



Discussion Guide Church — Part 1 LEADER GUIDE

.....

You were made for more than a comfortable, self-focused faith. You were made to be part of something bigger. In this series, we're rediscovering what the church was always meant to be: not a program to consume, but a Spirit-filled, Jesus-shaped community that's alive, vital, and still changing the world. We'll look at the stories competing for our hearts, and rediscover the one true story we were made for!

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

.....

"To the average church God is desirable and maybe even useful, but he is not necessary. Most of our churches can get on without God."
[A.W. Tozer]

LEADER RESOURCES || **Leader Note** *We do our best to equip, empower, and encourage you to shepherd your group well.*

- **Passage Summary**
 - Acts 1 describes the important aspects behind the birth and launch of the early church. For Luke the critical facet of this is what Jesus continues to do and teach, only now through His soon-to-be Spirit-filled followers. In these events and instructions of Acts 1, we gain insight and understanding into the true nature of the church and what makes her what she is supposed to be.

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.*

What church tradition or practice have you seen that surprised you the most?

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

Spirit of Christ, please give us discontent with things we've settled for that are less than what You have for us. Let us want more of You.

MEMORIZING SCRIPTURE || **Leader Note** *Help your group memorize these new verses together by having each person read them aloud. The goal is to enjoy hiding God's word in our hearts together.*

And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

[Hebrews 10:24-5, ESV]

BIG IDEA || **Leader Note** *Read this aloud so your group knows the theme of today's reading and discussion.*

The true church—as constituted by Jesus—is still a force to be reckoned with.

PASSAGE & DISCUSSION || Leader Note Your role is to FACILITATE, so keep your group moving along, encourage people to share, and look for opportunities to point out the grace and glory of God! Here are two reminders: 1) Every question does not have to be answered ... go where the Spirit leads! 2) Answers do not have to be read aloud ... they're for guidance!

Have someone read aloud Acts 1:1-11 in the ESV.

1. Why did Jesus spend more time on Earth after His resurrection? *It's beautiful that Jesus took time after everything changed to instruct and train the apostles and gave them not just one or two proofs, but many. He had to be sure they were sure, and He kept training them until the day He ascended.*
2. Why didn't they get to know the times and seasons that would answer their question? *"It is not for you to know"... we don't get to know everything. But we do get Him.*
3. What hope did the two men leave the disciples with as soon as Jesus ascended? *We don't often take immense solace in the fact that Jesus will return again, but as the disciples saw Jesus leave, it was perfect consolation for them. "Come soon, Lord Jesus."*
4. What does this passage teach us about what Jesus is like? *We see His shepherding, His staying with the disciples, His teaching, His authority, and more. Sit with the passage a bit and see what people notice.*
5. How is your story better now than where it was headed before Christ? *Testimony time! Answers will vary. For some, things may be more difficult, but that doesn't mean their story is headed in a worse direction. Fighting on the side of life is hard, but that's because we're facing death as an opponent, not as its victims.*
6. What would church service look like if God wasn't present? What is different when He is? *We know that God is present all the time—what we're talking about is a manifest presence, to the extent that it's mysteriously different.*
7. Why is it important to have both freedom to question AND receive correction? *Either one of these alone is a trap. If we can't ask questions, there is likely both weak faith and tyrannical leadership. If we can ask questions but won't accept correction, then we wander without boundaries or guidance into any pitfall the enemy places in our path. We are protected by both asking questions and receiving answers that correct our steps.*
8. When have you been witness to who Jesus is? *We see Jesus when His followers actually follow His teachings by the power of His Spirit. We can be witnesses of His excellence, His reign, and His love.*
9. Are you growing in your understanding of Jesus as we meet together? *Be open not just to positive feedback here, but also answers that aren't so sure. There may need to be adjustments to how you interact, and the discussion might reveal if there are issues to address.*

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.

Just because we believe something is true **doesn't mean we've done something about it.**

As you consider your next step, reflect on: 1) Which do you actually want more: what you want, or what God wants? 2) How are those things different? 3) How can you pursue what God wants this week?

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 2 or 3 for this question, so each person has others praying with them for the needs they're taking before the throne.

PRAYER FOCUS || Leader Note *Be intentional about saving at least 5 minutes to pray together. Try the prayer activity below or pray for one another's personal requests!*

"Jesus, help us to be witnesses of who You are and of Your way, instead of witnesses to only what is normal and what is our way. Amen."