

Notes for Group Leaders

Since there will be various preachers this summer, there will be no sermon transcripts, so listen well and take good notes! These discussion guides are shorter than normal with just a few questions for each week. As you listen to the sermon, you may come up with a few of your own.

Here are some good general discussion questions that you can use each week in addition to those provided:

[Q] What insight, principle or observation from this weekend's message did you find to be:

Most helpful? Eye opening? Troubling? Challenging? Explain.

[Q] What does this passage/message tell you about God?

[Q] How does this passage/message help you love and worship Jesus more?

[Q] Has God shown you sin in your life that needs to be fought?

[Q] Is there any action you want to take as a result of the message and hearing the Word of God?

See next page.

HORUHO

HOW DO YOU SEE IT?

Greater Things | Acts 1:1-11 | June 19, 2016

Icebreaker: What is one thing you like about church?

Luke tells us that in his first book he dealt with all that Jesus *began* to do. Christianity is unique in that other religions often say that their founder completed his work during his lifetime, but Luke says Jesus only *began* His! The book of Acts tells the story of how Jesus continues His work through His Spirit-empowered people, His Church.

Read Acts 1:1-11.

[Q] How can we as a church work together toward the advancement of Jesus' kingdom in ways we can never do alone?

[Q] Why do you think God decided to use His people, the church, to continue His plan?

Read Paul's prayer for the church in Ephesians 3:14-21.

[Q] How do these verses expand on Acts 1:8?

Proclamation and Transformation | Acts 2:14-41 | June 26, 2016

Icebreaker: How has God used His Word to change you?

The events that take place in Acts 2 are considered to be the birthday of the church. The disciples were gathered together to celebrate the Feast of Weeks (Leviticus 23:15-22), when the Holy Spirit came into the room with power. Was this something entirely new? Not exactly. We see the Spirit's work throughout the Old Testament. Rather, it was the inauguration of a new era when the Spirit would be available to the church of Christ on a continuing basis. The people of God can now and always benefit from the Spirit's ministry.

Read Acts 2:14-41.

[Q] On what basis does Peter announce that God has made this Jesus both Lord and Christ (Acts 2:29-36)?

[Q] How did the people respond to Peter's clear proclamation of the truth about Jesus and the truth about themselves?

[Q] Have you experienced the transforming power of the gospel (good news of Jesus) in your life? Please explain. How is Peter an example of this?

Joining the Family | Acts 2:41 | July 3, 2016

Icebreaker: What memberships do you have? Which are the most important to you? Why?

*Those who accepted his message were baptized,
and about three thousand were added to their number that day. Acts 2:41 (NIV)*

Read Matthew 18:15-17, 20, Acts 20:28, 1 Peter 5:1-3.

[Q] In your experience, what are some blessings from being part of a church family?

Read John 13:35.

[Q] What message does being part of a local church family speak to the world? How does that work?

Baptism

[Q] What is the meaning of believer's baptism? Read and discuss the following Scripture passages:

1. It illustrates death and resurrection in Christ.

1 Corinthians 15:3-4

Colossians 2:12

2. It illustrates new life as a Christian.

2 Corinthians 5:17

Romans 6:4

3. Baptism doesn't make you a believer; it does not "save." However, it is a public declaration that one believes in Jesus as one's Lord and Savior. Like a wedding ring - it's an external symbol of an internal reality. Only by grace through one's faith in Christ is one saved.

Ephesians 2:8-9

Listen | Acts 2:42 | July 10, 2016

Icebreaker: Who is the best listener you know?

This week we'll see how church is a people who come together to listen to God.

*They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching
and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Acts 2:42 (NIV)*

God speaks, we listen.

[Q] What do you learn about how God speaks to us and how we hear Him from the following passages?

Hebrews 1:1-2

Romans 10:8-17

How do we "listen" to God? The primary means that God uses to speak to us is through His Word, the Bible. We can expect and believe that God will speak to us through the Bible which is our final authority.

God will not tell us something that is contrary to what we find in the Bible, therefore everything that we might take as the voice of God must be examined in light of what the Bible teaches. Knowing His Word is key to becoming familiar with His "voice" and we will be able to differentiate between our thoughts and God's voice.

[Q] Why is it so hard to remember the sermon the next day?

[Q] What habits could we put in place to better listen and apply what God has for us?

- pray in advance
- take notes
- have a conversation about the sermon shortly after hearing
- what else?

Time for Fellowship | Acts 2:42 | July 17, 2016

Icebreaker: What are some of the best spiritual conversations you've had with a fellow believer?

*They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship,
to the breaking of bread and to prayer.*

Acts 2:42 (NIV)

We've seen how this brand-new church in Acts devoted themselves to the Word of God (the apostles' teaching), but what about this matter of fellowship? They didn't just *have* fellowship; they *devoted* themselves to it! They gave it a priority in their lives along with prayer and hearing the Word taught.

In the New Testament, the Greek word *koinonia* is translated several ways: for example, "participation," "partnership," "sharing," and, of course, "fellowship."

[Q] Read 1 John 1:3 and 1 Corinthians 1:9. How is the idea of *relationship* included in the idea of fellowship?

[Q] Koinonia is translated participation in 1 Corinthians 10:16-17. How does it expand your idea of fellowship?

[Q] Why do you think God designed His children to have fellowship with one another?

[Q] Is the depth of your relationship with Jesus connected to the way you live out koinonia fellowship? How so?

[Q] What might biblical fellowship look like in your life? What intentional step can you take to get there?

Time for Awe | Acts 2:42-47 | July 24, 2016

Icebreaker: Describe a time when you were awestruck.

We are seeing how this brand-new church in Acts was growing as they devoted themselves to the Word of God (the apostles' teaching), and to fellowship.

Read Acts 2:42-47.

One of the marks of these people who followed Jesus is awe. They were filled with wonder and amazement at what God was doing.

Read Isaiah 6:1-8 for an example of awe.

[Q] In Isaiah 6:1-4, God gives the prophet Isaiah a glimpse of Himself. How would you describe God from this passage?

[Q] What do you think of Isaiah's response in verse 5? Why did God do what He did in verses 6-7?

[Q] What are some ways you can become gripped by the awesome greatness of our God?

[Q] How do you explain Isaiah's response in verse 8?

Changed | Acts 2:42-47 | July 31, 2016

Icebreaker: If I had all the money in the world, I would _____

The first community of Christians in the book of Acts was radically generous after hearing the gospel.

Read Acts 2:42-47; 4:34-35.

[Q] How are the people's hearts described in verse 2:46? How does generosity reflect or demonstrate the change that the gospel brings?

[Q] What is it that keeps us holding on to our stuff?

[Q] Explain why a person who knows and belongs to Jesus might find it easier to share what they have.

[Q] In what area of your life do you need to reflect gospel generosity? (Words, forgiveness, time, serving, money, possessions... ?)

Pull Up a Chair | Acts 2:46-47 | August 7, 2016

Icebreaker: If a friend says to you, "pull up a chair!" how does that make you feel?

Read Acts 2:46-47.

The Gospel community, those people that have professed faith in Jesus and live for Him, are to be characterized by:

- unity
- joy
- generosity
- hospitality

[Q] What would a community that displayed these characteristics look like? How would you know from observing them?

[Q] Would you enjoy a community like this? Why?

[Q] What do you learn about God and the Church family from the following passages? What pitfalls are warned against?

James 2:1-9

1 Corinthians 11:17-19

Galatians 3:27-29

[Q] What step could you take this week to foster this kind of love?

For more discussion, see article at: gracetable.org/eating-and-drinking-a-meal-with-jesus/

A Family Legacy | Acts 2:42 | August 14, 2016

Icebreaker: In what ways do people pass on family legacies?

And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. Acts 2:42 (ESV)

The early church family devoted themselves to the Apostle's teaching, and their teaching came from Jesus.

[Q] From the following verses, what do you think it means to be a disciple/follower of Jesus Christ?
Matthew 4:19

Luke 6:40

[Q] Jesus gave His followers His authority to *make* disciples. In Matthew 28:18-20, what three phrases does Jesus use to describe what making disciples entails?

1.

2.

3.

[Q] Do you consider yourself a disciple of Jesus Christ? Do you consider yourself a *disciple-maker*? Why or why not?

[Q] How can you begin to invest spiritually in the people around you? If you already are, please share what you're doing.

[Q] Is there any action you want to take as a result of the weekend message and hearing the Word of God?

Experienced Favor | Acts 2:47 | August 21, 2016

Icebreaker: What is your favorite characteristic of God, and why?

Read Acts 2:42-47.

We've already talked about the early church being marked by

- 1) a shared life together (42, 44, 46)
- 2) being filled with the awe of God (43)
- 3) generosity (44-46)

In verse 47a we see two more qualities emerge from their lives:

1. They were a praising people.

[Q] Why is praising God important? How does praising God affect a person's life or viewpoint?

[Q] Is praise a regular part of your life? Why or why not?

2. They were a people enjoying the favor of all the people.

Read Colossians 3:12-17 and as you do, picture the church family acting this way.

[Q] What do you think those outside the church family would especially notice about believers? Why?

Read John 13:35:

By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another. (ESV)

[Q] Why do you think Jesus singled out love as the mark of His followers?

[Q] How would these people be different in today's society?

[Q] Is there any action you want to take as a result of the weekend message and hearing the Word of God?

Icebreaker: What factors have caused the most spiritual growth in your life?

Read Acts 2:41-47 and as you do, review the qualities of the early church we've seen in our study.

[Q] Which quality of this church family stands out to you? Why?

Acts 2:42 says that the early church devoted themselves to prayer. [Q] What do you pray for the most?

PRAYING LIKE JESUS

Read Matthew 6:9-13:

This, then, is how you should pray:

*'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.*

*And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.'*

From the weekend message, look at the four prayer elements below.

[Q] Discuss each one and describe the resulting attitude change for someone who prays like this.

Engaging with God in a Four-Part Conversation

1. Perspective

"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name" – v. 9

2. Alignment

"your Kingdom come, your will be done"- v. 10

3. Provision

"Give us today our daily bread.

And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors."- v. 11-12

4. Strength

"And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one" – v. 13

[Q] Looking ahead, how would you like to grow in your prayer life this year?

[Q] Is there any other action you want to take as a result of the weekend message and hearing the Word of God?

Take it further: Read what Jesus prayed in John 17.