

Life Group Member

The Acts of the Apostles:
Being the Church
Life Lessons 1-5
January 2012



January 1, 2012

The Mission of the Church

Key Verse(s): “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you: and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.” Acts 1:8 NASB

One Church Connection: The church is Christ’s witness in the world.

Focal Passage(s): Acts 1:4-11

Context: God’s mission for His church cannot be separated from His promise. Jesus promised His disciples, *“It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you”* (John 16:7 NASB). The mantle of kingdom responsibility was now being passed from the Lord Jesus to His followers, the church. The promise of the indwelling Spirit of God would empower their witness and embolden their faith; two essentials for being the body of Christ in the world. The church was also being introduced to two of the great doctrines of the faith: 1) The intercession of Christ at the right hand of the Father and 2) Christ’s promised return. Think about what your life might be like without the power of His Spirit, the comfort of His intercession and the hope of His return. How do these impact the work of the kingdom and the life of the church?

January 8, 2012

The Spiritual Birth of the Church

Key Verse: “For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord will call unto Himself.” Acts 2:39 NASB

One Church Connection: The church is always giving birth to the next generation of believers.

Focal Passage: Acts 2

Context: The Promise of the Father is fulfilled on the day of Pentecost in the midst of the Jewish celebration of the First Fruits. The arrival of the Holy Spirit corresponds with the birth of the New Testament church. This LifeLesson will consider five aspects of this glorious moment in the history of God’s kingdom: 1) Speaking the mighty deeds of God (v. 11); 2) His Divine revelation (v. 21); 3) The Gospel (vs. 22-24); 4) Lordship (v. 36); 5) Repentance and baptism (v. 38).

On this special day, the Father had prepared everything that the church would need to grow in an unbelieving world. Why are the aspects of the church listed above so vital to the church being the church?

January 15, 2012

The Message of the Church

Key Verse: “Therefore repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord.” Acts 3:19 NASB

One Church Connection: The church is a place of repentance and forgiveness which brings spiritual refreshing from the Lord.

Focal Passage: Acts 3

Context: Peter and John, the leaders of the church in Jerusalem, are on their way to the temple for afternoon prayers when they encounter a lame man begging at the gate called Beautiful. This gives them the opportunity to carry out the mission of the church in the community. They showed compassion, brought healing and proclaimed the gospel. This event provided a unique opportunity for the people in Jerusalem to hear the message of the church. Beginning with Abraham, they moved to Moses and the prophets, and ended with the revelation of Jesus Christ. Hopefully this brings to mind the Thin Red Line Journey recently completed by our church. This story demonstrates the importance of Scripture in understanding the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. “So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the Word of Christ” (Romans 10:17 NASB). As you tell the story be prepared to point out the significance of Old Testament references in understanding the events surrounding Jesus’ life, especially from a Jewish perspective.

January 22, 2012

The Generosity of the Church

Key Verse: “And the congregation of those who believed were of one heart.” Acts 4:32

One Church Connection: A church with one heart is a congregation led by a spirit of generosity.

Focal Passage: Acts 4:32-5:14

Context: As Spirit filled believers faithfully shared the Word with boldness, the Jerusalem congregation grew in number and in spirit. They were united by the change the gospel was generating in their hearts; walking in one accord, possessing all things in common, demonstrating an unusual spirit of generosity which provided for the needs of all. Their objective was to extend the kingdom of heaven regardless of the cost. While these believers expected the return of Christ soon, their motivation seems to be an unconditional love for Jesus and for each other. Most members of the body, like Barnabas, obeyed what they understood to be God’s will for their lives as directed by the Holy Spirit. Unfortunately there were two, Ananias and Sapphira, who chose to lie to the Holy Ghost.

January 29, 2012

The Servant Leaders of the Church

Key Verse: “Therefore, brethren, select from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task.” Acts 6:3

One Church Connection: Servant leadership is a requirement for a church that desires to function as the body of Christ.

Focal Passage: Acts 6:1-7

Context: The New Testament church was growing in number, while discovering that diversity often produces differences of opinion, even in the body. There were believers who embraced the culture of the Jews and those who embraced the culture of the Greeks (Hellenists). The Hellenist widows felt they were being discriminated against. The apostles who were charged with giving spiritual leadership felt that for them to personally serve these widows would cause them to neglect their primary responsibility to prayer and the Word of God.

The apostles opted to choose from among the congregation servant leaders to carry out the variety of ministry tasks that were inevitable in a growing church. Spiritual qualifications were set, the approval of the congregation was gained, the men were named and ordained. As a result the gospel continued to spread and the church increased greatly.

