



Discussion Guide
Stories Worth Sharing – Part 9
LEADER GUIDE

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Hey leaders! We are SO grateful that you have continued to lead throughout this summer. We hope that this sermon series has been a blessing and encouragement to you and your group!

We are excited to welcome our lead pastor, Matt Evans, back from sabbatical! He will preach the first week of our new series, "Different", based on the book of 1 Peter. This book offers hope to persecuted Christians and provides practical guidance for following Jesus. Their persecution, seen as a gift, allowed them to demonstrate the surprising generosity and love of Jesus, fueled by hope of His return and victory over evil. This series will remind us that we are called to be different and bear witness to God's love over all the earth!

Thank you for shepherding a group of people to Love God, Love Others, and Live Sent!

NEED A RESOURCE, HAVE A QUESTION, OR WANT TO HAVE A CONVERSATION?
Let us know how we can help! Contact your groups director or discipleship@rockbridge.cc

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"We must learn to live each day, each hour, yes, each minute as a new beginning, as a unique opportunity to make everything new."

[Henri Nouwen]

LEADER RESOURCES || Leader Note We do our best to equip, empower, and encourage you to shepherd your group well. Access a resource by clicking on the underlined title and share them with your group!

- **Passage Summary**
 - The story continues with the birth of the church. In this passage, we see a pivotal moment where three things are focused on: sharing the gospel (it spreads because people share their stories!), caring for people, and raising up new leaders. The theme in Acts is the church was on the move, reaching and discipling people, and growing.
- **Acts Ch. 6 Commentary & Working Together Through Growing Pains**
 - Use this commentary and article for background and encouragement. These would be good resources to share before you gather.
- **Acts 6 in 5 Minutes**
 - This would be an encouraging resource to share with your group after you gather.

ENGAGE & CONNECT || Leader Note The goal for the icebreaker is to prepare your group for the conversation ahead by connecting with one another's hearts and building joy together.

Share about a time recently when your spiritual growth has been a challenge for you.

BEGIN WITH PRAYER || Leader Note Begin your time together by thanking God for his presence and praying His word back to Him. Ask a few people to pray, beginning in a posture of humility and dependence!

Spend a moment praying this passage, beginning your time together in humility and gratitude!

“Let your roots grow down into him, and let your lives be built on him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught, and you will overflow with thankfulness.”

[Colossians 2:7]

BIG IDEA || Leader Note *Read this aloud so your group knows what the theme of today’s discussion is.*

The result of a church that reaches new people, cares for current people, and empowers people to serve is growth.

PASSAGE || Leader Note *We would love for your group to read through the passage below prayerfully using lectio divina. Follow the steps below before moving into your discussion. Encourage your group to try using this during their own time with God this week by texting them the resource below!*

- Slowly and prayerfully, have someone read Acts 6:1-7 aloud. Ask, “What word or phrase captures your attention or grabs your heart?” *(answers DO NOT need to be shared aloud)*
- Have someone read the passage aloud again (possibly in a different translation). Ask, “What longing in your life is God speaking into today?” *(answers DO NOT need to be shared aloud)*
- Have someone read the passage aloud a final time. Ask, “What invitation from the Lord do you sense? What might He be saying to you? Offer these to God in surrender and joy.” *(answers DO NOT need to be shared aloud)*
- Ask, “Is there something anyone would like to share from this experience?”
- Say, “If you enjoyed this way of reading Scripture, consider adding it to your spiritual ‘toolbox’. I will share this resource with you this week.”
 - **HERE** is the lectio divina process!

DISCUSSION || Leader Note *Your role is to FACILITATE the conversation, so keep your group moving and encourage multiple people to share, looking for opportunities to point out the grace and glory of God! Here are two REMINDERS: 1) Every question does NOT have to be answered ... there is freedom to go where the Spirit leads! 2) The answers do NOT have to be read aloud ... they are simply there for guidance!*

1. What does the passage display about the character of God? *This is a good opportunity to go first!*
2. What does the passage tell us about who we are meant to be?
3. In the sermon we heard, *“Empowering people to serve and lead is a part of God’s plan to reach more people and to care for more people.”* How have you been impacted by someone empowering you to serve and care for people in our church? How is God inviting you to do that for someone else?
4. In the sermon we heard, *“Prayer was an important ministry strategy.”* How has prayer been an important part of the ministry God has called you to? How could you incorporate prayer more or differently?
5. What other questions or connections to your own life do you see in this passage?

STEP OF OBEDIENCE || Leader Note *This is an opportunity for people to put into practice what the Spirit is inviting them to do and live in obedience to God for the sake of love! You can encourage your group to be accountable to one another and use these to follow up with one another throughout the week.*

Let’s go back to our big idea for today: the result of a church that reaches new people, cares for current people, and empowers people to serve is GROWTH! If we want to be this kind of a church for our community, it will take each of us doing our part to accomplish this Gospel-focused goal!

Based on the Spirit's prompting, what is a step of obedience that you can take today? Here are a few questions to help you take a step of faith ...

- How is God inviting you to reach new people in our community?
- How is God inviting you to care for and build up the people in our church?
- How is God inviting you to encourage and empower someone to begin serving or leading?

Give your group a few moments to reflect on their answers to the questions above. Then have your group answer the question aloud. Feel free to separate into smaller groups of 3-4 for this question.

PRAYER FOCUS || Leader Note *We want to commit to praying for OTHERS as a unified church who is dependent upon God for everything. Be intentional about saving at least 5 minutes for prayer at the end of your gathering each week to pray together. You can pray for one another as well as the prompt below!*

The Result of Sharing Our Stories

- Father, we come before you with grateful hearts, seeking guidance and blessing as we strive to reach new people with the Gospel. Grant us the wisdom and compassion to care for each person we encounter, reflecting Your love in all we do.
- Empower us, Lord, to inspire and equip others to serve in your church, that together we may grow in faith and unity. May our efforts glorify your name and bring many into your family.