

READ: Acts 1:12-26

“The constant references to prayer in Acts are a sign that this is how these very ordinary, frequently muddled, deeply human beings, the apostles and others with them, found that their story was being bound up with the story of ‘what Jesus was continuing to do and to teach.’”

--Tom Wright, Acts for Everyone

ACTION to discuss: going to a restaurant or event in a culture that is different from yours.



SHARE: How was this culture different from the culture you were raised in? How did it reflect or image God? What could you learn from this culture? How did you feel not being the same as those around you? Where does the culture need to be redeemed? What are challenges this culture has living in this city?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**I. SEEKING together** :: Read Acts 1:12-14

“If the Holy Spirit is the divine gift which empowers and guides the church, the corresponding human attitude towards God is prayer. It is as the church prays that it receives the Spirit. So at the outset Luke emphasizes that the disciples spent the time of waiting for the Spirit is an attitude of continuous and united prayer.”

--I. Howard Marshall, Acts (TNTC)

1. What is the significance of the diversity of people Luke listed who gathered? How do they prepare (1:12-14) for the promised gift of the Holy Spirit (1:4-5)?
2. What is the importance in verse 14 of followers of Jesus being: in community (“all these”), unified (“with one accord”) and persevering (“devoting themselves to prayer”)? What is challenging about those things?
3. In what ways do you seek isolation from others and God when you are struggling with something or are in a hard situation? How can the Gospel, that we are fully accepted by God through Jesus, combat that?

II. LEARNING together :: Read Acts 1:15-20

“The warrant for replacing Judas was the Old Testament Scripture....We need to recall that, according to Luke, the risen Lord had both opened the Scriptures to his disciples and opened their minds to understand the Scriptures.¹”--John Stott, The Message of Acts (BST)

1. Where do the followers go to understand the tragedy of Judas betraying Jesus and them (1:16, 20) and what to do next? Why is it important that they did this together?

¹ For Jesus teaching the Scriptures see: Luke 24:25-27, 32, 45-49

2. Dwell and discuss as a group two tensions that come in this passage:
- “the Scriptures being from the Holy Spirit through David” (see also 2 Timothy 3:14-17)
 - God’s sovereignty (control) and Judas’ betrayal. (see also Acts 2:23; Genesis 50:20)
- Why is it important to believe in the inerrancy (truth without error) of Scripture and God’s sovereignty?

3. How often do you seek out the Scriptures to understand what you are going through? What is hard about that? Why is often easier not to do anything or seek people’s opinions?

III. TRUSTING together :: Read Acts 1:21-26

“If you have not known and experienced God in ways you cannot deny, I would suggest that you are not living in a needy and dependent way. God delights to show up when His children call on His name and when they are trusting fully in Him to come through, whether that is in relationships, in battling sin, in strength to make sacrifices, or in endurance to be faithful in daily life. Are you living this way? Or are you surviving only by your own strength, by your own wits?”--Francis Chan, *Forgotten God*

1. What is the criteria for someone to become an Apostle (1:21) and what was the role of the Apostles (and ultimately every follower of Jesus) (1:22)²? How can you embody this?

2. How do the actions of Apostles show their trust and reliance on Jesus (1:23-26)? How is this different than blind/naive faith or you being in complete control?

3. How can you implement a pattern of prayer, studying the Scripture, and trusting in Jesus daily? What do you need to do (or not do) (see quote above)?

CONNECTING QUESTIONS

1. What gets in the way of you: communing with God (prayer and Scripture)? being in community?

2. What are specific steps you can take to grow through prayer and studying the Scriptures? Envision how your life would look/be different if you sought and relied on God through prayer and Scriptures daily?

Next weeks action to share: Next week, spend time in a busy place (mall, book store, gym, coffee shop, park, etc.). Imagine some of the things that might make up the life stories of the people you see: sadness, abuse, abandonment, broken relationships, sexual mistakes, unemployment fears, lack of purpose, broken marriages, debt, loneliness, desire for community, searching for God, mortgage issues.

Think about what kind of pressures these things put on people: How do people respond to them? How do people cover things up? What is it to go through these things without the hope of the Gospel? etc. Pray for them (to yourself).³

² See also Luke 9:1-6 for the sending out of the Apostles

³ Adapted from “The Tangible Kingdom Primer” by Hugh Halter and Matt Smay