

**Worship Material**  
**Living as a generous community**  
**Materials from Roots Bible Study**  
**Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> April**

**Begin with an opening prayer**

Generous God, who shares our life, pouring out the Spirit of Jesus, open our hearts and hands to reach out to one another, and to those we live or work among in caring and service, love and compassion.

**Amen.**

**Read Acts 4.32-35**

**Bible notes**

After Peter and John are threatened by the authorities and told 'not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus' (4:18), the believers pray that they may speak with boldness while 'signs and wonders are performed' in the name of Jesus. They were again 'filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God with boldness' (4:30-31).

This second outpouring of the Holy Spirit, in response to prayer, encourages us to think of Pentecost not only as a past event but also a present experience for a people of prayer. The first outpouring in Acts is particularly associated with evangelism (2:41,47), and this second outpouring is associated with the generous sharing in today's passage that follows on immediately. Noted by many early Christian writers, there is a strong connection established here between evangelism, speaking with boldness, and healing, performing signs and wonders. This is not surprising given the squalor in which so many people lived. Poverty and disability, pollution and sickness, social exclusion and malnutrition, unemployment and mental affliction are interlinked.

This is the important social context of the wondrous signs of the healing power of God. They are securely rooted in the common life of the apostolic community. The preaching of God's word is accompanied by the embodiment of God's generosity. So, isolation gives way to time together, hunger is satisfied by shared meals, and basic needs are met by the distribution of possessions.

## Prayer

### A prayer of praise

Praise to God who from the birth of time has enriched the world and all its people.

Praise to God whose love is poured out in abundance for each and every one of us.

Praise to God who calls us and guides us as a shepherd to his sheep.

Praise to God for unending patience and perseverance.

Praise to God for forgiveness and renewal.

Praise to God for the world around us, rich and diverse.

Praise to God for the community of people around us who make us the people we are.

Praise to God for the gift of insight and hearts feeling strangely warmed.

Praise to God for the gift of the Holy Spirit to dwell with us and within us.

Praise to God, Praise to God.

### A prayer to conclude

Lord, your generous love was showered upon us in Jesus.

Help us to be generous to those among whom we live or meet.

Guide us in building and becoming a generous community, as we seek to put our faith into action.

We ask this in Jesus' name and for his sake.

**Amen.**