

# Sermon Discussion Guide, Acts 1:1-15

May 21



PRAYING Regularly

## Getting Started- Life Updates, Prayer Requests & Opening Question (15 min)

- Anything to share about personal events in the past week? About follow-ups from last Sunday's meeting on "Cultivating Love?"
- Are there any joys or concerns that you would like to share with the group for the closing prayer time or for group members to hold in prayer during the week? (please note them below for later)

Opening Question: How would you define what prayer is? What has your experience with personal prayer been like so far?

## Review the Sermon (15 min)

Would a volunteer please read aloud the sermon scripture below, Acts 1:1-15. Know that it is ok to skip some questions below in order to manage the time for discussions in each section.

In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach <sup>2</sup> until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. <sup>3</sup> After his suffering, he presented himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. <sup>4</sup> On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. <sup>5</sup> For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with <sup>[b]</sup> the Holy Spirit." <sup>6</sup> Then they gathered around him and asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" <sup>7</sup> He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. <sup>8</sup> But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

<sup>9</sup> After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. <sup>10</sup> They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. <sup>11</sup> "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven." <sup>12</sup> Then the apostles returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day's walk <sup>[c]</sup> from the city. <sup>13</sup> When they arrived, they went upstairs to the room where they were staying. Those present were Peter, John, James and Andrew; Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew; James son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. <sup>14</sup> They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers. <sup>15</sup> In those days Peter stood up among the believers (a group numbering about a hundred and twenty)

- If you had to give a one-minute summary of the sermon message this week, what would you say?

- Why do you think the time of Jesus' appearances on earth after the resurrection needed to come to a close after 40 days?
- How do you think the disciples were feeling at the time of Jesus' ascension? Why do you think angels were apparently needed to spur them along?
- What do you think the disciples might have understood Jesus' promises to mean in verses 4, 5 and 8?
- Why do you think the disciples chose not to just wait for something to happen in Jerusalem, but also "joined together constantly in prayer" in the upper room?
- How were these acts of obedience and prayer together foundational for the day of Pentecost that came several days later?
- How is our prayers significant toward what God may want to do here at Columbia Methodist Church?

### **Other Related Scriptures (10 min)**

Would a volunteer please read aloud Philippians 4: 4-9.

- How does Paul's background of suffering for serving Christ and his imprisonment at the time of writing this scripture add weight to this charge given to the followers of Christ to "Rejoice in the Lord always?"
- What kind of relationship between anxiety and prayer is described in verse 6? How does that work?
- Even if we don't get what we pray for, what is the promise of verse 7 that we can count on? Anyone care to share about their experience with that?

### **Personalizing and Applying The Message (10 min)**

- As you reflect upon the sermon and the additional reading above, what are points of encouragement or challenge for you personally?
- When you find yourself in between appointments or in a time of waiting, how might you utilize such times for prayer?
- Aside from those in between times for prayer, are there particular times or locations that you could plan on for prayer this week even if it is only for 10 minutes each day?
- What forms of prayer might you consider trying this week? Using prepared prayers written by other Christians? Meditating on one or two verses of scriptures? Using doodle art as a visual expression of things you are placing in God's hands this week? Singing or reading the words of a favorite hymn? Other forms not listed here?

### **Witness & Closing Prayer (5-10 min)**

- One of the ways Christians can be a witness to those around them is to show loving concern for others and to offer to pray for them. Have you offered to pray for others you have been in conversation with before?
- Are you open to offering to pray for someone if that opportunity presented itself this week?
- The group leader or another volunteer may lead the group in prayer about the joys and concerns shared earlier in the meeting and others as well.