the ministry for which Jesus had prepared them. After the coming of the Holy Spirit, the disciples did not stay in the room basking in God’s glory but burst out to tell the world. This was the beginning of the Church as we know it.

Since the Jewish day starts at sunset,

Pentecost starts this year on Saturday night 23rd May at 6pm.

We invite you to join us with many Christians coming together from across the greater Sydney region for fervent prayer to our Lord for a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the people of our beloved city.

This prayer event will be held at:

Newtown Mission, 280A King Street, Newtown NSW from 6pm to 8:30pm.

Contact:

Newtown Mission: (02) 9519-9000 www.newtownmission.org.au

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Let us know you are coming and bring your people; we look forward to seeing you there, sincerely
Rev. Graeme Tutt (Senior Minister, Newtown Mission) and Bjorn Schmid (Transforming Sydney).