

ACTS

OF THE APOSTLES

September 12-13
Lesson 1

Waiting for Church

This Discussion Guide should be used the week following the sermon it supplements, but members can still interact even if they missed the sermon. To use this guide in your Community Group, try to work through the questions on your own before you meet. You might not get to all of the questions, and that's okay. If your Community Group does not meet one week, walk through the guide on your own so that you can stay in sync with the series.

MAIN TEXT: Acts 1:1-11

SUMMARY: The Acts of the Apostles describes the beginning of the church missional movement that was started by the resurrected Jesus. Most importantly, the church's power and strength comes from the Holy Spirit. Without the Spirit, the church ceases to be the church. Followers of Jesus have the Holy Spirit at conversion and receive a new nature, but Acts shows us how we need continual filling of the Holy Spirit to be the church engaged on mission. Of course, we can't manufacture this but need to put ourselves in a position of asking and waiting for the Spirit. Expectation without agenda.

GETTING STARTED

The book of Acts describes the "Kingdom normal" of church life. Often, we see a gap in our own life and the lives of those in the book of Acts. If you have read Acts before, what are some things in the book of Acts that you are hoping for God to do more in your life?

DISCUSSING THE WORD

1. Read Acts 1:1-11. Baptism of the Spirit here is not referring to regeneration. The disciples already received the Spirit, a new nature and are positioned to grow to become more like Christ. This is a lifelong journey. Baptism of the Spirit, or filled with the Spirit as also mentioned in the book of Acts, has to do with receiving power and awareness of God's presence that gives strength for the mission. We need to continually seek this from the Lord because we leak! It is also something that we ask for and expect, but with no agenda attached to it and it is to be given in the Lord's timing and in the Lord's way.
2. What water images come to mind when you hear being "baptized with the Holy Spirit." What spiritual disciplines have helped in positioning yourself to be filled with the Holy Spirit?
3. Read verses 6-11. How does the baptism or filling of the Holy Spirit connect to being witnesses?

PERSONAL RESPONSE TO GOD

The key to being filled with the Holy Spirit: Seek God's presence not what you can get out of Him. How can you build into your weekly rhythm some spiritual disciplines that position yourself to be filled with the Holy Spirit?

BOOKS & RESOURCES

River Dwellers by Rob Reimer

Surprised by the Spirit by Jack Deere

Unspeakable Joy by Martyn Lloyd Jones

MISSIONAL RESPONSE TO GOD

1. Think of 2 unsaved friends. Write them down on a piece of paper and commit to pray for them.
2. Pray for opportunities to get to know them and pray for the filling of God's Spirit for boldness to be a witness.
3. Invest in getting to know them. Think through these ideas:
 - Is there a need? Then fill it.
 - Is there a hurt? Then heal it.
 - Is there a common interest? Then do it.
4. When God's timing allows, invite them to a Worship Service, Alpha, or any other type of church gathering.