**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 6: Acts 4:23-31**

1. What does the prayer of the believers tell you about their trust in God?
2. Have you ever been threatened or persecuted because of your faith in Jesus? If yes, and you feel able, tell your group about it. If you are studying on your own, write or record what that was like. If not, spend some time thinking about or researching stories of people you know who have been persecuted for their faith. What do you think it is like to have have those experiences?
3. It’s interesting that the quote in verses 25 and 26 is from Psalm 118, which Peter quoted when he stood up for what he believed in last week’s session. What parts of the Bible do you find yourself coming back to? Do you have a passage that regularly comes to mind?
4. What do you think about verses 27 and 28?
5. When threatened, the believers asked for more boldness, not less. Do you think you would do the same?
6. It’s hard not to be excited by the development which takes place in verses 29-31 (I think!). Do you think this could happen today? What do you think stops it from happening?

**Something To Do This Week**

1. Pray for those who are threatened and persecuted for their faith.
2. Write a list of anything that stops you being bold in your faith. Ask God to help you deal with each one one by one. If it would help, find someone to talk to about this. It might be a Church leader, a family member or friend that you feel most comfortable talking things through with, but if it would help, make sure you do.