

SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE

SEPT. 28/29 - ACTS 1:1-11

f-ACTS

- The Book of Acts covers the history of the early church following the Resurrection of Christ.
- Acts was written by Luke (same author as the Gospel of Luke), and serves as a “follow-up” of that very Gospel.
- Acts was traditionally called “The Acts of the Apostles” as it quite simply recorded what the Apostles did as the Early church took root. Others have called it “The Acts of the Holy Spirit” as it demonstrates the Holy Spirit in action in and through God’s people over and over again.
- Acts was likely written in the period between 63 and 80 AD.
- Its 28 chapters cover events that took place in the Early Church between 30 and 69 AD.

GETTING THINGS STARTED

Acts follows the Apostles travels and ministry. It includes the amazing blessings and the miraculous... and it also includes some of the challenges and hardships they faced. However you have been engaged with ministry throughout your life, what have been some of those amazing blessings or challenges for you? If someone recorded a few chapters about you... what are the moments in your life and ministry that would be recorded!?

READ TOGETHER

Acts 1:1-11

DISCUSSION

- Either from Matt’s message or from re-reading the passage right now... what jumps out to you? Are you surprised by something? Questions? Confused by anything?

There are three main “things” happening in this passage:

The Ascension and Future Return of Christ

- Why is the ascension and future return of Jesus so critical to our faith?

Living with a Mission in Mind

- “*You will become witnesses in all the world*”. These were Jesus’ last words before He ascended. How does this hit you? Does the thought of being a witness to who Jesus is leave you full of fear? Excitement? Trepidation? Why do you think you look at it in that way?
- How are we witnesses to the world of Jesus? In what ways do we, or can we witness?
- Share some experiences of being a witness of Jesus. What happened? How did it go?
- How does the Holy Spirit play into being a witness?

The Holy Spirit

- In this passage, the disciples immediately ask if Jesus is going to restore Israel – they are looking for a physical kingdom to be restored. Instead, Jesus instructs them to *wait – to wait for the Holy Spirit to come*. Often the disciples display a lack of patience coupled with an inept understanding of what God is doing in them and among them. Is there an area of your life that you would love to have resolved, figured out or fixed *right now*? Do you believe there is purpose behind the wait?

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- o Why is it that sometimes God has us wait before our prayers are answered?
- o Share an instance where God's timing was much different, and much better, than yours!
- Power. That's what Jesus said the Disciples would receive when the Holy Spirit came. This is what Jesus has promised everyone who follows Him and receives the Holy Spirit. What is this power? How would you describe it?
 - o How would you describe the Holy Spirit's power in your own life? Are you feeling *empowered*, or are you feeling *powerless*? What ought we to do if we feel weak or distant from God... when we feel powerless?

PRAYER

- We need only come to God with our needs. With our frustrations, confusion, desires, petitions and honest feelings. After reading and discussing this passage, what is the one thing you would want to say to God or bring before Him? Share these thoughts with your group and then pray for one another.
- What is going on in your life right now that you desire prayer for? Spend time doing this!

NEXT STEPS

Related to the Holy Spirit:

If you would like to understand the Holy Spirit better, and come to embrace and follow the Spirit's direction in your life, work through the Book & Video series "Forgotten God" by Francis Chan either individually, or as a group. The video series is available for free for your small group on RightNowMedia.org (on demand digital streaming). Contact Ryan at rbrammer@rockpointe.ca for access.

Related to the ascension of Christ:

Why is the Ascension so important? Timothy Keller, Pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian Church talks about its significance for us today. This is a podcast available on iTunes. Search "Timothy Keller", "Redeemer Presbyterian Church" and find the podcast titled "The Ascension".

Related to living with a mission:

You can read about being on mission, you can do a study on what it means to be a "witness"... but the best step to take is to actually GO and BE a witness! This week, strike up a conversation about your faith with someone or pray for someone. Be intentional! Trust that the Spirit's power is with you! Come back to Small Group next week and share your experiences.

NEXT WEEK'S SERMON STUDY GUIDE

Acts 2:1-41

"The Holy Spirit in the Life of the Church" by Ron Gray

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