

Group discussion notes based on Acts 2, 4 and 8 and Dan's talk from 7/6/20

Read Acts 2.42-47

Here's a description of what the 3000 new believers did in the days following Pentecost. Which word or phrase stands out to you? Why?

Read it through the lens of our Up / In / Out discipleship triangle. What do you notice?

It doesn't take long for the first crisis to strike the first church. Peter and John are briefly imprisoned, then told to stop speaking about Jesus (4.18, 21).

If you'd been in their shoes (or one of the new converts who heard what had happened to Peter and John), what do you think you would have done?

Read Acts 4.23-35

Read this through the lens of our discipleship triangle again. What do you notice?

After a few more chapters, another crisis strikes the church. Stephen is martyred, people are imprisoned and believers are scattered (7.57 – 8.3)

If you'd been in their shoes, what do you think you'd have done now?

Read Acts 8.4-8

Philip is presented as one example amongst many of how those believers actually responded.

Dan's encouragement to us was to look for opportunities in the midst of this crisis, just as the first Christians did. And to make sure that we use this opportunity to 'go deeper, grow closer and reach further.'

Grow closer

How has this pandemic (or a previous time of adversity in your life) forced you to grow closer to other Christians?

What would help you grow closer still?

Are there others in the congregation who are more (spiritually / emotionally) isolated than you? What could you do to grow closer to them?

Reach further

Why do you think those who wouldn't ordinarily come to church services seem to be more open spiritually at the moment?

What opportunities (if any) have you had over the last 2 months to 'reach further' with the good news of Jesus?

For most of us, it's easier to serve people in need, or listen to their woes, than it is to actively speak about our hope in Jesus. In what ways could you 'give a reason for the hope that we have' (1 Peter 3.15)

[They prayed ...] "Enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. Stretch out your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus." After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly. (Acts 4.29-31). Dare you pray like that?!