

Island ECC Positional Paper

Holy Spirit

The Bible is from first to last Trinitarian, that is, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit are revealed as One at work throughout the whole of creation, salvation and sanctification. All statements of faith and doctrine should be founded on the eternal truths of scripture and certainly this is no less true of the person and work of the Holy Spirit.

...We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life. He proceeds from the Father and the Son, and with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified... (Nicene Creed)

At Island ECC, we affirm the magnitude of this truth and provide the following to assist in understanding the person, work and influence of the Holy Spirit.

The Person of the Holy Spirit

We affirm that God is one, and that the Holy Spirit, being fully God, has equal standing with the Father and Son. Thus, He embodies the eternal nature, as well as the heart, wisdom, and power which are also attributed to the other members of the Trinity.

It is also important to think of the Holy Spirit as a “person” worthy of our adoration and with whom we can be in relationship. In Scripture, the Spirit is described as creating, grieving, guiding, reminding, convicting; all actions attributed to a Person and not simply an energy, an impersonal force or some influence emanating from God. At our church we celebrate the glorious certainty of what the personal indwelling of the Holy Spirit, as promised by Jesus, means for a Christian's life and relationship with God.

The Work of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit reveals God's purpose, speaks through his people, and inspires the work of his Church on earth. The Spirit guided God's people in recording His work through history and with His people (2 Peter 1:21); and we are able to see this inspiration of the Spirit throughout the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16).

The Holy Spirit was active in creation (Genesis 1:2) and continues to bring life and breath (Psalm 104:29-30). He called His people through Abraham and came upon leaders to empower them for God's purposes (e.g., Moses and the 70 leaders in Numbers 11:25, Joshua in Numbers 27:18; Saul in 1 Samuel 10:10 and David in 1 Samuel 16:12-13). The Spirit of God spoke through the prophets and was prophesied to be poured out upon all people (Joel 2:28-29), a fulfilment of the promise that God will never leave us nor forsake us (Deuteronomy 31:6). The Holy Spirit was present at Jesus' baptism (Matthew 3:16), raised Jesus from the dead (Romans 8:11), and lives within and empowers God's church (Acts 1:8) in the current age. The Holy Spirit dwells in all who have placed their faith in Jesus Christ and works to transform Christians into the likeness of Jesus (Romans 8:29).

“In Him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in Him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of His glory” (Ephesians 1:13-14)

The Holy Spirit in the Life of the Believer

The connection between the Gospel and the Holy Spirit is explicit in scripture (Luke 24:49, Acts 1:4-5) therefore we should expect the work of the Holy Spirit to be something we experience. The Holy Spirit ushers us into a new spiritual birth and increasing freedom in that new life. We can no more live as Christians without the indwelling of the Holy Spirit than we can live without breathing. The Spirit births in us the very life of the risen Christ; instils in us a new allegiance, new love for God and His creation and new inclinations. His presence is the fulfilment of the promise of Jesus made to His disciples in the hours before His crucifixion (John 16:7).

We believe that all followers of Jesus receive the gift of the Holy Spirit at conversion and that the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is reflected in the Christian life which is the process of sanctification. The gift of the Spirit is manifested in the fruit of the Spirit, “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control” (Galatians 5:22-23).

Furthermore, we gather from scripture that:

- The Spirit gives us new life (John 3:5)
- He prays for us when we don't have words (Romans 8:26)
- He is our deposit, our guarantee of heaven (Ephesians 1:14, 4:30; 2 Corinthians 1:22, 5:5)



- He convicts us of sin (John 16:8)
- He reminds us we are children of God (Romans 8:16)
- He unifies the church (Ephesians 2:22, 4:3-4)
- He ushers us into spiritual freedom (2 Corinthians 3:17)
- He guides us into truth (John 15:26, 16:13; 1 Corinthians 12:3)

The work of the Holy Spirit is manifested in our worship, corporate and individual, wherein we join with all believers in glorifying the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit “in spirit and in truth” (John 4:23-24).

The New Testament also reveals that it is the Holy Spirit’s joy to equip believers with spiritual gifts both to benefit the church as well as to demonstrate the Kingdom of God to the world (1 Corinthians 12, 13 and 14). The distribution of these gifts by the Spirit has unfortunately brought division, even discord, within Christ’s Church resulting in extreme views and practices.

Island ECC seeks unity not uniformity. As a non-denominational, international church, we recognise our church family reflects a spectrum of belief that ranges from charismatic to cessationist understandings in regard to the work of the Holy Spirit. We believe all gifts should be exercised under the guidance of God’s Word and the authority of the church and, since the Holy Spirit is Himself the source of Christian unity, we guard against any use of the gifts which would lead to division within the church. We believe and affirm that Christian believers should maintain a vibrant balance between manifesting the fruit of the Spirit and using the gifts of the Spirit as God chooses for his purpose.