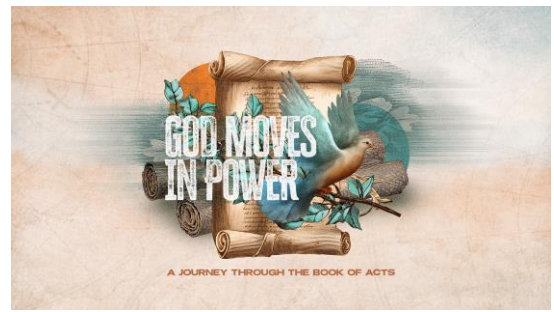


Group Discussion Guide | August 16
God Moves in Power through Prayer



Series overview and leader instructions

Overview

Our current sermon series, “God Moves in Power,” is a journey through the book of Acts, where we witness the Holy Spirit at work through prayer, the gospel, the Church, and ordinary people. As we explore the story of the early church, we’ll discover that the same God who moved powerfully then is still moving today. This series will challenge and encourage us to live with bold faith, expectant prayer, and a willingness to join God’s ongoing mission in the world. The story of Acts is far from over and we’re invited to be a part of it.

Note: This series will be a thematic walk through the Book of Acts rather than a chapter by chapter or verse-by-verse study.

Bible Lab

Each week, in addition to sermon discussion questions, groups are invited to participate in “Bible Lab,” an interactive Scripture reading experience. Your group will read a different text each time you gather, but the questions you ask will be the same, inviting you to consider what you notice about God, humanity, and yourself in each passage. By providing the same questions each week, we hope to offer a Bible-reading strategy that puts the emphasis first on God and the church/others before drawing a personal application.

It could be tempting for your group to skip the Bible Lab, but we *strongly* encourage you to engage with it each week, allowing God’s Word to form your group and each person in it.

Reading Plan

We have created a reading plan to accompany this sermon series. You can find it here: [Acts Series Resources](#). You can download the reading plan or subscribe to receive the daily devotional guide each week, which contains the reading plan and reflection questions.

Consider committing to completing the reading plan as a group. Here are questions you can use (during your life group time, over a meal, or however you choose) to reflect on the reading plan each week:

- As you read, what resonated with you?
- What questions came up in your mind?
- What challenged you from God’s Word?

Opening reflection questions (5 minutes)

This week we're looking at how prayer prepares the way for the gospel. In Acts 10, the gospel makes its way to the Gentiles when Peter prays and receives a vision and visits the Roman Centurian Cornelius. In Acts 16, the gospel makes its way to Europe when Paul receives a vision to go to the region of Macedonia and meets Lydia in the city of Philippi.

- Think about your own response to the gospel. Do you know what role prayer played? Were you praying? Was someone praying for you?
- Have you ever had a time when you thought you were going in one direction and God clearly changed your plans? What was the result?

Bible Lab (20 minutes)

All through the God Moves in Power series, we'll be spending time each week in what we're calling "Bible Lab." Bible Lab consists of three "movements." In the first movement, we will read the passage out loud, paying attention to what is happening in the passage. In the second movement, we'll read it out loud again, noticing what it teaches about God, people, and ourselves. In the third movement, we will silently read the passage and share what next step the passage has for us.

***Note:** See the last page of this document for a guide you can provide your group members if desired. You could print one for each person, collect them after Bible Lab, and reuse the same guide each week.*

Movement 1

*Invite everyone to turn to **Acts 10:23b-48** (if you have more time) or **Acts 16:11-15** (if you have less time).*

The first time through, we want to get an overview. As we listen, ask yourself:

- What is going on in this passage?
- What caught your attention?
- What questions arise as you listen?

Read Acts 10:23b-48 or Acts 16:11-15 out loud or invite someone else to do so. When you are finished, discuss your group's answers to the questions above. Feel free to break into groups of 2-3.

Movement 2

The second time through, we want to consider what the passage reveals about God and His people. As we listen, ask yourself:

- What does this passage show you about God? The work of the Holy Spirit?
- What do these verses reveal to us about the body of Christ, the Church?

Read Acts 10:23b-48 or Acts 16:11-15 out loud or invite someone else to do so. When you are finished, discuss your group's answers to the questions above. Feel free to break into groups of 2-3.

Movement 3

Each of us will now take a few moments to read Acts 10:23b-48 or Acts 16:11-15 silently to ourselves. As you read, prayerfully consider this question:

- Lord, what are You inviting me to believe, receive, or do in response to this passage?

Allow time for everyone to read and reflect. Then invite anyone who would like to share a brief response.

*When the time of sharing is done, pray a short prayer. You may use these words based on James 1:22 or something similar: **"Lord, thank You for this time in Your Word. May we not merely listen to the word and so deceive ourselves. May we do what it says. And may we encourage each other in that pursuit. Amen."***

Discussion of sermon and Scripture (20 minutes)

***Note:** We will again spend an extended time in prayer this week, so please keep that in mind as you guide your discussion.*

For Peter, the inclusion of the Gentiles in the gospel message is unexpected. Peter would have assumed Cornelius was beyond the reach of the gospel.

- Have you ever decided not to share the gospel with someone because you thought they were beyond the gospel's reach? What led you to that conclusion?
- What do these stories teach us about the role prayer can play in discerning how, where, and to whom we share the gospel?
- Are you engaged in meaningful relationships with non-Christians in your life right now where you are sharing (or hope to share) the gospel? If not, where in your life might you begin to develop those relationships?

Dan said that before the gospel is declared through our words, it is displayed through our lives.

- Think about the person or people who led you to Christ. How was the gospel displayed in their lives?
- Can you name ways that the gospel has been displayed in your life in the last few weeks?
- What steps do you want to take to pray consistently for people who don't know Jesus?

Tonight we are going to end our time together with an extended time of prayer, asking God to prepare the way for the gospel.

Prayer and upcoming events (15 minutes)

Dan shared that prayer prepares the people who *need* the gospel and prayer prepares the people who *share* the gospel. Ultimately, prayer opens doors *for* the gospel.

Let's spend some time praying both for people who need the gospel, and for those of us—and others—who can share it with them.

We will pray for . . .

- Our friends, loved ones, neighbors, and coworkers who don't know Jesus
- Our community, city, and country
- Any specific areas of the world God lays on our hearts.

As I name each category, please share your prayers. You may say the name of a person you have in mind. You may pray for the removal of a specific obstacle to the gospel that person is experiencing. You may pray for their increased curiosity or desire for the gospel. Listen to what the Spirit prompts you to ask for on behalf of each person or group after I pray our prompt, then please share those prayers out loud so we can agree together.

Dear Father,

We pray for the people we know who don't know you—our friends, loved ones, neighbors, coworkers, and others—naming specific people you place on our hearts . . .

Provide a time for people to offer their prayers.

We pray for those in our community, city, and country who don't know you, naming specific neighborhoods, communities, and areas you place on our hearts . . .

Provide a time for people to offer their prayers.

We pray for you to open doors for the gospel for those around the world who don't know you, naming specific countries and people groups you place on our hearts . . .

Provide a time for people to offer their prayers.

Now let us offer prayers for the Spirit to prepare us to share the gospel. As I read a prompt, please respond with your own prayer.

Provide a time for people to offer their prayers.

We come before you now to confess our fears and reluctance to share the gospel . . .

Provide a time for people to offer their prayers.

We come before you now to ask for wisdom, discernment, courage, and opportunity to share the gospel . . .

Provide a time for people to offer their prayers.

We come before you now to thank you for those who shared the gospel with us . . .

Provide a time for people to offer their prayers.

We offer these prayers, humbling acknowledging Your love and grace that made it possible for us to receive the gospel. May we be faithful in prayer for those who don't yet know You, and may we, like Peter and Paul, respond with obedience in sharing the gospel. In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit we pray. Amen.

Upcoming events

- **Life Group Prayer Experience:** This is the last week of the "God Moves in Power through Prayer" mini sermon series. If you haven't scheduled your prayer time yet, now would be a good time to do so!
- **August 20 Prayer Night:** It's this Thursday, August 20 from 5-8! (This prayer walk experience is similar in format to our Holy Week prayer experiences. You may arrive at any time in that window.)

Bible Lab Questions

The following may be used to guide each week's Bible Lab time.

Movement 1

The first time through this week's Scripture, we want to get an overview. As we listen, ask yourself:

- What is going on in this passage?
- What caught your attention?
- What questions arise as you listen?

Listen as the passage is read out loud then discuss your answers to the questions above.

Movement 2

The second time through, we want to consider what the passage reveals about God and His people. As we listen, ask yourself:

- What does this passage show you about God? The work of the Holy Spirit?
- What do these verses reveal to us about the body of Christ, the Church?

Listen as the passage is read out loud then discuss your answers to the questions above.

Movement 3

Each of us will now take a few moments to read the passage silently to ourselves. As you read, prayerfully consider this question:

- Lord, what are You inviting me to believe, receive, or do in response to this passage?

After a time of reflection, everyone will be given the opportunity to share their response.