

Icebreaker:

Luke writes the Gospel of Luke and tells Paul's life story in Acts. Who would you want to write your life story? What does that person know about you that you would like your group to know?

Read and discuss:

1. As you look back on this summer, in what way did you reflect the love and grace of Jesus?
2. Jesus told the disciples to wait in Jerusalem for the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4). Why do you think Jesus didn't have the Spirit come down immediately?
3. Jesus must go so that the Holy Spirit can come. Look at these two verses and discuss what insight they give us about the Holy Spirit.

Romans 8:26

"And the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness. For example, we don't know what God wants us to pray for. But the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in words."

John 14:26

"However, the helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything. He will remind you of everything that I have ever told you."

4. If you were a disciple at that time, how would you have felt about Jesus leaving you?
5. At least one scholar thinks that being a witness (as seen in Acts 1:8) is the theme for the whole book of Acts. What does being a witness mean to you?
6. Do you find it easier to be a witness in Jerusalem (those near you) or to the ends of earth (those farther away)?
7. Why do you think Luke included Mary and certain women and Jesus' brothers (in Acts 1:14) praying and meeting with the disciples?

Prayer:

It was important for the early disciples to be in prayer together (Acts 1:14). As you are praying with your group, think about how you can encourage each other, pray for each other, and help each other to be witnesses. Also, please pray for the following needs in our church family:

- > Prayers of healing for Orlin Colman.
- > Prayers of comfort for the Gordon family in the death of Margaret's father and for the Bankert family in the death of Roxann's mother.

Welcome back! This Home Group session goes through the week of November 12.

Leader's Notes:

We are so grateful you are leading a Home Group. We believe it's one of the most important roles our people can play inside the church. May God bless you during this fall session to lead with energy, imagination, humility, and grace!

Some of us have read the book of Acts so many times that the stories are too familiar. In reality, the "Acts of the Apostles" is an exciting book! We encourage you to read it with some passion as these first Christians risked their very lives to follow Jesus. We will see how in 30 short years the church grew from a small Jewish sect to a major spiritual force in the Roman Empire.

Acts 1 is packed full with images including Jesus ascending, the anticipation of the Holy Spirit, Jesus' commission to be witnesses, and the early followers praying together. We encourage you to read a study bible or look online to read an introduction and the context (who, what, where, when) of Acts. If you want, you can even use a commentary such as "Acts for Everyone" by Tom Wright or "The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary" by Ben Witherington III.

[Question 1] This question gives you the opportunity to think back on what you did this summer and how it related to your faith. The answers could range from caring for a family member, to helping at VBS or around town, to meeting a new neighbor, or going on a short-term mission trip.

[Question 2] The disciples needed to wait so that they would be dependent on God and be together to build community both women and men. They had to pray. God saw their faithfulness as they obeyed what he told them to do.

[Question 3] The Romans verse tells us the Holy Spirit knows us intimately and is speaking to God on our behalf as an intercessor or go-between. In the John verse, we see the Holy Spirit as a helper, teacher, and reminder.

[Question 4] The angels had to tell the disciples to stop staring into the sky after Jesus ascended. They were probably confused (they asked questions), and in need of help (they prayed), or maybe even scared for their safety. Some options for us might be terrified, confused, or excited about what was to come.

[Question 5] Acts 1:8 is a powerful verse – Jesus telling his followers what they will become. Being a witness might mean telling or showing others the grace and love of Jesus, who is the Christ, the Savior of the world.

[Question 6] Jerusalem might be your immediate family or neighbors, Judea is close by, Samaria is those who you don't get along with, and the ends of the earth is just what it says! Some find it easier to witness to those close by while some find it easier to go on a mission trip to places like Brazil, Romania, or Uganda.

[Question 7] It is possible that Luke intentionally includes Mary and Jesus' brothers to show that they believed in Jesus as Messiah, just as the disciples did. It was important to include women to show that Jesus was for everyone, not just the men in that culture 2000 years ago.