



Bible
BOOK CLUB

June 2021 - Acts

OPENING PRAYER

Gracious God, open our minds, open our eyes to see the hope of resurrection, and open our ears to hear your call to be witnesses to the ends of the earth. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, help us to be bold in our witnessing as people of faith, yet humble, empathetic and caring as we learn from you and with one another. Amen.

BOOK CLUB QUESTIONS

In Acts 1:1–11, the community of faith is sent out to carry the teaching and ministry of Jesus Christ to the ends of the earth. The phrase, “to the ends of the earth”, in Acts 1:8 means the witness of the disciples, which began from home (Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria), is expanding to reach all nations and diverse groups of people.

- How does God lead us to proclaim the message today?
- Where does the Holy Spirit lead us to go and why?
- Does our witness start where we are and end where we are? Or does it start where we are and end where we are not?

In Acts 1:8, “and to the ends of the earth” may refer to the Ethiopian Eunuch who comes from a great distance and meets Phillip (Acts 8:26–40) or to Cornelius, the first acknowledged Gentile convert who meets Peter (Acts 10:1–11:18).

- Who might be referred to as “the ends of the earth” in your circle ?

The story of Peter and John (Peter healing a crippled beggar) and their interaction with the crowd and with the healed man, tells us about the nature and the mission of the early church. They were responding to the needs of people, both spiritual and physical. They healed the sick and told the story about Jesus with confidence, regardless of crowd reaction (Acts 3:1–19).

- What is the implication of this ministry to the 21st century church of today?
- Do we have the courage and boldness to respond with confidence to the present crowd and share our faith about Jesus, how it changed us and how it can change others. Or do we miss the opportunity to speak about our faith?

As we read the book of Acts, we see diversity as a gift from God important to God’s mission. The Holy Spirit comes to the disciples and empowers them to speak in the languages of the many different people who are there. They meet others where they are in all of their diversity.

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BOOK CLUB QUESTIONS

- In what ways has God equipped us to be witnesses to all diverse groups during the pandemic?
- What can be difficult about diversity in the church today?
- What can be effective about diversity in the church today?
- Are there any barriers or boundaries that we need to overcome or remove in our congregations?

In the book of Acts, there is considerable evidence that the practice of the early church was to share with those who had need. (Acts 4:32–37) .

- What does this reading suggest about the unequal distribution of the Covid-19 vaccine among nations and global communities, poor countries and rich countries?

In the book of Acts, the Spirit of God is moving and new communities of believers are forming and being sent out to bear witness to the resurrection of Jesus Christ and encouraged not to be stagnant.

- At this time of the pandemic, what does a “sent out” church look like? How do we respond to God’s call of being “sent”?

Striving to discern the will of God is both a theological theme and part of the storyline in Acts.

- In what ways can we affirm the gifts of other members of the body of Christ and work together to discern what the will of God is during and after the pandemic?

The interaction between Peter (pious Jew) and a centurion, Cornelius, (a Gentile) resulted in the reaching of more people with the promise of the Gospel of Jesus. God crossed the boundaries and the barriers .

- In what ways might we be inspired, like Peter, to leave our comfort zone to go and visit people of different cultures, ethnicities, backgrounds and places where we had not expected faith, and work together as one body of Christ?

The Book of Acts ends with a powerful reminder: the Gospel of Jesus Christ is unstoppable. Despite the persecutions, discouragement, and challenges that all believers endured, the Good News continued to be proclaimed throughout the world.

- Is there anything that we think can stop the Good News of Jesus Christ from being proclaimed to the ends of the earth ? Pandemic? Economy?

CLOSING PRAYER

O God, you have called us, your servants, to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden and through perils unknown. Give us faith to go out with good courage not knowing where we go, but only that your hand is leading us and your love supporting us. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen (ELW page 317)

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This month’s resource was prepared by Rev. Victoria Mwamasika.