



Part 2: What the First Church Teaches Us

FACILITATOR'S NOTE:

How To Prepare For Leading Your Group:¹

- Dedicate some time before leading to pray for your group and arrange the discussion questions in a way that suits their needs and the time given to meet.
- Review the Bible verses and “Big Idea” of the message to help you gain clarity around the heart of this week’s message.
- Use the discussion questions as a template. **You do not need to use all the questions given.** Ask the Holy Spirit to guide your discussion in a way that honours God, engages the group and helps your group apply the Bible passage and the speakers “big idea” to their life.
- You are not the answer. Your responsibility is to facilitate the discussion and keep it on track. The questions are meant to spark conversation as your group interacts with the content of the message. Encourage interaction with the content as opposed to “answers” to the questions. It is ok to disagree and have different views in a way that honours God and values your group members’ **own journey with God.**

How To Use The Discussion Questions:

- Start your groups discussion with the “Check-in” question to help your members reflect back on their week and follow up on last week’s message. It is ok if no one remembers the last week or applied the content. The weekly reminder for feedback may lead to application becoming a habit.
- Read this week’s scripture passages **together** (ask for volunteers) and guide your group through the “discuss” questions to initiate meaningful dialogue around key concepts or insights from this week’s message/passage.
- Move your group discussion to a deeper level by leading them through questions in the “apply” section. Use discernment to customize these application questions to meet the **needs and dynamics** of your group, moving from ideas about the message to the application of the message to your members life / current circumstances.
- Connect with God together as a group through prayer. This can be in the form of **prayer requests or prayer practices.**
- If you routinely do not have enough time to pray together, **try starting your meeting with the prayer section.** Many leaders have found that giving the group a cut off time to end the discussion (set a timer) and transition to prayer is very effective for time management (usually the last half hour of the meeting).
- Prayer is so key to the application of the passage and transitioning the message from the head to the heart. An open honest time of prayer will help members in your group feel cared for and more involved.
- Commitment to a time of prayer together as a group is key to a healthy group experience, spiritual growth, and the application of Scripture.

¹ For more resources on care and prayer, check out the Slack channels.



<p>CHECK-IN</p>	<p>What is the one thing that you are the most excited about going back to our home church?</p>
<p>BIG IDEA</p>	<p>We don't have to guess about what God wants us to be, or to do as His church. He's provided an example in the Acts Church.</p>
<p>DISCUSS</p>	<p>Read Matthew 22: 37-38, & Matthew 28: 19-20</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Great Commandment tells us to <u>love</u> God and others, and the Great Commission instructs us to <u>go</u> and teach others about God. Why are these two components crucial in building a Great Church? 2. Read Acts 4:31. Have you ever experienced a prayer gathering where you were shaken by the Holy Spirit? What were the results? How did it empower your faith? 3. Read Acts 4:32-37. What's the difference between a tithing church and a giving church? What were some of the results of the church's generosity as listed in this passage?
<p>APPLY How do we respond to God's teaching in meaningful ways? What might God ask of us in mind, spirit, or actions?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Pastor talked on the 5 Purposes of the Church (Worship, Discipleship, Fellowship, Ministry, & Missions). If you were to measure your engagement in each of those purposes (measuring between 1 & 10 - 1 being minimal, 10 being maximum) what would your commitment to the Great Commandment and the Great Commission look like? 2. Refer back to Acts 4:32-37. Do you consider yourself a generous person? How so? How does this passage encourage or challenge you to be more generous with the resources God has given you (money, property, possessions, time, people, etc.)? 3. The Pastor spoke that the church is made up of many members each blessed with a different gift according to the grace given to us (Romans 12: 4-6). At the Bridge, there is a course called <i>Discover Your Purpose</i> which helps believers



discover their SHAPE (Spiritual Gifts, Heart, Abilities, Personality, Experiences).

- a. Have you ever taken the *Discover Your Purpose* course? What did you discover about yourself?
- b. If you haven't, is this something you'd want to commit to? How do you think it would benefit you? The church?

PRAYER PRACTICE
(15 minutes)

Please use **ONE** of these two options to lead your group through prayer. Choose the one that fits best with your group:

1. Palms Down, Palms Up Prayer Practice

Step 1: Sit in a comfortable position with as little background distraction as possible. Turn off cameras and audio on Zoom. Take a few deep breaths.

Step 2: (Allow 2 minutes) Put your palms down as a symbol of letting go. Talk to God as if he was sitting across from you. Tell Him what's on your mind as if your best friend were sitting beside you. Talk about your hurts, your distractions, your cares, what happened today or what made you happy or you are looking forward to. Share whatever comes to mind.

Step 3: (2 minutes) Now turn your palms up as a symbol of surrender and receiving. Sit in silence listening to God. It is natural for your mind to wander. When it does, gently bring it back to focus on God, listening to what He has to say in response to you.

Step 4: (5 -7 minutes) Debrief with the group. Let these questions guide you:

- What was your experience during this exercise?
- What did you hear God say to you?

OR



2. Write down prayer requests for the group.

Either leader or another member can write.

Step 1: Begin the time of prayer by asking each member of the group to share one thing they need help with.

Step 2: Explain to the group that we will be praying for each other's prayer requests. Ask those who feel comfortable to pray for one of the requests given.

Step 3: Ask someone to pray first, then allow others to join in and pray afterwards.

Step 4: After all requests have been prayed for, the leader will allow a time of silence (approx. 1 minute), then will close the meeting by praying for any missed prayer requests and close the practice in a final prayer. (leader can use the following or do his/her own)

"Lord may we discover who we are in You. Give us ears to hear your calling. Help us Lord to be obedient to use the gifts you have given us for the benefit of others. Use us to bring change to our communities, to comfort those who need comfort and to serve those you put in our path." Amen.