

“Getting Ready” (Acts 1:12-26)

For the week of September 20, 2015

Ground Rules

Go over the ground rules for small groups one more time.

Testimony

Have a volunteer (one who agreed last time the group met) to share their testimony. Take 5-10 minutes. A simple three-point approach can be used:

1. What was your life like before you committed your life to Christ?
2. How and when did you surrender your life to Christ?
3. Since you accepted Jesus as your Lord and Savior, how has your life in Christ made a difference? How has Christ met your needs? What does a relationship with Him mean to you now?

Tell the Story

Have your volunteer (one who agreed last time the group met) to tell the story of Acts 1:12-26 to the group. Next, have everyone open their Bible and read the passage. Discuss any details missing from the telling of the story and reading of the story. Finally, have everyone close their Bibles and as a group rebuild the story from memory. When finished, everyone applaud!

1. Two central themes of this passage are prayer and waiting. Why do you think prayer seemed to be the major activity that they engaged in after they returned?
 - a. Waiting reveals our true motives
 - b. Waiting builds patience in our lives
 - c. Waiting transforms our character
 - d. Waiting builds intimacy and dependency upon God
2. Which of the following benefits of waiting on the Lord have you experienced? Discuss.
 - a. Waiting reveals our true motives
 - b. Waiting builds patience in our lives
 - c. Waiting transforms our character
 - d. Waiting builds intimacy and dependency upon God
3. The disciples returned to Jerusalem and waited, but they didn't wait passively. They acted because they prayed.
 - a. Describe a time when you had to wait for something that you were very excited to receive or experience. What was it like when the waiting was finally over?

- b. Now describe a time when you prayed continually for something or someone. How did you feel when the waiting was finally over?
- c. Finally, share a long-term request that you have been praying for an extended period of time. What supports or encourages you to continue praying, especially if the prayer(s) has not yet been answered?
- d. At this time have everyone share prayer requests and praises and then pray as a group.

Digging Deeper

1. The eleven (the twelve minus Judas Iscariot) were men chosen by Jesus as his special ambassadors and church leaders. They had varied professions (fisherman, farmer, government worker) before following Jesus for three years. They were the original Apostles whose acts are being told in the book of Acts. Those present in Acts 1 waiting for the Holy Spirit were:

Peter – Called the “Rock.” Quick-tongued (Matthew 16:15-16). Denied Jesus three times (Matthew 26:75). Martyred in Rome.

John – Brother James and he were nicknamed “Sons of Thunder” for volatile personalities (Luke 9:51-55). He is the disciple “Jesus loved” of the Gospel of John. Served in West Turkey; took care of Mary the mother of Jesus in his home. Late in life exiled to island of Patmos, in modern-day Greece.

James – The other “Son of Thunder.” First apostle martyred (Acts 12:1-2). Executed by Herod about 44 A.D.

Andrew – Peter’s brother. Brought strangers to Jesus (John 1:35-42, 12:22). Served in area of the ex-Soviet Union.

Philip – Among the first five to connect with Jesus (John 1:43-45). Served possibly in North Africa and then in Asia Minor.

Thomas – Called Doubting Thomas for refusing to believe the Resurrection until he saw Jesus alive (John 20:25-29). Most active in Syria; preached as far east as India.

Bartholomew – Also called Nathanael. Skeptical at first, then recognized Jesus as “King of Israel” (John 1: 46, 49). Served in India, Armenia, Ethiopia and southern Arabia.

Matthew – Called Levi. Tax collector. Held banquet to introduce Jesus to friends (Luke 5:29). Student of Bible prophecy. Ministered in Persia in Asia and Ethiopia in Africa.

James – “Younger” or “Junior.” Possibly Matthew’s brother (compare Matthew 10:3 with Mark 2:14). Christian legend says he’d been a revolutionary. Possibly ministered in Syria.

Simon – The Canaanite, nicknamed “Zealot” (Acts 1:13; Mark 3:18). From militant wing of Jewish independent movement. Ministered in Persia.

Judas – Alias: Jude, Judah, or Thaddeus, to distinguish him from the betrayer Judas Iscariot. May have been the Apostle James’s son.

a. Why would Jesus select such a diverse or “rag-tag” group of guys to spread the Gospel throughout the known world?

b. After observing the varied backgrounds of the Apostles, what is truly required (i.e. education, experience, etc.) to be an effective disciple of Jesus Christ?

2. Read Acts 1:21-26. There were three aspects of choosing leaders in this passage.

a. Choose tested leaders (vv. 21-22). What kind of leader was Peter looking for? How were they “tested?”

b. Choose leaders carefully (vv. 23-24). Two men were considered. Who made the final decision? In the rest of the New Testament, the elders and deacons and other church leaders are chosen according to decisions made by human beings, whether by an apostle or by others in the churches.

c. Choose leaders of character (vv. 24-25). How does 1 Samuel 16:7 apply to character?

Next Week

1. Ask for a volunteer to share their testimony.
2. Ask for one or two volunteers to tell the story in Acts 2:1-21 the best they can from memory. After telling the story, then have everyone read Acts 2: 1-21. Compare the telling and the reading of the story. Finally, have the group retell the story together with their Bibles closed.

Prayer

- Praise God for who He is.
- Thank God for how He has blessed you. Be specific in identifying His blessings to you.
- Examine yourself and confess any unconfessed sin in your life.
- Go before God with your requests. Be specific. Acknowledge and thank God for prayer requests that God has responded to.

The Bottom Line – The mission of the church is a mission worth getting ready for. What might God do through RiverLakes if we are always in a state of readiness through prayer, the Scriptures and intentional leadership? We have a great work ahead of us to make disciples to the ends of the earth and what the Lord is asking each of us to do is get ready. Are you ready?