FOR THE KINGDOM
THE SPIRIT AND THE KINGDOM
Kingdom Presence

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THE CENTRAL INVITATION

Seek his face. Be filled with his Spirit. Carry his presence.

The Kingdom is the active rule of God made present among us by the Holy Spirit.

SEEK HIS FACE, NOT ONLY HIS HAND

The hand of God speaks of what he does: provision, protection, healing and power. The face of God speaks of personal presence. The call is not merely to desire something from God, but to desire God himself.

> ***"Come, my heart says, seek his face! Your face, Lord, do I seek."***
>
> **Psalm 27:8**

Psalm 105:4 calls us to seek the Lord, his strength and his presence continually. The biblical word for "presence" is also the word for "face". We seek his strength, but we do not stop there. We seek the One whose strength we need.

JOY IN THE FACE OF GOD

Jim Wilder and Michel Hendricks describe joy as relational: the experience that someone is glad to be with us. A newborn child looking into the face of a loving mother does not begin with explanation or achievement. In the meeting of faces, the child experiences delight, belonging and security.

THE CHILD DISCOVERS
Someone is glad that I am here.

THE BELIEVER DISCOVERS
In Christ, God has already turned towards us in love.

We look towards God and discover that he is looking towards us. Worship is the Church turning its face towards God; prayer is sustained attention to God. As we behold the Lord, the face we seek begins to form the people we become (2 Cor. 3:18).

> ***"If your presence will not go, do not carry us up from here."***
>
> **Exodus 33:15**

Moses refuses success without presence. What distinguishes the people of God is not size, history, programme or presentation. It is God among his people. The call is not simply to visit the presence of God, but to become people of the presence.

KINGDOM PRESENCE

1 PRIORITISE THE PRESENCE

The presence of God is not an addition to Christian life. It is the centre from which Christian life is lived. David's "one thing" was to dwell before God and behold his beauty (Ps. 27:4). The presence was not an escape from responsibility, but the place from which responsibility was carried faithfully.

LUKE 3	LUKE 4:1	LUKE 4:14	LUKE 4:18
The Spirit descends upon Jesus.	Jesus is full of the Spirit.	Jesus returns in the Spirit's power.	The Spirit sends good news and freedom.

The Spirit does not draw Jesus away from the world's pain. He sends Jesus towards it. "If it is by the finger of God that I cast out the demons, then the kingdom of God has come to you" (Luke 11:20). When the Spirit acts, the rule of God becomes visible.

WORSHIP AND PRAYER ARE KINGDOM PRACTICES

WORSHIP	PRAYER
We bring the whole of life under the worth of God. Worship is not decoration around the "important" parts of church.	We confess that the purposes of God cannot be fulfilled without the power of God. The Kingdom is received before it is expressed.

We cannot offer London a presence we no longer practise. People of the presence open Scripture expecting God to speak, pray beyond convenience and worship until attention is drawn away from self towards the beauty of Jesus.

2 LIVE UNDER THE GOVERNMENT OF THE SPIRIT

> *"Do not get drunk with wine ... but be filled with the Spirit."*
>
> **Ephesians 5:18**

The command is continuous: keep on being filled; be being filled. This is not a call to drunken, uncontrolled behaviour. Drunkenness impairs judgement and diminishes self-control. The Spirit's filling does the opposite: every part of life is increasingly controlled and directed by God.

- The Spirit does not destroy self-control; self-control is part of his fruit.
- The Spirit does not bypass the mind; he renews it.
- The Spirit does not erase our humanity; he restores us towards the likeness of Christ.
- The Spirit brings thought, speech, relationships, money, vocation, influence and power under the lordship of Jesus.

KINGDOM PRESENCE

POWERFUL AND SAFE

First Peter 5 places Spirit-formed ministry under the chief Shepherd. Leaders serve willingly, refuse domination, lead by example and clothe themselves with humility. The Church, its people and its ministry belong to Jesus.

EXPECTANT We expect the Spirit to speak, give gifts and heal.	**DISCERNING** We test what is said and remain accountable to Scripture.
HUMBLE No gift makes us owners; we are stewards of varied grace.	**SAFE** We neither manipulate suffering nor blame those not immediately healed.

We reject a false choice between supernatural power and holy character. We need gifts and fruit, healing and humility, spiritual fire and Christlike formation. We are not seeking uncontrolled lives. We are asking the Spirit to take control.

3 CARRY THE PRESENCE INTO THE WORLD

Watch the presence of God move across Scripture:

EDEN God walks with humanity.	**WILDERNESS** Cloud and fire lead the people.	**TABERNACLE & TEMPLE** Glory fills the house.
INCARNATION The Word becomes flesh. The presence has a face.	**PENTECOST** The glory that filled the house now fills people.	**NEW CREATION** The home of God is among mortals.

From garden to tabernacle, from temple to incarnation, from upper room to Spirit-filled Church, from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth, this is the movement of Scripture: God comes to dwell among his people, and his presence makes all things new.

FROM PIETISTIC TO PUBLIC PENTECOSTALS

We must retain a proper Pentecostal piety: conversion, holiness, Scripture, worship, prayer, gifts and personal encounter with God. But Pentecostal experience was never intended to end in the private life of the believer. The Spirit who meets us personally also sends us publicly.

Luke will not allow us to privatise Pentecost:

- Acts 3: spiritual power meets physical suffering at the temple gate.
- Acts 4: Spirit-given courage speaks before public authority.
- Acts 6: Spirit-filled wisdom addresses ethnic injustice in food distribution.
- Acts 10: the Spirit crosses a deeply embedded cultural boundary.
- Acts 16: deliverance disrupts an economy built upon exploitation.

Public Pentecostalism is not the replacement of evangelism with politics, nor the capture of the Church by left or right. It is the public maturity of Pentecostal piety: encounter becoming embodiment, anointing becoming vocation, and the presence experienced in worship becoming the presence carried into every sphere of society.

KINGDOM PRESENCE

THE CHURCH GATHERED AND SCATTERED

KINGDOM VOCATION

The Church gathered in the presence must become the Church scattered with the presence.

We enter public life clothed with humility, following the chief Shepherd, ready to serve and, where necessary, ready to suffer.

We need Pentecostals whose prayer is deep enough to sustain public courage, whose theology is strong enough to resist political capture, and whose encounter with the Spirit produces practical love for their neighbours.

BECOME PEOPLE OF THE PRESENCE

MOSES	**"If your presence does not go with us, we will not go."**
DAVID	**"Your face, Lord, do I seek."**
PAUL	**"Be being filled with the Spirit."**
THE CHURCH	**Leave the upper room and enter the city.**

MINISTRY AND RESPONSE

- Seek his face: begin without a list. Turn your attention towards God and pray, "Your face, Lord, do I seek."
- Surrender to his government: name the part of life resisting the Spirit and pray, "Bring every part of my life under the lordship of Jesus."
- Receive healing: trust the compassion and authority of Jesus, praying with faith, humility and love.
- Receive courage: ask for the person, place, vocation or sphere into which the Spirit is sending you.
- Receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit: come seeking Jesus, without anxiety or performance, ready to receive and ready to surrender.

GOD-GAZERS

"Not merely opportunity-gazers, platform-gazers, problem-gazers or gift-gazers. God-gazers: people who behold his beauty, carry his presence and reveal the reign of Jesus wherever he sends us."

Closing call

PRAYER OF COMMITMENT

Father, we do not want your promise without your presence. We do not want only your hand; we seek your face. Lord Jesus, chief Shepherd of the Church, clothe us with humility and bring every part of our lives under your reign. Holy Spirit, fill us again. Awaken worship, deepen prayer, release your gifts, bring healing and give us courage to carry your presence into the city. Baptise hungry people in the Holy Spirit. Make us people of your presence, for the sake of your Kingdom, for London and for the nations. In Jesus' name. Amen.

KEY TEXTS: Exodus 33:12–17 • Psalm 27:4, 8–9 • Luke 4:1, 14–21 • Luke 11:20 • Acts 1:8 • Acts 4:23–31 • Ephesians 5:18 • 1 Peter 5:1–5