

# **SMALL GROUP STUDY - LEADER'S NOTES**

## **Acts 1:1-9**

### **LEADER'S NOTES**

These expanded notes contain more detail which we hope will be helpful when preparing your small group session. We pray your discussions will richly bless you and help you explore your – and the Holy Spirit's – role in mission.

#### **Warm up question:**

What do you think the purpose of the church is?  
How is your church a blessing to your locality?

#### **Acts 1:1-9**

We are going to focus on Acts 1:1-9. This study contains two sorts of questions.

- Questions that focus on the Bible passage to help us to listen to what the Holy Spirit inspired Luke to write.
- Then questions that will encourage us to think about what we have read and apply it to our situation today.

#### **Read Acts 1:1-9**

#### **Questions**

##### **Acts 1:8**

- *What* is Jesus calling the apostles to be?
- *Where* is Jesus telling them to go?
- *Who* will enable them to be and do what he is asking of them?

#### **To think about**

What is the mission of the church today?

How should we be answering these questions:  
Who are we called to be? Where is Jesus telling us to go? How can we be and do what he is asking of us?

#### **Additional leader's notes**

*You shall be my witnesses.*

This was Israel's calling – to be a Light to the Gentiles (nations, eg Exodus 19:6; Isaiah 42:1, 6-7; 49:6; 60:3); witnesses that the God of Israel is the only God who rules history and announces the future (eg Isaiah 43:10-12; 44:8). This promise is now made to the apostles as the representatives of the restored Israel who will enable God's restored people to fulfil their mission purpose.

The apostles were *unique eyewitnesses to all Jesus had done and said*, especially to his resurrection. We stand in the position of those who have received their testimony as it has been passed down to us through Luke and the other Gospel writers. It is good for us to tell others what the Lord has done in our own lives, but we are especially called to be witnesses to what God did through Jesus in history: witnesses not only to our lives being changed but to the world and its history being changed by the coming of Jesus.

*In Jerusalem, all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.*

Where are we to go? If we try to apply this to ourselves today

- Where is our Jerusalem?
- Where is our Judea?
- Where is our Samaria? It may help you to remember the relationship the apostles as Jews had had with Samaritans in the past (see Luke 9:51-56)

In the past we sent missionaries to the 'ends of the earth.' Today people from across the world have come to us. How should we be responding to them?

**The apostles were unique eyewitnesses to all Jesus had done and said, especially to his resurrection.**

*“you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you”*

**Who** will enable them to be and do what he is asking of them?

- The first answer has to do with where Jesus is now and what he is doing – see Acts 1:2,9 and 2:34. Compare Matthew 28:18 *‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.’*
- The second has to do with who Jesus is sending to them – see 1:4,5,8. Whereas in the past the Holy Spirit came upon certain people to equip them for the task given to them, eg the judges, the prophets, now the promise is for all God’s people as Joel foretold (see Numbers 11:29; Joel 2:28-32 quoted in Acts 2:17-18).

### Questions

#### Acts 1:1-3

Look at the way Luke summarises the story of Jesus in his ‘first volume’ (former book) to Theophilus.

- As witnesses to Jesus, and to all God has done through Jesus, what are the apostles to tell the people?
- As ambassadors of King Jesus, what can they expect to experience?

### To think about

When they were doing this Jesus was ‘front-page’ news. How can we continue this work today when so many have written off Christianity as outdated and irrelevant?

Where and when are people willing to listen to the story of Jesus today?

What should we expect to experience?

### Additional leader’s notes

In Acts we see the apostles telling the story of Jesus as the story of

- Jesus’s God-accredited ministry of healing and driving out evil 2:22
- Jesus’s God-ordained sufferings 2:23
- Jesus’s God-orchestrated vindication and exaltation 2:24-35

that all Israel might know that *‘God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah.’* 2:36

*Which is, of course, the story all the Gospel writers tell.*

## Where and when are people willing to listen to the story of Jesus today?

Acts also tells the story of the church proclaiming Jesus through their own

- God-accredited ministries that brought healing and deliverance to people; both the signs and wonders done by the apostles and the ministries of kindness done through disciples such as Dorcas
- God-ordained suffering that included imprisonment, beatings, and execution, while they patiently and joyfully waited for the
- God-orchestrated vindication of his Word and of his servants; whether by being released from prison (eg Acts 4-5), or seeing violent opponents brought to proclaim the Jesus they once persecuted (eg Acts 9), or seeing persecuting tyrants brought down (eg Acts 12)

### Questions

#### Acts 1:3b-5

What did Jesus spend his time doing and talking about after he was baptised by John?

What did the apostles spend their time doing and talking about after they were baptised by the Holy Spirit?

### To think about

Where is the presence of the Holy Spirit evident in your church?

If so what is the evidence? What might you expect to see happening?

What could you do to see more of the Holy Spirit’s presence in your church?

### Additional leader’s notes

Take care to ensure this part of the discussion doesn’t ‘point the finger’ at other people.

It is also important to note that those ‘filled with the Spirit’ talk about Jesus (Acts 2:4; 4:8; 4:31; 9:11-22).

The signs and wonders the apostles did, though part of their unique role as witnesses to Jesus and his resurrection is not something they began to do before the coming of the Holy Spirit since they had already been given authority to heal and cast out demons by Jesus when first appointed as apostles and sent to the towns of Galilee in advance of Jesus' coming (Luke 9:1-2)

### To round up

*What should we be doing?*

We cannot do everything. What is the Lord calling us as a church/church small group to focus on?

*What should we be praying for?*

Let us pray **'Come Holy Spirit', that we may**

Proclaim Jesus as Lord

- and that the Holy Spirit might empower us to so do it in our day and our culture that people are cut to the heart by the sword of the Spirit – even if not 3,000 in one day!!

### Additional leader's notes

Lots of companies and organisations have mission statements. Today we have been talking about the mission statement given to the church by Jesus.

It may be helpful to ask:

- Does your church have a mission statement? What is it?
- What place does the mission have in *your Church's* life and faith?
- What place does the mission have in *your* life and faith?
- What part does the Holy Spirit play in this? Where is it evident?
- Where do you believe you lack the Spirit's power? Where is that evident?

### Further Reading

How about spending a month reading through Acts and praying for the Holy Spirit to empower you for mission?

**Let us pray 'Come Holy Spirit',  
that we may proclaim Jesus  
as Lord.**