

ACTS

OF THE APOSTLES

September 19-20
Lesson 2

Experiencing 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 OF THE SERIES: 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. What experiences have you had with the Holy Spirit? How have some of these experiences lead to witnessing in a way that enters a person's world and show that you love them?

DISCUSSING THE WORD

1. Read Acts 2:1-4. To review from last week, 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. The “other tongues” referred to here isn't the same as the “gift of tongues” as mentioned in other Scripture passages. This was a miraculous manifestation of the Spirit that marked how the Spirit is to fill followers for the mission to all the world. How do you seek to be filled by the Holy Spirit in regard to living on mission?
3. Read Acts 2:5-41. An insight from this passage shows us the heart of the Father in that He wants to enter our world. He does this by giving the disciples here to speak in a language of the audience. A principle for mission that we can apply is to enter the world of others, especially those different than us. How can you do this? What stops you from doing this?

BOOKS & RESOURCES

River Dwellers by Rob Reimer

Surprised by the Spirit by Jack Deere

Unspeakable Joy by Martyn Lloyd Jones

4. Read Acts 2:42-47. In the book by James Emory White called *The Rise of the Nones*, he mentioned that those who mark off “no religious affiliation”, which is the highest group in the United States, “believe they do know about Christianity—even though it’s often a caricature of its true nature—and thus they feel it has been tried and found wanting.” Sadly, as Christians, we don’t always show the face of Jesus but rather a “version of our Christianity” which is nothing like Jesus. How can we love those different from us? How can our love for each other in the church be a witness to the world?

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 have you been building into your weekly rhythm some spiritual disciplines that position yourself to be filled with the Holy Spirit? Talk with each other about your experiences with this.

MISSIONAL RESPONSE TO GOD

1. Think of 2 friends who haven’t experience life-change through Jesus. 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 enter into their pain, their world, their interests, their reality so that you can earn the right to speak into their heart and soul.
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.