



Catherine
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One Body

Study Notes
For Small Groups & Personal Reflection

INTRODUCTION to the series...

Being One Body is all about the unity of the people of God in all our variety. This is achieved by the baptism and subsequent life in the Holy Spirit.

The Unity of the Spirit

The Church in Corinth had gone off track and instead of being focussed on the mission of the Kingdom of God - they wanted the bells and whistles. Paul's teaching leads them through the minefield of '*my gift is fancier than your gift*' or '*my calling has more value than your calling*' to reveal the true purpose of the body. It is diverse in characteristic and well equipped as a single unit for mission in the community where it is sited.

In verse 12 - which I've taken from the Passion Translation complete with footnotes -

12 Just as the human body is one, though it has many parts that together form one body, so too is Christ.

Footnotes: 1 Corinthians 12:12 Christ is now a body with many parts. The human body of Jesus is glorified and enthroned in heaven. So also is the body of Christ. We are co-enthroned with him (Rom. 8:29-30; Eph. 2:6; Col. 3:1-4), but we continue to exist on earth to represent him to the world. (Bible Gateway)

Prior draws attention to so too is Christ, suggesting that;

Paul is affirming both the rich variety and the deep unity in Christ himself. In this all Christians share as members of this one body (13) through this one Spirit.
P210

It is necessary that there is more than one gift or personality type in order that we might bring the good news of Jesus Christ to the world. In the giving of his Spirit, Jesus gives everything that the church needs to do Jesus' work. It is not the humanity of Jesus which the world receives but the infinitely more varied and wonderful 'Son of God'. As Christ's body, his church will need to work in a unified way to deliver what the world needs. The deep and indivisible unity of Jesus Christ is a gift to the church. The Spirit can never be divided against himself but will rest easy in places where unity of the Spirit is actively sought after and prayed for. The image of Christ's body is spelled out in 1 Corinthians 12:12-31, and lived out, exemplified in Acts as we see the diverse group of believers putting themselves and their gifts into action that they may be the 'body of Christ' doing the work of Christ in the world. This ministry is truly incarnational: the ministry of the Son of God being done by the people of God, who are the body of Christ.

Q1: What is drawing your focus away from Jesus?

How can you help each other to focus on what is important?

Discuss the underlined statement.

What challenges does this present to you/ your group/ your church?

One Body: back to Socrates

Paul is challenging the 'spiritually obsessed' Corinthians with some direction and teaching that will reposition them from being a people who want the demonstration and spectacle of the more overtly supernatural gifts, to becoming a people who are focussed on the one who brings the Spirit and with that Spirit, the characteristics of Christ whose body they form.

Paul uses the image of the 'body' to refer to the Christian Church for the first time here in 1 Corinthians 12. Barnett draws our attention to this as being a use of an image borrowed from local tradition for the Christian context. This will not be the only time that we see Paul borrowing from the culture around him in order to make

a point, it is part of his method when entering into a culture and revealing the truth of Jesus Christ to them.

Four centuries earlier Socrates (Plato, Republic 5:10), in his picture of 'the best governed state', appealed to the example of the human body where the pain of one 'member' is suffered by all. During Roman republican days the ordinary 'members' of the 'body' politic were discontented because they worked hard for no other reason than to swell 'the belly', a reference to the rich patricians. Arguing for the status quo, Menius Agrippa countered that the 'members' depended on the 'belly' for nourishment; let them be content! Pp228-9

Baptism in the Holy Spirit

Some churches are diligent in following the teachings of Christ without having been recipients of the baptism that Christ brings; the baptism of the Holy Spirit as John the Baptist prophesies in Luke 3:16 and Acts 1:5. **Peskett/Ramachandra** observe;

We have noted in particular the fundamental need for the church to live continually in the experience and power of the Spirit: an initial Pentecostal endowment is not enough; neither is a 'second' or subsequent blessing - we need to 'live in the Spirit.' P 223

The body of Christ is a single unit with the task of sharing the Good news as Christ's witnesses 'to the ends of the earth' Acts 1:8. Luke's account in Acts demonstrates the way that church functions. As a unit of people who are fuelled by the Holy Spirit to tell of Jesus wherever God sends them and on arrival at that place to establish His church.

Over the series focussed on "One Body", we will examine the variety of Gifts that the Spirit blesses the church with, with the assurance that Paul gives that God has intentionally placed Apostles, Prophets, teachers, miracles, healing, helping, guidance and tongues (v27) into the church. These gifts are brought by the baptism in the Holy Spirit which Jesus gives to all believers.

One of the challenges faced by the church is that some believers are confident in what they know about Jesus but have not 'waited to be clothed with power' or to be 'baptised with the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:5). We see Priscilla and Aquila deal with a similar situation regarding Apollos in Acts 18.

The reference to One Body is one which denotes responsibility. We have a responsibility as a church to be properly 'tooled up' with the Holy Spirit and the unity He brings for the purpose of mission and evangelism as commanded by God.

Q2: Talk about the purpose of the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

Is it more than 'blessed assurance'?

The Church: We belong to each other

Being Christian is an inherently corporate activity. Being 'of Christ' necessitates being part of his life in the world and that life is one of unity in the spirit. **Timmis and Chester** in their book Total Church suggest that;

To be a Christian is, by definition, to be part of the community of God's people. To be united with Christ is to be part of his body. The assumption of the New Testament is that this always finds expression in commitment to a local church... Commitment to the Church is easy while the church is an abstract, universal reality. But the New Testament assumes commitment to real people in real local churches with all their faults and foibles. P 85

'Many parts' only work if they are joined up and make sense. A whole body needs all the parts. They are designed by God and work well together.

A foot is no use without the leg and so on... And it is so much better when the body is fully alive.

As we look at the working out of the One Body in the characters and churches of Acts, we see churches that are springing into life. We see leaders who are brave and full of the Holy Spirit and we see places where there is need of the unity of the Spirit. Places such as Corinth. Perhaps this can be the most challenging area of all.

To be rooted in a body of believers and to believe that it ‘doesn’t suit’ any longer is a challenge to the unity of the spirit and causes pain and absence within the body of Christ. Too many of you know what it is like to have an arm, leg, hand, foot, back, gut or head that don’t work comfortably or even at all. You know the difficulties that this brings to the rest of the body. Choosing to commit, whatever the frustrations or difficulties is a spiritual discipline.

Q3: *Spend some time praying about the issues in this section. Choose to commit.*

The Church: We belong to the community

The Church is a complex unit of people. Timmis and Chester write in their chapter about church planting that this follows the Acts imperative to lay down roots in localities and that to be constantly giving an eye to planting anew keeps faith fresh and vibrant.

Whilst this may be the case, there is something to be said for embracing the need for fully tooled up Christians to be the body of Christ in well situated churches and to reject becoming “*second generation churches without their own experience of the gospel, without their gospel ‘cutting edge’*”. P 93 This is a reference to church without the life of the Spirit, where people come for the comfort and security it gives rather than for the unity with Christ and each other in mission and evangelism.

Whether in Jerusalem, Ephesus, Corinth or Achaia, the church became effective when it was seen daily by the local community and was relevant to the place where it was planted. In Jerusalem, the people flocked from miles around to Solomon’s Colonnades to hear the apostles and receive healing. Longevity in a place breeds reputation.

Timmis and Chester state that;

“there can be no sustainable Christian mission without sustainable local communities” and that *“mission cannot be done by a lone ranger. Mission must be done by a community of believers ... There must be a community that can be observed and one that offers a place of belonging. When we think ‘mission’ we must also think ‘church’”*. P86

This then is the challenge to Churches. Especially ones that have many generations within them. The diversity among believers of age, wisdom, gift and experience necessary to health and growth will challenge unity, especially in a rapidly changing culture. The same diversity also holds the key to credible witness of the unity of the spirit and the wisdom and gifts necessary to keep a missional focus to the community in which the church has been rooted.

Q4: *How can you help your church to retain its ‘experience of the gospel’? What value is there in being a multi-generational church?*

In Conclusion...

If the One Body is to stay alive, it must commit to daily living the life of the baptism in the Spirit into which Jesus immerses his people. This will ensure that the One Body is constantly expecting and experiencing life as a Church in worshipping and in demonstrating the love of Christ together on a daily basis.

Q5: *Talk together about the adventures you have had as ‘One Body’. Ask God what is next for you as a people committed to living a Spirit-fuelled life.*

Enjoy the series!

Love, Catherine

Session 1 Apostles

As you Gather 5-10 minutes

Write your favourite thing to do on a slip of paper and place them all in a bowl. Let the leader take them out one at a time and give thanks for the action, the person and then reveal whose it is.

The thing to do could be sleeping, cooking, working, singing in the shower, sudoku - anything at all.

Pray & Worship 10 Minutes

Sing a hymn or a song praising God, whose ways & plans are perfect

Pray

1. For an increase in your willingness to receive the Holy Spirit.
2. That God will bless your Group in your discussion today.
3. For a greater trust in God for all your plans.
4. For the people in your community who don't yet know God.
5. For a complete commitment to Jesus' call on all our lives.

Read the Word 50 minutes

Acts 5:12-26 The Passion Translation (TPT)

12 The apostles performed many signs, wonders, and miracles among the people. 13 And the believers were wonderfully united as they met regularly in the temple courts in the area known as Solomon's Porch. No one dared harm them, for everyone held them in high regard. 14 Continually more and more people believed in the Lord and were added to their number—great crowds of both men and women. 15 In fact, when people knew Peter was going to walk by, they carried the sick out to the streets and laid them down on cots and mats, knowing the incredible power emanating from him would overshadow them and heal them. 16 Great numbers of people swarmed into Jerusalem from the nearby villages. They brought with them the sick and those troubled by demons—and everyone was healed!

17 The high priest and his officials, who formed the party of the Sadducees, became extremely jealous over all that was happening, 18 so they had the apostles arrested, placed in chains, and thrown into jail. 19 But during the night, the Lord sent an angel who appeared before them. He supernaturally opened their prison doors and brought the apostles outside. 20 "Go," the angel told them. "Stand in the temple courts and preach the words that bring life!" 21 So early that morning they entered the temple courts and taught the people. The high priest and his officials, unaware of their supernatural release from prison, convened the members of the supreme council. They sent for the apostles to be brought to them from prison. 22 But when the officers came to the prison cell, it was empty!

continued

They returned to the council and informed them, 23 “We found the jail securely locked and the guards standing by their cell, but when we opened the door, there was no one inside!”

24 When the captain of the temple guard and the leading priests heard this report, they were perplexed and at a loss over what to make of it.

25 Someone came and informed them, “The men you put in prison are out there standing in the temple courts, teaching the people!” 26 So the captain of the temple guard and his officers went to arrest them once again, but without using force, for they were afraid the people would stone them.

Please read the whole of Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 before meeting with your group. This sets the context for the event we are looking at. Peter and John’s previous arrest is given consideration in the study notes in this series Acts (2018).

When we consider ourselves as the “Body of Christ”, we make a shift from individualism to an intensely corporate understanding of ourselves and our place in God’s Kingdom. We also stop viewing ourselves ‘from a worldly point of view’ *Romans 12*, being open and receptive to the transformation that Resurrection power and the Holy Spirit make within the people of God:

2 Stop imitating the ideals and opinions of the culture around you, but be inwardly transformed by the Holy Spirit through a total reformation of how you think. This will empower you to discern God’s will as you live a beautiful life, satisfying and perfect in his eyes. Romans 12 TPT

It is not only our transformed-thought-inspired lives that demonstrate to the world that we are different, but our willingness to receive the life of the Kingdom of God which is found in our unity in Jesus.

People generally don’t bring the Kingdom of God with its miracles, wonders and hope; God’s people do.

There is therefore no division in the life of a person who is in the Body of Christ. There is no ‘secular and sacred’ there is no ‘church and home’ there is no ‘work and faith’. Rather, it is life. Life in all its fullest opportunity which is given by God.

Discuss the assertion that ‘Peter’s transformation and effectiveness as an Apostle was in his total surrender to the Gospel of Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit.’

**Now talk about what challenges this has for your own life.
Spend some time in prayer with and for each other.**

Peter and John had been imprisoned earlier (chapter 4). The Sadducees are thorough in their treatment of the Apostles with this new arrest which involves many more than just Peter and John, Acts 5:29. In response to this attack on God's mission and his apostles, Peter demonstrates that the work that they do is absolutely NOT circumscribed by earthly powers and authorities. God will not be limited by people.

Read through the underlined portions of our passage from Acts.

Discuss your experiences of God healing people supernaturally.

It is Peter's faith and the Holy Spirit revealing that faith which is attractive to them.

Talk about the power of the apostle's faith.

Talk about the response of God to the opposition.

What message does this send to:

The apostles...

The crowd who are seeking God's help...

You...

Notice how God meets the apostles in the place of their defeat and brings about his purposes. The Angel of the Lord (verse 19) is significant in the account. The angel is 'sent' and 'speaks instruction' to the apostles as well as bringing them out. This activity of God is relational and near. It is not distant and cold. We learn that God's heavenly authority can countermand earthly authority - even when it looks like earthly authority has the winning hand.

Why do you think God sent an angel to release the apostles?

The angel brings God's message, this is similar to the accounts of angelic messengers in Luke's opening chapters.

What confidence does it give when God's word of instruction are confirmed, especially in the face of opposition?

Religious controversy has long been an issue for the Church of God. Notice that the angel is clear about the apostles remaining true to the Gospel of Christ and that they don't take out the bits that would have made their message to the Sadducees. God's authority over his Gospel is affirmed in the Acts passage.

How does this passage speak to those who have calling to proclaim the good news?

How does it speak to those (the crowd and new believers) who are watching those who are leaders the Christian Faith? What do we take from this?

Reflection & Refreshment *25 minutes*

Gaukroger writes;

Luke is struck by the fact that the apostles are simply carrying on where Jesus left off. Verse 16 sounds amazingly like Luke 4:37, 40. By the power of the Holy Spirit they are continuing the ministry of their Master. P 57.

We ask ourselves what Luke is wanting us to notice in Acts. Chapter 2 of David Cook's little book; Introducing Acts is excellent in reminding us of our responsibility and calling.

There are two pieces that I would like you to prayerfully consider; the first is on p34;

The gospel is the world's only hope, and we must not be silenced. No matter how tough things are, the gospel will not be overcome. 'God buries his workmen, but carries on his work' (John Wesley)

Talk together about the implications and opportunities for you and your church.

Pray for the places and people for whom 'tough' has a greater meaning. Pray for the persecuted church. Pray for the life of the church in an increasingly hostile and consciously secular society.

Page 35, Cook makes the point:

To be apostolic today is to see the world and to respond to it as the apostles did. It is to imitate the apostolic character, to preach the apostolic gospel and to follow Jesus as part of God's plan and kingdom. To be committed to that plan and its fulfilment is always the mandate of the apostolic church.

This is in keeping with the line in the Apostle's Creed; "We believe in one holy and apostolic church..."

Talk about the apostolic nature of your church and how it can seek to be obedient to the call of God in all respects.

Confess where it has been imprisoned and seek God's release so that the gospel of Jesus can be proclaimed in the places where the people are.

Session 2 Teachers

As you Gather 5-10 minutes

Who was your favourite teacher? (School, Sunday School, or driving instructor or other learning experience). What made them stand out from all the others?

Pray & Worship 10 Minutes

Sing a hymn or a song which honours the way the Holy Spirit teaches us.

Pray

1. Acknowledge God's mystery and wonder.
2. Make statements of God's provision in all areas.
3. Invite the Holy Spirit to teach you something new.
4. For increased faith and understanding in preachers of the gospel.
5. For a raising up of evangelists and teachers.
6. For all who teach, in every context.

Read the Word 50 minutes

Acts 18:24-28 (NIV) Apollos

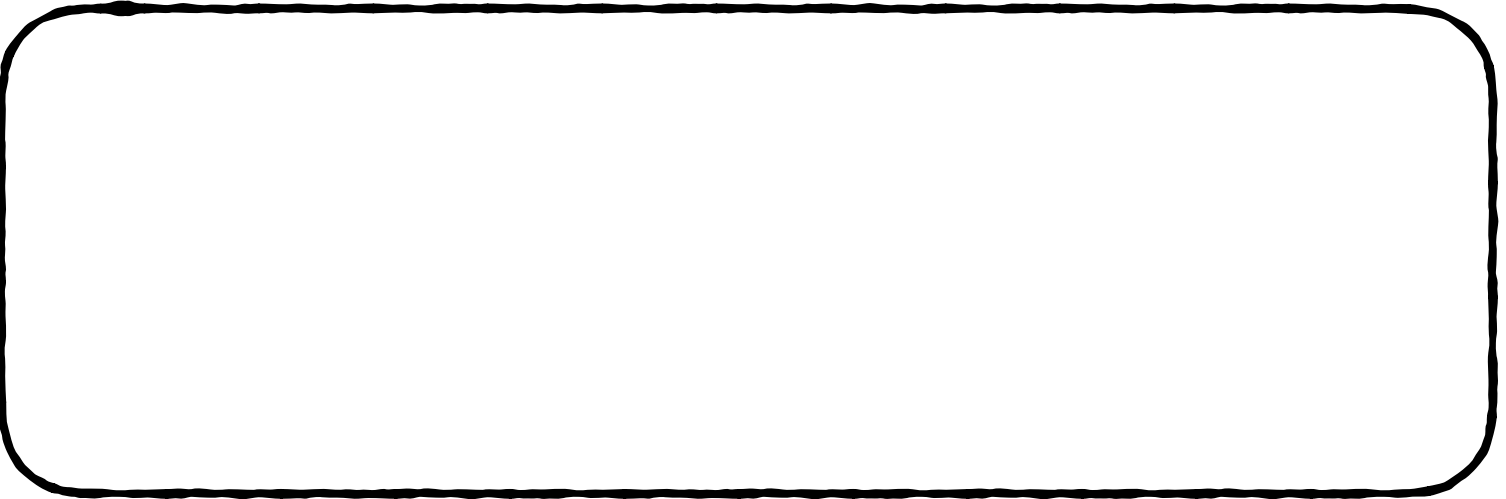
24 Meanwhile a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was a learned man, with a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures. 25 He had been instructed in the way of the Lord, and he spoke with great fervour and taught about Jesus accurately, though he knew only the baptism of John. 26 He began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they invited him to their home and explained to him the way of God more adequately.

27 When Apollos wanted to go to Achaia, the brothers and sisters encouraged him and wrote to the disciples there to welcome him. When he arrived, he was a great help to those who by grace had believed. 28 For he vigorously refuted his Jewish opponents in public debate, proving from the Scriptures that Jesus was the Messiah.

In verse 24, we note the introductory word, *meanwhile*. As the body of Christ, there is never a single story that tells everything, no one account of faith that sums everything up. Even when amazing testimonies are being told in one part of the Church, there is another part that is galvanising or getting prepared in some way. Luke wants us to take a break from Paul - who is on his third missionary journey - and to see that there is more. It is a

side journey as Luke lands us in Ephesus where Paul has left his missionary companions, the trusted church leaders, Priscilla and Aquila. Fernando observes that Alexandria in Egypt; “became the intellectual centre of Christianity and produced some of the greatest scholars of early Christianity (notably Clement and Origen). It had a large Jewish population, which included (until about AD 50) the famous philosopher Philo.” P 504

Have a look at the passage and note down all the significant information about Apollos.



The expansion of God’s Kingdom with the invitation to be part of it is not just down to one person.

Who are the teachers in the passage?

What Apollos taught and what he knew were not quite synchronised. He was a gifted and effective teacher who had an excellent grasp of the Hebrew Scriptures. Here, I am taking “he knew only the baptism of John” verse 25 - to mean that he had no personal experience of the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:5; Luke 3:16). This would limit the power his teaching as he would be short of the Spirit-fuelled desire to know and love God through Jesus Christ. We have listened to many sermons that are full of interesting information but stop short of igniting faith. We have listened to many sermons where faith oozes from every pore of the preacher and we long to be transformed within by the love and grace of Jesus.

Priscilla and Aquila are able to spend time with Apollos in their home to - as Fernando puts it - ‘complete him’ p 503. Under their gracious hospitality and away from the public eye, they are able to offer him the full picture until he is a full and capable missionary-teacher fuelled by the Spirit to

teach and contend for the Gospel in Achaia and eventually in Corinth (Acts 19:1).

Talk about what Priscilla and Aquila offer to the Church in their preparation of Apollos.

Why is it important to be discipled by wise leaders before setting out to teach others?

Priscilla and Aquila send Apollos onward with a reference. Why are credentials important when someone is offering to teach God's people?

Reflection & Refreshment *25 minutes*

Over refreshments, take a look at Cook's Introducing Acts, p 62.

Luke's purpose is to show the gospel reaching out, carried by Spirit-empowered messengers, under God's superintendence, to Jew, Samaritan and gentile. This is the melody of Acts: the fulfilment of God's plan to gather in his people from the far reaches of the earth. Christ is ascended, but he continues to direct his church and empower it through His Spirit.

The message of Acts is that of the Body of believers taking up their role and living it out with Spirit-fuelled passion and tenacity. We have already seen the difference that the Holy Spirit makes to Peter and the others in Jerusalem. Through Spirit-filled, gifted teachers such as Apollos, the gospel makes credible inroads among the Jewish people of Ephesus, Achaia and Corinth.

What challenges does this level at you and your group/church?

Are you willing to be taught - even though you are knowledgeable?

Are you open to being sent still further from your home in pursuit of the call God has placed upon you?

Discuss and pray together for the Holy Spirit to teach you and strengthen you in faith.

Session 3

The Presence of the Kingdom: Miracles

As you Gather 5-10 minutes

Share stories of unusual things that have happened to you.

Pray & Worship 10 Minutes

Sing a hymn or a song which celebrates the mystery and awe of God

Pray

1. Declarations of God's power.

(God, you brought your people out of Egypt ... etc)

2. That God will give you a fresh confidence in his presence.

3. For a reminder that your ministry and witness belongs to God.

4. That you will trust God in difficult times.

5. For a church that expects the impossible.

6. For opportunity to share testimony of God's saving love.

Read the Word 50 minutes

Acts 12:1-18 NIV

Peter

It was about this time that King Herod arrested some who belonged to the church, intending to persecute them. 2 He had James, the brother of John, put to death with the sword. 3 When he saw that this met with approval among the Jews, he proceeded to seize Peter also. This happened during the Festival of Unleavened Bread. 4 After arresting him, he put him in prison, handing him over to be guarded by four squads of four soldiers each. Herod intended to bring him out for public trial after the Passover. 5 So Peter was kept in prison, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him. 6 The night before Herod was to bring him to trial, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and sentries stood guard at the entrance. 7 Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him up. "Quick, get up!" he said, and the chains fell off Peter's wrists. 8 Then the angel said to him, "Put on your clothes and sandals." And Peter did so. "Wrap your cloak around you and follow me," the angel told him. 9 Peter followed him out of the prison, but he had no idea that what the angel was doing was really happening; he thought he was seeing a vision. 10 They passed the first and second guards and came to the iron gate leading to the city. It opened for them by itself, and they went through it. When they had walked the length of one street, suddenly the angel left him. 11 Then Peter came to himself and said, "Now I know without a doubt

that the Lord has sent his angel and rescued me from Herod's clutches and from everything the Jewish people were hoping would happen."
12 When this had dawned on him, he went to the house of Mary the mother of John, also called Mark, where many people had gathered and were praying. 13 Peter knocked at the outer entrance, and a servant named Rhoda came to answer the door. 14 When she recognised Peter's voice, she was so overjoyed she ran back without opening it and exclaimed, "Peter is at the door!" 15 "You're out of your mind," they told her. When she kept insisting that it was so, they said, "It must be his angel." 16 But Peter kept on knocking, and when they opened the door and saw him, they were astonished. 17 Peter motioned with his hand for them to be quiet and described how the Lord had brought him out of prison. "Tell James and the other brothers and sisters about this," he said, and then he left for another place. 18 In the morning, there was no small commotion among the soldiers as to what had become of Peter.

This is the third time that Peter has been imprisoned. Now, however, there is evidence of the persecution of Christians resulting in their death (verses 1-3). What is notable is that the church believes in the power of prayer and the power of God to release the captives. Herod is looking for the approval of the people, the Christians are looking to God for approval.

**Talk about the significance of the church being at prayer.
Why might they be encouraged to do this? Verse 5.**

John Stott points out;

Here then are two communities, the world and the church arrayed against each other, each wielding an appropriate weapon. On the one side was the authority of Herod, the power of the sword and the security of the prison. On the other side, the church turned to prayer, which is the only power which the powerless possess. Pp 208-9

Talk about the power of prayer and how we do not belong to the earth when we pray.

Discuss why and how prayer makes the church powerful.

In Acts, Luke continues to demonstrate the power of God for salvation in the lives of God's faithful people. Peter's release is significant because on 3 separate occasions, he was saved from jail. Firstly, in Acts 4, he and John were released by the Sanhedrin and cautioned. The second time, in Acts 5, Peter and the apostles are granted release by an angel of the Lord. Each time, the resolution to continue the mission of Jesus is deepened and on this third occasion, even Peter's stay in jail is shored up in case of escape

with guards being present in the room and two chains as well as sentries on duty.

The church is encouraged that God is with them through evidence of his kingdom being at work despite the vicious opposition.

When are you at your most confident as a disciple?

The presence of God's kingdom is evident as we see the Church and the angel having the same purpose. Just as in our earlier study, there could be argument for a 'sympathetic guard' releasing Peter, or the use of bribery on Peter's part to escape the cell. However, this seems a stretch as Peter is mystified by the goings on for a good while - (verses 9-11) and the appearance of the 'light' in verse 7.

Why do you think there is scepticism around 'the miraculous'?

Talk about how you deal with your own scepticism

And other peoples...

Look at the work of the angel in the miracle.

What do the angel's actions teach:

Peter

Herod and the authorities

Rhoda

The church who are at prayer in Jerusalem

You and your church

Reflection & Refreshment *25 minutes*

Over refreshment, talk together about Rhoda. She is the one who answers the door to Peter after 'recognising his voice'.

What is significant about her response to Peter's arrival?

Talk about the church's response to Rhoda's witness regarding Peter's release. What do we learn from it. How does it caution us?

Pray that you have the faith to trust in God.

Pray for an opportunity to speak about salvation and answered prayer to those who are sceptical.

Pray for church leaders and those who lead the church in prayer, that they may be confident in the presence of God's Kingdom in their ministry.

The Holy Spirit: Helping

~ a mini-study ~

Acts 9:26-30 Barnabas

The Holy Spirit assists the body of Christ in all the body's missional and evangelistic tasks. In this account of Paul's entry into the church, we see how the Holy Spirit prepares Barnabas to overcome the prevailing fear that many believers still had and to help him in his ministry by being his advocate.

It is important that Paul becomes a member of the church and that the church receives him. Barnabas, the 'son of encouragement' is able to enable that engagement with the church to take place.

Who are the people who helped you to engage with the local church?

Or who helped your transition into adulthood within the local church?

In the lecture, we looked at the nature of church being a body, and Paul too needed to find his place within that body and what his role might be. It is necessary for the mission of God that Paul be accepted and given a good reference by the Church in Jerusalem.

Think about the importance of having a good reference and how that opens doors for you. Sometimes those references are the people you associate with, the words people speak about you and the things they will put in writing.

Barnabas' role in the body is to be a helper and encourager within the body of Christ. He will accompany Paul throughout much ministry over many years. Being a helper is not to be despised or looked down on, for without their helper, the person who is well-known is not able to fulfil their calling.

Look back at the image of the Body in 1 Corinthians 12:12-31. Pray through the different gifts and roles with which the Holy Spirit gifts the church.

It feels as though Barnabas opens a window through which the life the Holy Spirit is able to blow. Barnabas is sent from Jerusalem to Antioch to encourage the church there, with great effectiveness and then goes to find Paul who was sent by the church to Tarsus when his life was threatened by the Greeks in Jerusalem.

In 11:24 we read that Barnabas "was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith". Remind yourself why being full of the Holy Spirit and Faith is necessary to the missional purposes of God.

The Holy Spirit is to be trusted as our helper and guide. This is to be valued in the people who display these gifts within the body.

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Celebrating the Diamond Anniversary Year of
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