



Create a peaceful space to pause, and allow yourself to feel God's presence alongside you, as near to you as your own breath. In following the reflection below, as a church we will draw closer to God and to one another as we grow in faith and deepen our sense of belonging to God.

### **Acts 2:43-47 'Spirited Action'**

<sup>43</sup> Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. <sup>44</sup> All who believed were together and had all things in common; <sup>45</sup> they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. <sup>46</sup> Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, <sup>47</sup> praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.



'People of God' by Ally Barrett  
2016, acrylic on canvas.  
Approx. 800 figures in this image.

Throughout Acts, Luke presents a picture of a dynamic, changing, restless Church – a story of exciting encounters, strange and disturbing experiences and, yes, conflicts too. Sometimes the book is referred to as 'The Gospel of the Holy Spirit' – but the title is a dead giveaway, and a reminder of what the Church of Christ can be like.

It's not called '*The Great Words of the Apostles*'; nor is it entitled '*The Ever Such Good Ideas of the Apostles*'; still less is it called '*The Really Interesting Committee Meetings of the Apostles*'! It's the **ACTS** of the Apostles, because it tells the story of what they **did** and how they **acted** – how they met together for worship, how they spoke out (and fell out!) and acted out the Gospel they'd received from their Risen Lord. In other words, the Spirit of God was recognised by what she **did** through the early Christians.

We've heard people say that our society – life in this country – will be different because of the pandemic; that the way we live will have changed for good. Part of me feels that this won't be altogether a bad thing, if the examples of self-sacrifice, generosity, co-operation that we have seen everywhere in recent weeks, become more of a norm and less of an exception.

It will be a challenge for the Church, however. We all know how important it is for the **words** of those who exercise leadership to be matched by **actions**. In the same way, it may well be that there will be less emphasis in Church circles on debates about ecclesiastical forms or doctrinal minutiae. We as Christians will be judged, rather, by what we do, and the way that the Gospel we have received is translated into practical, loving action.

### **Prayer:**

Bless our hearts and minds, O God, that we may truly love you above all else.  
Bless our lips, O God, that they may always speak of your love.  
Bless our eyes, O God, that we may see where there is human need around us.  
Bless our feet, O God, that they may walk in the way of Jesus.  
Bless our hands, O God, that they may ever be stretched out  
towards our sisters and brothers in their need. **AMEN.**