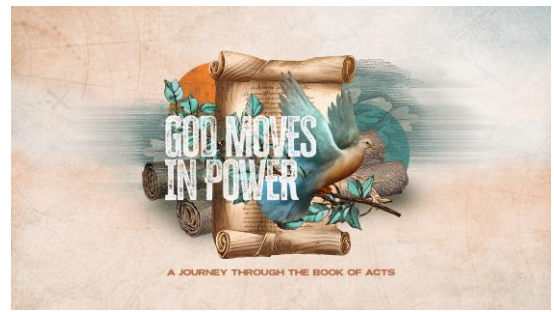


Group Discussion Guide | August 9

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 (10 minutes)

This week we’re looking at Acts 12 as the church earnestly prays for Peter’s release from prison.

- Can you think of a time when you gathered with others to earnestly pray for something? What was that like?
- What differences do you notice when you pray with others versus when you pray alone?

This could be a good time to cast vision for your life group prayer experience and the prayer event at The Creek on August 20.

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 12:5-16**

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 12:5-16 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 12:5-16 out loud or invite someone else to do so. When you're 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 the Acts 12:5-16 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 encourage you to leave at least 15 minutes at the end of your time together for prayer.

The believers in Acts 12 faced a *crisis*. One of their leaders, James, was killed. Another one, Peter, was in prison and under threat of execution. The church responded by gathering to pray.

- Be honest. How do you tend to respond to a crisis? What role does prayer typically play?

Rhoda was surprised when Peter knocked on the door, and the other believers were astonished when they saw him.

- Followers of Jesus worship the God who created the universe. Why do you think we are often so surprised when we see Him move in power?
- Can you share a time when you were surprised by God’s provision in response to prayer? Where He did more than you could have asked or imagined?

Acts 12 recounts James’ execution, Peter’s arrest, the believers’ prayers, Peter’s release, and Herod’s death. Grief, joy, political upheaval—this chapter has it all. It ends with, “But the word of God continued to spread and flourish” (Acts 12:24).

Dan reminded us that our focus in prayer should not be for God’s kingdom to help advance our lives, but for our lives to help advance God’s kingdom.

- Think back on the recent prayers you've prayed or heard. Do they tend more toward a desire for comfort, convenience, and problem solutions, or toward the advancement of God's kingdom?
- How would your prayers shift if the advancement of God's kingdom was the highest goal?

This passage also shows a group of believers fervently praying.

- What are some practical and specific ways we could incorporate more prayer into our group, especially in response to crises/hard times in our lives?
- Are there ways we could change how we pray in our weekly meetings that would enrich that time?

Prayer and upcoming events (15 minutes)

As we approach our prayer time tonight, let's pause and consider what we're praying for and why. Take a few moments to think about what we can be praying for fervently and how we can ask God for what we long for in a way that also considers how His kingdom is being advanced.

Allow a few moments for silent reflection.

What can we earnestly pray about in each other's lives tonight?

How can those prayers advance God's kingdom?

Gather prayer requests. Consider asking different members of the group to earnestly pray for each request, then pause to allow others to pray for that request as well. At the end of each prayer, you may wish to invite people to repeat Job's words: "May the name of the Lord be praised" (Job 1:21).

Remember that silence is OK, and that every person is on his or her own journey in prayer. Some people are more comfortable than others. But some people just need a little time and space to gather thoughts.

Upcoming events

- **Life Group Prayer Experience:** Remember the prayer experience your group did in Rooted? Since church will be looking at how "God Moves in Power through Prayer" over the next few weeks, we've created another prayer experience for life groups to walk through together! *If you haven't already, designate a time and place for your prayer experience.*
- **August 20 Prayer Night:** You and your life group are invited to a church-wide Prayer Night on 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.