**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 9: Acts 5:12-16**

**12**The apostles performed many signs, wonders, and miracles among the people. **13**And the believers were wonderfully united as they met regularly in the temple courts in the area known as Solomon’s Porch. No one dared harm them, for everyone held them in high regard.

**14**Continually more and more people believed in the Lord and were added to their number—great crowds of both men and women. **15**In fact, when people knew Peter was going to walk by, they carried the sick out to the streets and laid them down on cots and mats, knowing the incredible power emanating from him would overshadow them *and heal them*. **16**Great numbers of people swarmed into Jerusalem from the nearby villages. They brought with them the sick and those troubled by demons—and everyone was healed!

1. Signs, wonders and miracles are mentioned regularly in the Gospels and the early chapters of Acts. Have you experienced anything miraculous in your own life?
2. It seems that these are seen as part of the life of the believers, along with a sense of being held in high regard. How do you think it would have felt to see what the believers were doing?
3. Do you think signs, wonders and miracles still happen today?
4. In v14 we’re told that ‘Continually more people believed in the Lord’. How do you think they found out about Him?
5. What drew you to follow Jesus? The story told about Peter’s shadow and people swarming into Jerusalem from nearby villages speaks to me of people recognising the power of God and realising that they need to meet God for themselves?
6. Do you think it is possible that people would swarm from nearby villages to join our family of faith? What would encourage them to do so, do you think?

**Something To Do This Week**

1. Think about the story of how you became a Christian. Do you think you would be ready to tell it if you were asked to?
2. Pray and ask God to use you to show his love and power to people and then be ready for it to happen!