Notes for Life Groups: Series **Liminal; Living in the 'In-Between'** Sunday 1 June 2025

LIMINAL # 6. 'LIVING WITH EXPECTATION'

This past week has seen the celebration of Ascension Day (40th day of Easter), the event is recorded in our main scripture passage. Jesus' final commission is to go and witness, but cautions patience to wait for the empowering of the Holy Spirit he promises.

Read Acts 1: 1-11 *He told them in part what to expect but omitted practical detail about the witnessing. With all we have considered these past weeks about liminal periods, what do you think Jesus' purpose might have been to allow some time before delivering the gift of the Holy Spirit? Does this say anything about liminal periods in general?*

Many can identify with, I suspect, asking God to endorse actions you have begun with good intentions, realising too late, that in the rush to get on, the waiting and prayer, the first seeking his guidance and Spirit empowerment, were omitted from any preparations. *Can you share some past personal examples, and what was the outcome?* Jesus here cautions his disciples not to make this same mistake (see also Isaiah 30:8). Not only does God want to be involved in all we do, but we absolutely need this if the intended outcome of our action is to give Him glory. Should we have an **expectation** that God will participate if invited? Yes, but are we prepared to except that this might bring change and unexpected challenges to our proposed plans?

Jesus' ascension brings to an end the liminal period (40 days) between his bodily resurrection and ascension, and sets the stage for Pentecost (next week). As one chapter closes, another opens (read John 16:7). The disciples wait in **expectation**, not knowing what the 'coming of the Counsellor' will bring. *What does the Ascension mean to you personally, and for us all collectively?*

Read Romans 8: 18-25 (I suggest you may find it helpful to read this in both the NIV or similar translation, and in The Message).

This passage emphasises both the big picture of God's overall, good and ultimate plan for us and all creation, together with the acknowledgement of the sense of waiting we feel, waiting with **expectation**. *Is this reminder of God's plan a comfort to you or something else? In what ways do you identify with the frustration and groaning highlighted in the passage?* The passage also emphasises both hope and joy which should characterise our waiting. I suspect most of us know this is how we should feel but have had times when such feelings were difficult to achieve. *What connection, if any, do you see with the Ascension we looked at earlier?*

Prayer: We worship and adore you, risen, reigning King. We look for your coming again, in like manner as they saw you go. Help us to live and serve you day by day till faith be sight, and all waiting turn to joy in the place you have gone to prepare. (Jamie Wallace)