# The Leading of the Spirit 7. Inspiration to stand for the faith Acts 6:8-7:60

# Stephen the deacon

## The story of Stephen is there to demonstrate what it means to be full of wisdom and Spirit (6:3)

### Stephen was full of God’s grace and power (6:8)

### He did great wonders and miraculous signs (6:8)

## That provoked opposition from outside the church

### The opposition were no match for him but Stephen still died because of them

# God and one is a majority

## This is NOT an excuse to be awkward

### We can be confident with God on our side

#### Not that we will win, but that God will be with us

## Your background does NOT help you follow the Spirit

# The difference the Spirit makes

## God

### appeared to Abram (2), called Abram to a life of following God (3)

### promised the land to Abram’s descendants (5), was with Joseph (9)

### fulfilled His promises (17), sent Moses to rescue His people (25)

### appeared to Moses (31), turned away from idolatrous Jews (42)

### directed Moses (44)

#### God does not live in temples made by men (48)

##### But He can fill them with His glory

## The people

### rejected God’s dreamer because they were jealous (9), rejected God’s choice of leader (25), rejected God’s ultimate revelation of His own Son (37), rejected God’s word spoken through Moses (39), refused to be free!

#### Stiff-necked people (51) who stand against God’s ways

# God’s call now is to you

## This church is on the brink of a new era

### It can’t be more of the same if you want to follow God wholeheartedly

## Standing for the faith is a tough thing to do

### People like Stephen are written about to remind us that your ultimate responsibility is to hear God speaking and do as He says – wherever that may lead

# The Spirit uses Grace

## Grace to minister together

### Grace to be gracious

# Homegroup/Private study questions

# When to make a stand

## Christians are often attacked for beliefs they do NOT hold

### How far do you agree with this?

#### Give examples if you can

### How and when can we correct it?

# God and one is a majority

## How far do you agree with this?

### Read Ezekiel 2

#### What did God promise Ezekiel?

#### What did God NOT promise Ezekiel?

# The difference the Spirit makes

## To what extent do you agree that a person’s Christian background does not help their walk with the Spirit?

### In what ways does a person’s background limit their experience of God?

## God is a God of action

### In what ways has God called, appeared to, rescued, led, fulfilled promises to, sent or been with you?

#### In what ways have these not happened for you yet?

### How far do you agree that those who have not experienced these things tend to oppose them?

# Stephen’s defence

## Stephen speaks much of the people of God resisting the Spirit (Joseph, Moses, the prophets then Jesus rejected

### How can we be faithful to tradition and still be accepting of the ‘voice in the wilderness’ of the dissident Christian who may be right?

## Stephen’s speech gives us information that is not in the OT accounts, including Moses’ thoughts about his role at 40 and the Israelite acceptance of it (7:25)

### How does this add to his ‘defence’ about people rejecting the Spirit?

# Our Call

## How can we hold ourselves open to the leading of the Spirit without going with every ‘kooky’ idea for the future of the church?

### What do you think God is saying to us as a church for the future of HBC?