

# Renew Your Life

COVID-19 Version

Session 1: The Renewable Energy of the Holy Spirit

Reading: Introduction and Chapter 1

## Welcome & Opening Questions (10 minutes)

Introduce yourself and share your response to one or more of these questions:

- What is it about the *Renew Your Life* theme or the small group experience that prompted you to step in?
- What is something about the season of summer that you enjoy, even with any restrictions that might still be in place?

## Group Hopes & Expectations (5 minutes)

Walk through the "Hopes and Expectations" information found on the website. Offer input. Share details about the group (dates/times/location...)

## Group Prayer Practice (5 minutes)

Spend a few minutes in silence as a group. Sit in a comfortable position and imagine yourself being held by God. Close your eyes and focus on your breath. Gently set aside or release any distracting thoughts during this time. The leader will guide you with these prompts.

- As you think about the past day or week, what did you experience that was life-giving?
- As you think about the past day or week, what was energy depleting for you?
- Silently, release the past day or week over to God in prayer.
- Imagine yourself held in the expansive energies of God's love. Take a minute to breathe deeply of God's presence and peace.

Amen

## Scripture Text (3 minutes)

*Acts 2:1-4 (NRSV)*

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

### Reading Recap (5 minutes)

In *Renew Your Life*, we follow Pastor Kai in his journey to restore the energy he once had but had lost along the way, an energy he desperately needed to revitalize his ministry and refresh his relationships. Cultural challenges deplete energy for all of us: the pace of life, our quick fix mentality, the seduction of more, comparison fatigue and now the impact of COVID-19. Through his journey, Pastor Kai discovered and shares seven renewable sources of energy: grace, possibility, paradox, natural world, relationships, fruitful work, and rest.

*This guide includes more questions than your group can answer to give you choices and a chance to adapt. Some groups are new and just starting. Other groups are returning for the COVID-19 series. Returning groups may want to focus on the COVID-19 update and questions below.*

### Questions on the Introduction and Chapter 1 (35 minutes)

*Start with these questions, adding in other questions to supplement. Questions are also available in the *Renew Your Life* book, starting on page 141.*

- What concepts in the readings and sermon were life-giving for you?
- What concepts or stories were difficult or challenging for you?

### The Renewable Energy of the Holy Spirit

1. Where do you see evidence of the cultural distortions (pace of life, quick-fix mentality, seduction of more, comparison fatigue) in the world and in your life? What effect do they have on you?
2. Which, if any, of the seven renewable, creative energies is most apparent in your life (pages 19-20)? How do you live out that energy? Which of the energies are you curious about or long for?
3. Look at the "Is it possible" questions on page 31. Which of the "possibility questions" speak to you today? In what area of your life is it easiest to acknowledge the Spirit's presence? Where is it more difficult to acknowledge or imagine?

### Update during COVID-19

**The Spirit of Life** – How did fearful, morally suspect, doubt-filled disciples become courageous agents for good in the world? The Spirit of Life. God's Spirit takes the raw material of our ragged lives and gradually—interaction by interaction, circumstance by circumstance, prayer by prayer—shapes us into people who perceive life as gift, who see other people as image-bearers of God, and who imagine ordinary life circumstances as opportunities to experience the presence of God. The church was never meant to be bound by its walls. How are we able to bring God's presence to others, in a world where the church has no walls? What might the Spirit be up to in our world today?

### Questions during COVID-19

1. For some, this has been a time of upside-down disruption, for others life has continued with some small adjustments. What has this time been like for you?
2. What are the things that remind you of God's presence in ordinary days? Where do you see God-given gifts in the people and circumstances around you?
3. What have you been able to do in this time that has been life-giving for someone else or for the community?
4. Where, in your life, do you long for God to be present and active?
5. When have you done something that was challenging or frightening? What helped you to keep moving forward? What gives you courage?
6. How has this time depleted you? How has this time given you rest and new energy?
7. Where do you see evidence of new energy in the search for racial justice? What are some examples? How has that energy affected you?

### Closing Question & Faith Practice (5 minutes)

*Explore how the chapter theme can make a difference in your life by considering this question & trying this faith practice:*

- What is draining or depleting your energy? Are there ways to release or rethink these activities?
- Use this breath prayer in the coming week to remind yourself of God's grace and creative, renewing energy. (see "breath prayer" instructions).

*Inhale: Spirit of God*

*Exhale: Fill me*

### Closing Prayer (3 minutes)

God, this is a time of challenges beyond what we could have imagined. We each face our own, unique circumstances, and together we share in a time of unforeseen changes, loss, uncertainty, pain, brokenness, fear and disruption.

Yet, God, we know that your steadfast love never ends and your presence never leaves us. We continue to see you in ordinary and extraordinary moments. We thank you for creation's renewal and beauty, for actions of kindness and love, for the blessings of daily life and for your renewing gift of hope. We are especially grateful for those who are doing self-sacrificing work on behalf of others, the community and the world. Most of all, we thank you for your peace, love and grace.

Guide us to know how to be your blessing in the world today. Open our hearts and imaginations to see how we can create healthy and abundant life for others. Sustain us, comfort us, guide us and enliven us to be your presence in the world. Amen.