

# Discipling new believers

## discussion guide

based on **Acts 11.19-30** (Linked to sermon of 18/6/17)  
which can be accessed at [www.stjamesbythepark.org/current-sermon-series](http://www.stjamesbythepark.org/current-sermon-series)

Intro: Who or what helped you most when you were a new Christian?

Read Acts 11.19-30

Dan suggested 4 elements of a nurturing environment for new Christians which together make a NEST:

Encouragement – Barnabas (a nickname meaning 'son of encouragement') encouraged them to remain true to the Lord with all their heart (v 23; see also 14.22, 18.23, 20.2). Biblical encouragement points people to God and his faithfulness even through tough times.

When have you most appreciated encouragement from others?

Who could you encourage at the moment? How?

Example – in v27-30, Barnabas showed the new believers how to respond to prophecy (by responding to it actively, not passively) and how to be generous (see also 4.36-37). Share a time when someone has inspired you to live differently by the power of their example.

Think of someone (younger in the faith?) who's facing a challenge they haven't met before, but you have. (It could be related to work / home life / church life etc.) How could you draw alongside them and set an example for them to aspire to?

Stamp of approval – in v23, Barnabas (as an official representative of church HQ – see also 8.14-17, 11.1-3) is glad with what he sees (evidence of the grace of God), even though much of their church life would have looked different and possibly wrong to him.

Imagine someone from a very different background begins to explore faith with us on a Sunday or through one of our ministries. How could you look for evidence of the grace of God in them? What would be a good way to deal with your frustrations of what looks 'wrong' to you about how they're engaging with church?

Teaching – in v25-26, Barnabas recruits their former persecutor (see v19 and 8.1-3) as the new teaching pastor!

Draw up a curriculum for what you would want a new Christian to be taught.

How could you help teach some of those things to new believers?

Encouragement, Example, Stamp of approval, Teaching ... what else would you add as essential elements of a good nurturing environment for new Christians?

Up: How hungry are you to grow and mature as a Christian at the moment?

In: Established believers need this NEST as well in order to keep growing as disciples. What changes could you make to your group to help you create this NEST for each other?

Out: Think of a mission-focused area of church life that you're involved in. What could a NEST look like in that environment?