**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 11: Acts 5:27-41**

**27**When they brought them before the council, the high priest demanded an explanation, **28**saying, “Didn’t we strictly warn you that you were to never again teach in this name? But instead you have now filled all of Jerusalem with this doctrine and are committed to holding us responsible for this man’s death!”

**29**Peter and the apostles replied, “We must listen to and obey God more than pleasing religious leaders. **30**You had Jesus arrested and killed by crucifixion but the God of our forefathers[c] has raised him up. **31**He’s the one God has exalted and seated at his right hand as our Savior and Champion. He is the provider of grace as the Redeemer of Israel. **32**We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God freely gives to all who believe in him.”

**33**When they heard this, they were infuriated and determined to murder them. **34**But a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a noted religious professor who was highly respected by all, stood up. He gave orders to send the apostles outside. **35**Then he said to the council, “Men of Israel, you need to be very careful about how you deal with these men. **36**Some time ago there was a man named Theudas who rose up claiming to be somebody. He had a following of about four hundred men, but when he was killed, all of his followers were scattered, and nothing came of it.

**37**“After him, in the days of the census, another man rose up, Judas the Galilean, who got people to follow him in a revolt. He too perished, and all those who followed him were scattered. **38**So in this situation, you should just leave these men to themselves. For if this plan or undertaking originates with men, it will fade away and come to nothing. **39**But if this movement is of God, you won’t be able to stop it. And you might discover that you were fighting God all along!”

Gamaliel’s words convinced the council. **40**So they brought the apostles back in and had them severely beaten. They ordered them never again to speak in the name of Jesus and then let them go.

**41**The apostles left there rejoicing, thrilled that God had considered them worthy to suffer disgrace for the name of Jesus.

1. Do you seek to listen to and obey God more than you do religious leaders?
2. What experience do you have of the Holy Spirit in your life? If you’re in a group, talk about it if you are willing to.
3. Whose side do you think Gamiliel was on?
4. ‘…If this movement is of God, you won’t be able to stop it’ he tells the Council. Have you ever seen or been part of a movement that was ‘of God’? What was that like? If not, what do you think one would look like or feel like to be part of?
5. Would you be up for suffering disgrace for the name of Jesus? The apostles are delighted to. Would we be?

**Something To Do This Week**

1. Think about your life. What would you be willing to let go of if you were asked to for the sake of Jesus?