

Acts Series

A Sending Church

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

SUNDAY 8 November 2026

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GETTING STARTED

After Stephen's death, believers scattered by persecution reached Antioch, and some began telling Greeks the good news about Jesus (**Acts 11:19–21**). Jerusalem sent Barnabas, who **"saw what the grace of God had done"** and was glad (**11:23**). He brought Saul to Antioch, and for a whole year they taught the church. It was there that the disciples were first called Christians (**11:26**).

Antioch, a Roman city, was about to become the first church of its kind as the largely Jewish, Jerusalem-based community of believers moved towards becoming **a multi-ethnic, international movement that sent missionaries to the Gentiles.**

- Barnabas saw what the grace of God had done. Where have you seen God's grace at work recently?

- What do you think makes a church a "sending church"?

INTO THE WORD

In **Acts 13:1–5**, the leaders in Antioch are worshipping and fasting when the Holy Spirit says, **"Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."** After more prayer and fasting, they lay hands on them and send them off. **Antioch sent its best.**

In each city they go to the synagogue first. Saul, now known as Paul, and Barnabas are rejected by some, so they turn to the Gentiles: **"I have made you a light for the Gentiles"** (**13:47**). The gospel is for **everyone, everywhere.**

On the way home (**Acts 14:21–28**) they strengthen the disciples, appoint elders in each church and gather the Antioch church to report how God had **"opened a door of faith to the Gentiles."** Sending also meant hearing the stories that came back.

- Why do you think prayer and fasting were part of how Antioch decided who to send?

- In **14:21–23** the pattern is preach, strengthen, appoint and commit. Which of these does our church do well, and which could we grow in?

GOING DEEPER

Their journeys continue through Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, Corinth and Ephesus. New churches spring up as **"the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power"** (**19:20**).

In **Acts 20:17–38**, Paul says goodbye to the Ephesian elders: **"I consider my life worth nothing to me; my only aim is to finish the race and complete the task… of testifying to the good news of God's grace"** (**20:24**). They weep, knowing they will not see him again.

That is the cost of sending: **we send our best.** Yet this is how the kingdom grows. A sending church prays, fasts, equips, releases and sends, and it takes **the whole body of Christ.** Church planting is an expression of the kingdom, as new life springs up everywhere.

- Who has God placed in your life that you could equip and release?

- If we are to be a sending church, what would it look like for you to play your part in the kingdom advancing? What giftings and abilities do you bring to the table?

Pray

Lord Jesus, thank you that your good news is for everyone, everywhere. Holy Spirit, speak to us as we worship and pray, and show us who you are setting apart. Give us open hands to send our best, and hearts that count our lives as nothing compared with finishing the race you have given us. Make us a church that plants, equips and sends, until new life springs up all around us. Amen.