

GROWTH GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

Fall 2023 – Acts Sermon Series - “Witness”

Week of Sept 18 (Week 2)

EMPHASIS FOR THE MONTH: The month of September is all about ***building relationships and building trust within your group***. You really want to be sure to give some time to just getting to know one another if people don’t already know each other or know each other very well and allowing time for those that do know each other to just catch up.

ICE BREAKER: This time is designed for getting conversation going. [Click here](#) for a helpful list of ideas for this time or create / do your own!

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

1. All young adults (20s - 30s) are invited to a Backyard BBQ this Sunday, September 24! Join us for fellowship, food, and yard games. Hot dogs and hamburgers will be provided. Please sign up to bring a side dish or dessert. For the sign up, more information, and the address, contact Jill at (551)-795-5338.
2. We will be holding our next Child Dedication Class on Saturday, September 30 at 8:30 AM. For more information and to sign up to attend, please contact our BergenKIDS Director, Barbara Krieger at barbara.krieger@churchatbergen.org
3. Join us for prayer every Tuesday night from 7-8 PM. All are welcome!
4. Every Wednesday morning at 6:30 AM a group of women meet for prayer at the church! Reach out to covenant members Danielle Hoitsma (leavnalegacy@aol.com) and Al Cimino (alexandra.m.cimino@gmail.com) for more information.
5. Join us for prayer every Sunday morning from 9-9:30 AM. We meet in the classroom behind the Guest Services desk. All are welcome!

PRAYER FOR DISCUSSION: Leader or Co-Leader prays for the discussion time. Pray that the Spirit of Jesus would assist in the conversing, processing, and listening of the discussion.

SERMON DISCUSSION TIME: You can start the discussion by saying: This past Sunday we looked at Acts 16:6-15. We saw two major things in this passage: (1) How the Holy Spirit led Paul and his team to Macedonia and (2) The conversion of a God-fearing woman named Lydia. Read or have a volunteer read Acts 16:6-15.

QUESTION #1: In the sermon, Pastor Mike shared that Paul doesn’t get told WHO to share the gospel to but WHERE to take the gospel to be shared - wherever he is stationed. The same goes for us. That’s how we know where to share the gospel - wherever we are stationed, wherever we live, work, frequent, wherever our spheres of influence are. These can be called our “Gospel Spheres”. Take a minute and think about where/what your “Gospel Sphere” might be. What/where are they? Discuss them with one another as a group and if you need help brainstorming, use the help of your fellow group members.



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Announce: During the month of October, as a church we are committing to take a 20-30 min walk just once each week within our “Gospel Spheres” to pray as we walk, for those within the “Gospel Sphere”. If you encounter someone on your walk, say hello to them and let them know that you are praying for them and if there is anything that you can pray for them for. We would love to hear your stories of what God does during these times and how He works through your prayers within your “Gospel Sphere.” Please share them with us by emailing info@churchatbergen.org.

QUESTION #2: In the passage, we see an absolute miracle happen. We see Lydia’s heart opened by God to see the gospel which Paul is sharing with her. If God did not open Lydia’s heart, she would not have been saved. If you are a Christian then this very same thing has happened to you - God opened your heart to see the gospel. What is so miraculous about this? What thoughts and feelings go through your heart and mind when thinking about this?

QUESTION #3: Lydia was well known, a successful business owner with great income, a religious person, a moral and good person. Some might say that she “had it all” but even having all these “things” and all that comfortability she still is captivated by Christ and His gospel and commits herself to Jesus. How is this possible?

QUESTION #4: We can learn something from this story about Lydia. Though she seemingly had it all, she still needed Jesus Christ. We must be careful and on guard against comfortability given to us through wealth and how we spend our time. Pastor Mike shared in his sermon that giving (of time and money) is an act of war on the temptation to remain comfortable and self-reliant. How does that work? How is giving an act of war on the temptation to remain comfortable and self-reliant?

PRAYER: Before going into a time of prayer together, read the following to your group:

Praying by yourself and praying with others are necessary practices in the church. There is more freedom and self-focus when praying alone, but praying together requires wisdom, patience, and love. Wisdom, because it’s done in public. Patience, because it takes time to do it well. And love, because it considers others. Below you will find guidelines that are universally helpful when praying together. These are not laws. We will not be legalistic. So, if someone “violates” one of the guidelines, we will gladly bear with one another in love and remain patient as we grow in this together.

Sincerity: Pray in a way that reflects what is really going on inside. Suppress the desire to sound “spiritual.” In-sincerity cultivates in-authenticity, so just be yourself when you pray.



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Length: Prayers should generally be shorter, rather than longer. This allows more people to pray and more people to be prayed for. But do not over think this one! Just pray.

Simplicity: Prayers should be easily understood. Prayers are not sermons or theology lessons. So, pray simply, plainly, and childlike. This way everyone can truly say “Amen!” to your prayer.

Courage: Prayer fuels prayer. Saints love to hear the heart cries of fellow saints. So, don’t hold back just because you are afraid of not getting it right. We are totally for each other!

PRAY TOGETHER: Spend time taking **and recording** prayer requests and then pray together as a group. *(You may want to consider sending out the prayer requests weekly to your group to keep everyone informed and in the loop on how to pray for one another throughout the week. This also makes it easier to check-in with people who have shared requests to see how the Lord has been working in their lives.)*

