**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 5: Acts 4:1-22**

1. In the first four verses, we see that Peter and John get arrested for speaking about Jesus and put in jail, but that 2000 men believed that day. Why do you think the authorities were so disturbed by people becoming followers of Jesus? Why do you think authorities in our country are not disturbed when people become Christians?
2. Peter speaks boldly about the healing of the man who had been begging at the Beautiful Gate saying that ‘It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed. 11 Jesus is“‘the stone you builders rejected, which has become the cornerstone. (Psalm 118:22) Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.” When was the last time you spoke boldly about something? What made you confident to do it? I’d be pretty sure you spoke boldly because you were passionate about the subject, thought it was important and thought you knew what you were talking about, that others needed to hear and know it too.
3. Do you speak about faith with the same boldness? If yes, why? If not, what do you think stops you?
4. How much time do you spend reading the Bible and praying in an average week, do you think?
5. What do you think is important about a cornerstone? What is the cornerstone of your life?
6. Eventually, Peter and John are released. This is somewhat miraculous! ‘After further threats they let them go. They could not decide how to punish them, because all the people were praising God for what had happened. For the man who was miraculously healed was over forty years old.’ What does this tell you about the power of praise?

**Something To Do This Week**

In today’s passage, Peter says ‘we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard’. So a challenge or two for you this week:

1. Tell at least one person the story of how you met Jesus and what changed in your life when you did. When you do, pray and ask God to make you ready to answer any questions that they have after you have told the story.
2. Create )in whatever way you like) something that reminds you of God’s power and His promise to care for his people and always give us the words to say when we need them.