**Summer 2020 Journey Through Acts**

We are spending the the summer of 2020 whilst we are seeing together to find out what it means to be a kingdom community in a time of dislocation and lockdown looking at the Book of Acts as a model of how the followers of Jesus decided to be, to live and to act in the very beginnings of the ‘church’ of Jesus Christ. There are similarities and differences between the circumstances they found themselves in and where we are now, but if there has ever been an opportunity to imagine and re-imagine what it means for us to be followers of Jesus, that time is arguably now.

This document is designed as an outline for you to work through, either individually or as part of a group. All feedback and suggestions for modification is most welcome.

**A Session Outline - 40 mins total, but can be longer or flexible if you wish**

**Introduction - 10 mins (longer if you’re in a group I suspect!)**

1. How are you?
2. What notable things have happened recently?
3. Is there anything distracting you from focusing on God today? If yes, think or talk about that and then pray and give it to God as you begin.

**Time With the Bible - 15-20 mins**

*What does this passage tell me abbot God?* To answer this question, you might want to think about whether the passage speaks about God directly or indirectly. Is there a prophecy quoted, or does the passage remind you of another part of scripture? If so, spend some time following the leads. How does the passage remind you of what you’ve known about God before? Does it make you think differently about God than you have done before?

*What does this passage tell me about myself?* To answer this question you might want to ask how you felt as you read the passage and how you feel as you reflect on it now. Do you identify with a particular character? Does it make you feel happy or sad, hopeful, excited, confused or any other emotions?

If you feel challenged, or as if something in the passage is really speaking to your or feels personal to you today, spend a few minutes thinking: what is it? What about it feels important to you?

*What is this passage inviting me to do differently?*

As Christians we are meant to live according to the truth that is in Jesus and to not be the same as before we knew him (Ephesians 4:20-24). As we learn the good news of Jesus and the truth about his love we are bound to change.

Spend time thinking about things in your life you might want to be or to do differently as a result of today’s study and pray about those things.

For each session, we will also provide a few questions to pick out the key elements of the passage and try and help you to be guided through the study.

**Time in Prayer - 10 mins**

Each time you meet or spend time reflecting alone, make sure you leave plenty of time to pray. You could pray about:

The Church and its leaders, both ours, Churches nearby and the worldwide Church

Situations locally or in the world around us

Things shared by people during your time together

Those who are afraid, sick or those who are bereaved

Committing to God that you will follow through on what you’ve been invited to do by today’s study.

Your neighbours and the street you live in.

Those who govern us locally, nationally and internationally.

**Week 4: Acts 3:1-10**

1. Why do you think it was important that Luke mention that the event described in the reading today took place at 3 in the afternoon? I wonder if it has anything to do with the time at which Jesus said ‘it is finished’ at his crucifixion and the curtain in the temple was torn in two, showing that everyone could have access to God. What do you think?
2. The passage tells us that the man who was begging was at ‘the gate called Beautiful *where he was put every day* (my emphasis added). Who do you think put him there? Why? Do you think he got to keep the money he received from passers by at the end of the day?
3. Why do you think it is important that we pray ‘in the name of Jesus”, as Peter does here?
4. Peter and John saw the man straight away and gave him what he needed: ‘in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, walk.’ We know that this man had been unable to walk from birth - Luke must have found this out later, which makes me think that the man became part of the growing family of faith God was building - what do you think it would have felt like for him to be *seen* by the two apostles and then to be given such an unexpected gift? We know that Peter helped him up. Those must have been nervous and exciting moments. ‘..instantly the man’s feet and ankles became strong.’
5. The man praises God for his healing immediately. Can you think of a time God did something unexpected for you? How did you respond?
6. Do you think the main healing that took place in this story was physical? Whether you do or don’t, why do you think what you do?

Read on to the rest of the chapter if you’d like to. We see that this event draws a crowd. The man holds on to Peter and John (not surprising really) and Peter uses what has happened as an opportunity to proclaim Jesus Christ as the one with the power to heal and free people. This doesn’t prove entirely popular with the authorities to say the least.

**Something To Do This Week**

Pray and ask God what the greatest needs for change and healing are around you, whether it’s close by or farther afield. It shouldn’t hard to come up with a good list! As one comes to mind, pray for the situation to change, ‘in the name of Jesus’. As time moves on, make sure you are keeping aware of whether things change. **Perhaps you’d like to keep a journal of your prayers**, either written, drawn, painted or whatever suits you, and make sure that any answers you see are recorded too. After a month, look back and see what has happened. If things have changed, tell people about it. If not, keep praying. We’re told to be persistent in prayer. We will grow in confidence in the power of the name of Jesus to change things for God’s glory and to show signs of the coming of God’s kingdom the more we practice trying to get our hearts and minds in line with the things that God loves and wants to do. Peter is a bit like Jesus in today’s story, I think. He did what he saw the Father doing, because he was living with God in the power of the Spirit. I don’t think it would have surprised Peter at all that the man got up and walked, he would have expected it. Not because every person who was ‘lame from birth’ is going to walk in this life. Peter saw what this man needed - freedom from the need to beg, acceptance from God and hope for the future.

Keep practicing in prayer, spend time with God and be willing to be used when the moment comes.