

**Worship Material**  
**Living Truth**  
**Materials from Roots Bible Study**  
**Sunday 14th May**

**A prayer to open with**

Come to the living God,  
to the Spirit promised by Jesus,  
to the Comforter, our Advocate.  
Come and worship.

**A prayer to say or sing**

Come down, O love divine,  
seek thou this soul of mine,  
and visit it with thine own ardour glowing.  
O comforter, draw near,  
within my heart appear,  
and kindle it, thy holy flame bestowing.

**Introduction to the reading**

*Paul was at ancient Athens. This is an imagined speech by a Greek councillor who was present at some of the events described in Acts.*

*(Shaking head)* We get many visitors to Athens peddling their religious or philosophical ideas; some can be written off as harmless cranks, but others need more considered treatment. Are their views dangerous or subversive? If so, they need to be investigated by the Court of the Areopagus. And so, when I came across this itinerant Jewish teacher, Paul, who was babbling on in the market about Jesus and the resurrection, I was glad that other members of court felt, too, that we needed to hear him officially to discover whether his novel ideas were nonsensical, dangerous, or even worth considering. We summoned him to the court of the Areopagus for a hearing. In his favour, he obviously has gathered some understanding of our way of thought and was able to quote from our poets – unlike many of his compatriots. On the other hand, he harped on about idolatry, dismissed our gods, offended us by declaring we are under judgement for our sins and demanded we turned to this God, Jesus, whom he claimed rose from the dead. I ask you! Few of us were convinced, but I am sorry to say one of our group believed him, together with a handful of those there. Me, I'm sticking with one of our own, the philosopher Epicurus. His ideas make more sense, but hear what Paul said...

**Read : Acts 17:22-31**

**Comments from Roots:** *The end of the story suggests that Paul's preaching did not, on this occasion, have great success. Most of the hearers rejected his ideas. But the part that it plays in*

*the text of Acts is crucial: it is an example of how the preaching of the gospel needed to be adapted to different audiences.*

To what extent is this still a challenge for us today ?

### **Prayers for others**

Dear Lord, we bring into your love  
those who do not know you and your love;  
those who have turned away from you;  
those who struggle to accept you;  
those who refuse to listen.  
May your love touch them,  
and transform their lives.  
Amen

### **A concluding prayer**

Lord Jesus Christ,  
we thank you for your promise of the Spirit of truth  
to guide and lead us.  
May we have hearts ready to welcome your gift,  
eyes open to see and ears eager to hear,  
that we may live and reveal your truth and love  
in every moment, day by day.  
**Amen.**