**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 13: Acts 6:8-15**

**8**Stephen, who was a man full of grace and supernatural power, performed many astonishing signs and wonders and mighty miracles among the people.**9**This upset some men belonging to a sect who called themselves the Men Set Free.They were Libyans,Egyptians and Turks.

They all confronted Stephen to argue with him. **10**But the Holy Spirit gave Stephen remarkable wisdom to answer them. His words were prompted by the Holy Spirit, and they could not refute what he said. **11**So the Men Set Free conspired in secret to find those who would bring false accusations against Stephen and lie about him by saying, “We heard this man speak blasphemy against Moses and God.”

**12**The Men Set Free agitated the crowd, the elders, and the religious scholars, then seized Stephen and forcefully took him before the supreme council. **13**One after another, false witnesses stepped forward and accused Stephen, saying, “This man never stops denigrating our temple and our Jewish law. **14**For we have heard him teach that Jesus of Nazareth will destroy the temple and change the traditions and customs that Moses handed down to us.”

**15**Every member of the supreme council focused his gaze on Stephen, for right in front of their eyes, *while being falsely accused*, his face glowed as though he had the face of an angel!

1. What do you think it means to be full of grace and supernatural power?
2. Have you ever felt compelled to argue with a fellow believer about faith? Did it end well?
3. How important do you think it is to be right?
4. Have you ever been persecuted or falsely accused because of your faith in Jesus?
5. What does this passage make you think about God’s vision for justice?

**Something To Do This Week**

Ask God to show you how to be more like Stephen