

THIS IS US

A SEVEN-WEEK GROUP STUDY THROUGH THE BOOK OF ACTS

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"This is Us"
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INTRODUCTION

Dear Life Group Member,

Why should I be in this group?

Life Groups are designed to help you experience the life to which God calls you by helping you **CONNECT** with other believers, **GROW** to be more like Christ, and make an **IMPACT** with the gospel.

Every time a group meets, they spend time connecting by building relationships, growing through a discussion-led Bible study, and making an impact by supporting each other through prayer and service. As a result, group members will experience growth, belonging, and care. A Life Group is your chance to pursue healthy relationships and spiritual growth. You cannot grow spiritually without connecting relationally.

How will this series help me?

In this 7-week Life Group series, we will explore the core building blocks upon which the first church was established. We will take a look at many verses throughout the book of Acts to discover the pattern of how God intended His church to thrive and to imagine what it could look like in the future.

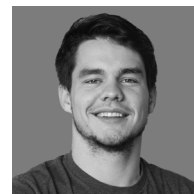
Through this study and discussion, we will uncover vital truths about what has made the church strong for 2,000 years. We will look into the hearts of men and women from church history who embodied the powerful ideals set out in Scripture and see how they found strength in their time. And we will dream of what God's church could look like for future generations.

What is my role in this group?

As you attend a weekend service and participate in this Life Group series, you will be equipped to live the life God desires for you. But ultimately, it comes down to you. Only you can share in your group, engage with what God is teaching you, and take action to allow Jesus to work in you and through you. Enjoy the encouragement and challenges over the next few weeks as God's grace abounds in your Life Group.

Sincerely,
Life Groups Team

MEET THE SPEAKERS



Caleb Walden

As the son of a pastor and a worship director, Caleb has grown up at Shepherd Church from the age of two. Though he never thought to pursue it, at a high school summer camp, he made the decision to go into full-time ministry and never looked back. He's a graduate of Ozark Christian College and now serves at Shepherd Church as a Youth Minister.

Adrianna Cervantes

Since a young age, Adrianna has sought to serve boldly wherever the Lord has planted her. She currently works full-time at Shepherd Church where she leads worship, teaches, and coordinates youth and young adult programs. She is currently pursuing her Masters in Ministry at Hope International University in Spiritual Formation.

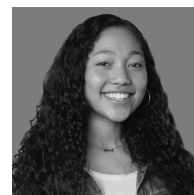
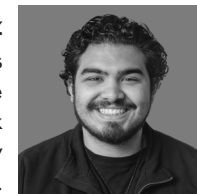


Lev Bure

Lev has attended Shepherd Church with his family since the age of 10. After graduating high school, he began a career playing semi-professional hockey in the North American Hockey League. After speaking at Shepherd Church, the Lord opened his eyes to ministry. He plans to attend college and pursue business, as well as ministry.

Derieck Lopez

Derieck was born in Miami, Florida, and moved to Los Angeles when he was 16. Shepherd Church has been his home for the last five years, where he has served in youth and young adult programs. He currently attends Ozark Christian College as a preaching major and seeks to enter full-time ministry as a preacher.

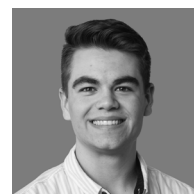
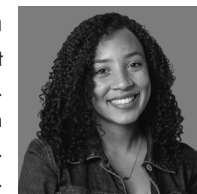


Noelani Jones

In 2018, Noelani graduated from Heritage Christian School, and later pursued a year of study at Churchome College in their biblical leadership program. She currently serves as a Shepherd Youth Intern. She is passionate about teaching young people about Jesus as well as creating environments where they can experience Jesus and His grace.

Callie Smith

Graduating from Heritage Christian School, Callie will attend Westmont College in the coming fall as a double major in Psychology and Religion. Her battle with mental illness has inspired her to pursue a Doctorate in Psychology, so that she can serve as an adolescent therapist or psychiatrist. She will also study religion as part of her call to ministry.



Michael Johnson

Like many of the speakers in this series, Michael grew up in the children's and youth programs at Shepherd Church. He currently attends Ozark Christian College where he serves during the school year as a weekend preacher at a church in Kansas. He has spent the summer serving an internship with Freedom Church. He plans to go into full-time ministry as a preacher.

OUTLINE FOR EACH SESSION

Every session is structured to reflect the values of the Life Groups Ministry: Connect, Grow, and Impact. Therefore, the sessions are designed to help each group member connect with others, grow to be more like Christ, and impact the community with the gospel.

CONNECT

The foundation for spiritual growth is an intimate connection with God and His family. This section of each session is designed to allow group members to get to know each other. You can do this by using the icebreaker questions provided, or by asking light, easy-to-answer questions of your own that invite involvement from everyone.

To begin the session, play the Session Video.

GROW

Together, you will process the video teaching you watched as a group. The focus is not gaining information, but on how we should live according to the Word of God. Each question is designed to apply insights from Scripture both practically and creatively, using your heart as well as your head. At the end of the day, our greatest aim is allowing the timeless truth from God's Word to transform us.

IMPACT

This section is about putting what you learned into action and applying the insights and principles in the lesson. We ask that all groups perform a community project together at some point during each series. Many groups have found that they were able to make significant contributions to the community as well as a lasting impact on people's lives for Christ. This is also a good time to make an impact in each other's lives through prayer. We encourage you to provide time, if the schedule allows, for people to share their prayer requests and praise reports at the end of each session.

LIFE GROUP AGREEMENT

Every group should put into words their shared values, expectations, and commitments. Such guidelines will help you avoid unspoken agendas and unmet expectations. We recommend that you discuss your guidelines in order to lay the foundation for a healthy group experience. Feel free to modify anything that does not work for your group.

We agree to the following values:

Clear Purpose To encourage and challenge each other to live the life that God has called us to live (John 10:10 and Matthew 28:18-20)

Group Attendance To give priority to the group meeting (call if I am going to be absent or late)

Safe Environment To help create a safe place where people can be heard and feel loved (no quick answers, snap judgments, or simple fixes)

Confidentiality To keep anything that is shared strictly confidential and within the group.

Spiritual Health To give group members permission to help me live a healthy, balanced spiritual life that is pleasing to God.

Welcome Newcomers To invite our friends who might benefit from this study and warmly welcome newcomers.

Building Relationships To get to know the other members of the group and pray for them regularly.

Session ONE

Bold Preaching

Patterned After the New Testament Church

Standing Up for Christ

The Importance of Baptism

Evangelism and Missions

Prayer and the Holy Spirit

Service and Leadership

Each session will begin with a few questions to help you connect with and get to know one another. Since this is your first time together (or since you may have new members), take a few minutes to make sure everyone knows each other.

If you were asked to speak in front of a crowd for an hour straight, what topic would you choose?

Who is your favorite preacher or speaker?

Play the *“Session One: Bold Preaching”* video.

What stood out to you in the video?

“Bold preaching is speaking about the love of Jesus despite the resistance you may feel or the consequences you may face.”

— Caleb Walden

In the following section, you will explore Bible passages and take part in discussion to apply insights from this session. If time is a concern, please choose just a few questions to discuss in your group.

Read Acts 20:17-21

1. From these verses, what qualities would define a bold preacher? On the other hand, what qualities would define a cowardly preacher?

2. During his address, the Apostle Paul states he never hesitated to preach anything that would be helpful. In our world today, what reasons might cause us to hesitate to preach the gospel?

Read Acts 17:1-9

3. According to these verses, what was the center of Paul's message to the Jews in Thessalonica? Why would he choose this topic as the center of his message and not another?

4. Imagine that everything you say and everything you write on social media could be called your "message." If this were true, what would your listeners say is the center of your "message?"

5. In verses 6-7, we see the Jews complain that Paul's message brought trouble to the way things worked in Thessalonica. How has the gospel brought "trouble" to your life? How has the gospel solved "trouble" in your life?

Read Acts 17:16-31

6. During this sermon, Paul does not quote a single verse of Scripture or point to the Bible at all. Why would Paul avoid talking about Scripture to this audience in Athens? In what situations might we avoid using Scripture to preach the gospel message?

7. How did Paul make a personal connection with the people of Athens during his sermon? Why would it be important for a preacher to connect personally with people who are listening?

8. If the Apostle Paul preached a sermon directly to you, and it was a message you needed to hear, what would be its subject?

DEEPER STUDY QUESTIONS

Read Acts 28:17-31

9. Paul was ultimately executed in Rome for preaching the gospel. Why would the Romans consider Paul's preaching a threat, so much so that they needed to take his life? What threat does Christian preaching pose to the world at large today?

10. The Greek word for "boldly" in this verse is *parresia*, which can mean either "to speak freely" or "to speak publicly." Why has the act of public speaking—standing in front of people and preaching freely from the heart—been such an important cornerstone for the church for 2,000 years?

"Let this be to you the mark of true gospel preaching—where Christ is everything, and the creature is nothing; where it is salvation all of grace, through the work of the Holy Spirit applying to the soul the precious blood of Jesus."

— Charles Spurgeon

Charles Spurgeon (1834-1892)

Charles Spurgeon was not your typical London preacher. He didn't dress in the stuffy wardrobe that pastors and ministers typically wore in that city. He didn't speak with confusing turns of speech, and he didn't make his listeners puzzle out the meaning of his words.

He dressed like one of the common people. He spoke like one of the common people. He carried himself with an authenticity and sincerity that connected to the common people. And he preached directly to the hearts of the common people.

In a city that was dying spiritually by the day, Charles Spurgeon drew crowds of thousands upon thousands to hear his sermons and messages. As a result, many were baptized and saved due to his ministry of preaching. In fact, so great was the desire to hear him preach, that his church was forced to construct a new building to accommodate them all. It was called the Metropolitan Tabernacle, a marvel of a facility that could seat over 5,000 people at one time.

Spurgeon enjoyed great success as a preacher, but he also endured intense scrutiny. The religious community in London at that time did not agree with his practices and style of preaching, often calling him "vulgar" and "in bad taste." In response, Spurgeon said this, "My firm conviction is that we have had quite enough polite preachers, and many require a change. God has owned me among the most degraded and off-casts. Let others serve their class; these are mine, and to them I must keep."

Spurgeon also faced many health issues including kidney inflammation, gout, rheumatism, and neuritis. At times, he could barely find the strength to walk up to his pulpit to preach. He also suffered from long bouts of depression and anxiety. This, coupled with the extreme workload the man faced day in and day out, proved to be a daunting hurdle to his preaching ministry. But Spurgeon never gave up. He continued to preach the word with power.

On one occasion, while Spurgeon was testing the acoustics in a building where he would preach the following day, he announced aloud the words of John 3:16. One of the workmen in that building heard Spurgeon's voice and the truth of the gospel message and gave his life to Christ that very day. For us, Charles Spurgeon will always serve as a standard for the power of bold preaching.

Reference — Dan Harmon, *Charles Spurgeon: Prince of Preachers* (Uhrichville: Barbour Books, 1997).

One of the core principles in Life Groups is to have an impact in your community and in the church. In the following section, we have given you some ideas for how you can put the word of God into practice.

Group: For our first week in this series, we want to try a new exercise to get you to use your creativity and to think a little more like a preacher. We call it "The Preaching Game."

This is how it works: Each person in the group takes a turn and picks a random item that they see around the room. Then, each person uses that item as a symbol or a metaphor to talk about the gospel or about Jesus or about anything related to the Bible.

Here is an example: You might notice a clock hanging on the wall. You might say, "Anytime I see on a clock on the wall I think about how much time I have left until I need to go home. But when I think about how much time I have left until I return to my heavenly home, there is no clock! So, I need to make use of the time I have right now and make sure I am spending it wisely in service of God." Or you might talk about how clocks need to be adjusted every now and then so that they're telling the time, and that reading God's Word helps you adjust your life so you're "ticking" together with God. Or you might go in a totally different direction!

Don't worry about trying to sound wise or clever or anything like a preacher. And definitely don't worry about getting "the right answer." There is no right answer! The value is found in thinking creatively about how to make a personal connection with others to tell them about Jesus.

Individual: Everyone's life is a kind of sermon, a story from which we can learn about God and about ourselves. In many church circles, your personal story about how you came to faith in God is called a "testimony," and it is one of the most powerful tools for sharing the gospel with others.

During this week, sit down with a piece of paper and a pen, and spend time writing your personal story about how you came to faith in God or about how you struggle with your faith or about how you've been challenged in your life. What lessons might we learn about God or about Scripture from your life? What encouragement might we find from your walk with God? What challenges might we hear from your spiritual journey?

How can your story personally connect another person to God?

PRAYER AND PRAISE

This is a place where you can write each other's prayer requests and make notes when God answers prayer. Pray for each other's requests out loud together as a group. If you're new to group prayer, you may pray silently.

Prayer Requests

Praise Reports

Session TWO

Bold Preaching

Patterned After the New Testament Church

Standing Up for Christ

The Importance of Baptism

Evangelism and Missions

Prayer and the Holy Spirit

Service and Leadership

Each session will begin with a few questions to help you connect with and get to know one another.

Are you the kind of person who likes to do things according to a familiar pattern or who likes to come up with new ways? Share a quick example if time allows.

What is your favorite part of a church service?

Play the *“Session Two: Patterned After the New Testament Church”* video.

What stood out to you in the video?

“When a church has the same vision and the same goal, that church is unstoppable. And that’s the church the world needs.”

— Adrianna Cervantes

In the following section, you will explore Bible passages and take part in discussion to apply insights from this session. If time is a concern, please choose just a few questions to discuss in your group.

Read Acts 2:42-47

1. Compare the church described in this passage to the church we see today. What is still the same? What is different?

2. Why do you think the church should continue to devote itself to the pattern of the New Testament Church laid out in these verses? Why should the church continue practices that are nearly 2,000 years old?

3. Imagine a gathering of the believers described in these verses. What would you see? What kind of spirit would the members have? What kind of conversations would you hear?

4. In these verses, we see that the church shared a common ownership and had “everything in common.” Describe a time when you felt a unity, common spirit, and purpose with the church, or when you felt part of something bigger than just you.

Read Acts 20:7-12

5. In these verses, we see that the rhythm of the church was to meet together every Sunday. What is the difference between a rhythm of the church and a ritual of the church? Why is it important to keep the rhythm of attending church every week?

6. Share a part of your faith that has become a ritual or something you do while “going through the motions.” How can we transform a ritual back into a healthy, spiritual habit?

Read Acts 11:19-26

7. What was so unique about the church in Antioch that they would be called “Christians?” What else ought to be unique about “Christians,” that they should be different from anyone else?

8. How would the world describe a “Christian” today? What steps would you personally take to change the meaning of that word by today’s standards?

DEEPER STUDY QUESTIONS

Read Acts 9:1-2 & 24:14-16

9. One of the names the first believers in the church used to refer to themselves was “the Way.” Why do you think they adopted that specific name? What name might you have selected instead?

10. Why would anyone at that time say that “the Way” was a sect, or a branch, of the Jewish faith? If Paul did not view “the Way” as a branch of Judaism, then how did he view it?

“But men cannot give up their opinions, and therefore, they can never unite, says one. We do not ask them to give up their opinions—we ask them only not to impose them upon others. Let them hold their opinions, but let them hold them as private property. The faith is public property; opinions are, and always have been private property. Men have foolishly attempted to make the deductions of some great minds the common measure of all Christians.”

— Alexander Campbell

Alexander Campbell (1788 – 1866)

Alexander Campbell did not intend to revolutionize the church, but through his life and ministry, that is precisely what he did. Though he grew up as a Presbyterian, he quickly grew frustrated with the petty differences in theology and doctrine that divided churches and kept believers worshipping separately rather than together.

When Campbell travelled to America to join his father Thomas, who was also a preacher, he found that his father felt the same way as him about the frustrating differences dividing the body of Christ. His father Thomas had decided to use the Bible, and not man’s opinion, as the foundation upon which the church should be built. He famously declared: “Where the Scriptures speak, we speak; where the Scriptures are silent, we are silent.”

Alexander Campbell would travel on horseback throughout the Midwest and the South, preaching messages without dogmas or creeds. He would instead use the word of God as his guide. In a world of Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, Catholics, and many other denominations, Campbell argued that believers should be called “Christians,” like the name they had been given in Antioch in Acts 11:26.

Campbell found a kindred spirit in a fellow preacher named Barton Stone, a man who also believed that the church needed to get back to its roots found in Scripture. Together, they formed a network of independent churches that were committed to restoring the practices of the very first church described in the book of Acts. They were called the Christian Church.

The Christian Church, also known as the Restoration Movement, was dedicated to restoring the church back to the blueprint that had been laid out in the New Testament. With Campbell as its greatest champion, he committed to preaching sermons based on Scripture and not on doctrines man had devised.

Alexander Campbell was one of the forces behind the Second Great Awakening in the United States, and it was all because he called men and women back to the word of God, to follow the pattern that God had laid out for His church in the New Testament. For Campbell, there was only one way to unite the denominations back together, and that was by returning to the examples given to us in Scripture. We are here today in large part because Alexander Campbell decided to return to Scripture and restore the church to what God had originally built it to be.

Reference — Eva Jean Wrather, *Alexander Campbell: Adventurer in Freedom, A Literary Biography, Volumes I-II* (Fort Worth: TCU Press, 2005).

PRAYER AND PRAISE

Group: Get together as a group and spend some time without any agenda. You could barbecue. You could potluck. You could get together to watch a movie. You could plan a night of board games. You could schedule a trip to a nearby museum. You could meet up at a local taco truck.

Whatever you choose, the main goal is spending time together. There is no better way to get on the same page with others. Relax and simply enjoy one another.

Individual: As believers, we may often feel as if we're "going through the motions" when it comes to our faith. That is why we are providing an exercise you can practice any time you go to a church service, one that will help you stay present in the moment and engaged with what the Spirit is saying. We call it "Journaling Through Church," and all you need is a piece of paper and a pen.

Basically, the exercise is to write a journal entry during a worship service. While you are singing to God, take some time to write down some of the words that strike you or some thoughts that pass through your head. Take an opportunity to look at other worshippers and imagine what they are experiencing. As communion and offering is passed through the rows, jot down some thoughts about how the sacrifice of Jesus has impacted your life and about the gratitude you feel. Instead of taking traditional notes during the sermon, pay special attention to what you're thinking about and what you're feeling during the message and write it all down. As people come forward to make decisions, write about what you see and what you experience.

The purpose of the exercise is to break the monotony we can fall into during our worship with the Father and to bring ourselves into the present, to fully experience everything that God is sharing with us. You will be astounded at what you will learn about yourself and others when you break what has become a ritual, and transform it into a healthy spiritual rhythm.

This is a place where you can write each other's prayer requests and make notes when God answers prayer. Pray for each other's requests out loud together as a group. If you're new to group prayer, you may pray silently.

Prayer Requests

Praise Reports

Session THREE

Bold Preaching

Patterned After the New Testament Church

Standing Up for Christ

The Importance of Baptism

Evangelism and Missions

Prayer and the Holy Spirit

Service and Leadership

Each session will begin with a few questions to help you connect with and get to know one another.

What is a movie or a story you love that no one else seems to like?

Would you consider yourself a confrontational person or a person who avoids conflict?

Play the *“Session Three: Standing Up for Christ”* video.

What stood out to you in the video?

“The truly amazing thing is that all of the mockery, all of the violence, all of the attacks against the Christian faith have done nothing to stop the Gospel message and the church of Jesus Christ.”

— Lev Bure

In the following section, you will explore Bible passages and take part in discussion to apply insights from this session. If time is a concern, please choose just a few questions to discuss in your group.

Read Acts 4:1-22

1. Why do you believe the priests and Sadducees in Jerusalem were so threatened by what Peter and John were teaching? Why did they believe they needed to stop men who had worked an incredible miracle?

2. If you were the one standing before the 70 members of the Sanhedrin, what would you say? How would you defend your faith to those men?

3. In this story, the apostles turn their situation into an opportunity to preach the gospel. Describe a situation in your past where you could have turned an opportunity around in order to tell others about Jesus.

Read Acts 7:54-8:4

4. How could Stephen forgive the people who were wrongfully about to kill him?

5. According to Acts 8:4, what effect did persecution have on the church and on the gospel? Do you think persecution still has the same effect today?

6. If you were in charge of persecuting the church, how would you do it? How would you attempt to stop the message of Jesus Christ?

Read Acts 9:1-6

7. What kind of connection does Jesus have to believers who are being persecuted? How might this connection comfort you during times of trouble?

8. This story features a man who was transformed by God from one of the worst persecutors of the church to one of its greatest champions. Without using names, who is one person from your past who has opposed the faith but who shows great potential for the kingdom of God?

DEEPER STUDY QUESTIONS

Read Acts 19:23-41

9. How did Paul's preaching threaten Demetrius and the other silversmiths? What might this teach us about the source of persecution?

10. The author Luke adds a curious detail to this story in verse 32. He writes, "Most of the people did not even know why they were there." Why would he add this detail in a story about persecution?

"He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose."

— Jim Elliot

"There is nothing worth living for, unless it is worth dying for."

— Elisabeth Elliot

Jim Elliot (1927 – 1956) and Elisabeth Elliot (1926 – 2015)

Jim and Elisabeth Elliot met each other at Wheaton College during the middle of the 1940s. It was a wonderful time to study at Wheaton, a school that was quickly becoming the driving force behind a movement in Christianity, focused on reviving the church, winning the lost, and gaining the respect of the world. Billy Graham had just graduated from this school a couple years prior and was already drawing crowds at revivals where people could hear this refreshing take on the gospel message.

Jim and Elisabeth Elliot, too, were formed by this new movement in Christianity, and their hearts were drawn overseas. They eagerly desired to take the gospel to a people who had not heard it and to translate God's word for them into a language they could read. The Elliot's were told about a fierce tribe in Ecuador known as the Auca, who were in danger of being wiped out by the Ecuadorian government due to their violent history. The Elliot's felt the call to share the good news of God's love with these people in order to save them.

Jim Elliot, together with four other missionaries, made first contact with the Auca people in 1955, flying overhead in an airplane and lowering a bucket filled with gifts. In 1957, they met face to face for the first time, speaking with two women and a man named Nankiwi. As Nankiwi returned to camp, one of the other tribesmen was furious with him for meeting with the missionaries. In order to direct attention away from himself, he lied and said that the missionaries had attacked him.

The next day, the Auca tribesmen devised a plan of attack. They successfully speared all five missionaries to death, including Jim Elliot. When news of Jim's death reached the world, the Christian Church was awoken, and it moved full tilt into supporting missions all around the world. But everything that took place did not dissuade Jim's wife Elisabeth from sharing the gospel with these people. Over the next two years, she learned their language, and then returned to the tribe with her three-year-old daughter and a woman named Rachel Saint, whose husband Nate had also been killed alongside Jim. She lived among the Auca tribe for two years, building friendships in their villages and sharing the gospel with them.

After those two years, an incredible mission was born, carried on by Rachel Saint. And due to their work, many of those Aucas (which are today known as the Huaorani) turned to the Lord and were saved from their sins, including some of the men responsible for killing Jim Elliot and his four fellow missionaries.

Jim and Elisabeth Elliot provide for us an incredible example of the miracles that can happen when we stand up for Christ.

Reference — Elisabeth Elliot, *Shadow of the Almighty: The Life and Testament of Jim Elliot* (New York: Harper, 1958).

PRAYER AND PRAISE

Group: Each of us has at least one question about our faith that confuses or frustrates us. Maybe it's a doubt you have carried for some time or maybe it's simply something you're curious to know. However, we were never meant to carry those difficult questions and frustrations alone. In fact, one of the greatest advantages of belonging to a body of believers is that we can ask each other questions and discover the answers together.

Without signing your name, all of you will write down on a slip of paper one question that has caused you to doubt or struggle with your faith. Read the questions aloud. Over the week, each person in the group should do research for answers or should ask church leaders or trusted believers for how they would answer these tough questions.

The purpose of this exercise is to answer the call given to us by 1 Peter 3:15, to be prepared to give an answer to those who may challenge or question our faith. If you cannot come up with sufficient answers within a week, do not worry! Sometimes these questions will take months of struggling to answer. The key is that we walk together and share our doubts, so that we are prepared to stand against those who might challenge our faith.

Individual: We want to encourage all of our Life Group members to educate themselves concerning the struggle that many Christians are enduring around the world. The premier organization for learning more about the persecution Christians are facing is Open Doors, a ministry committed to tracking and serving believers who are living in hostile conditions.

On your own, visit opendoorsusa.org and click on the link at the top of the page that says "**WORLD WATCH LIST.**" If you scroll down on this page, you can see a list where Christian persecution is the fiercest in our world. Select one country on this list by clicking on it, and then spend time reading the Country Report and watching the videos attached. Make sure you check out the prayer prompts near the bottom of the page, and pray for our brothers and sisters who are standing up for Christ in harsh conditions.

Commit each day this week to read a story of Christians who are persecuted in the country you selected and pray on their behalf. Spend time putting yourself in their shoes, hearing what they might hear and, seeing what they might see while their faith is being challenged. In this way, we hope that every Life Group member becomes aware of the intense persecution against Christians happening around the world.

This is a place where you can write each other's prayer requests and make notes when God answers prayer. Pray for each other's requests out loud together as a group. If you're new to group prayer, you may pray silently.

Prayer Requests

Praise Reports

Session FOUR

Bold Preaching

Patterned After the New Testament Church

Standing Up for Christ

The Importance of Baptism

Evangelism and Missions

Prayer and the Holy Spirit

Service and Leadership

Each session will begin with a few questions to help you connect with and get to know one another.

What traditions did you grow up with in your family?

What kind of kid were you growing up?

Play the *“[Session Four: The Importance of Baptism](#)”* video.

What stood out to you in the video?

“Why is baptism important? Because it’s the moment your faith truly becomes yours and when you finally get to step out in faith and find out what God has called you to do.”

— Derieck Lopez

In the following section, you will explore Bible passages and take part in discussion to apply insights from this session. If time is a concern, please choose just a few questions to discuss in your group.

Read Acts 2:22-41

1. In these verses, the Bible says that the people were “cut to the heart?” What emotions do you think they were experiencing? What thoughts might have been going through their heads?

2. According to verse 38, what is the process of salvation? Why do you think Peter listed the steps in this order? Does the process of salvation always have to follow the order we find in Scripture here?

Read Acts 8:26-40

3. Why did the Ethiopian eunuch want to get baptized so quickly?

4. If you have been baptized, what was the turning point for you? What was your experience like? What tipped the scales toward you getting baptized?

Read Acts 10:44-48

5. If someone actually wanted to keep Cornelius and his household from being baptized, what reason would they give? What has stood in the way of you being baptized, either in the past or in the present?

Read Acts 16:25-34

6. Why do you think that Luke, the author of this story, included the detail about how the jailer washed the wounds of Paul and Silas? What might he have been hinting at?

7. In just a few hours, the Philippian jailer went from attempting to take his own life to finding eternal life through baptism. If you were the jailer in this story, what kind of emotions and thoughts would you have experienced?

8. Describe a time from your past where God dramatically shifted the course of your life. What happened? What changed?

DEEPER STUDY QUESTIONS

Read Acts 19:1-7

9. Why did Paul think that these men needed to be baptized a second time?

10. In what situation should a person be baptized again?

"I was once young and now I am old, but not once have I been witness to God's failure to supply my need when first I had given for the furtherance of His work. He has never failed in His promise, so I cannot fail in my service to Him."

— William Carey

William Carey (1761 – 1834)

William Carey has long been known as the father of the modern missionary movement. He spent 40 years as a missionary in India and also traveled far and wide to argue for the impact that sharing the gospel overseas can have. But he certainly did not start as a champion of the faith. He grew up in the English village of Paulerbury as a nominal Anglican, a young man who cared nothing for the gospel.

As he apprenticed in a cobbler's shop, he would debate the Bible and ideas with another apprentice named John Warr, who was known as a Dissenter. At that time, Dissenters were those who rejected the traditions and practices of the Anglican Church that did not line up with what Scripture taught. They were considered radicals, and John Warr was certainly a radical Christian according to the standards of England. William Carey almost always won the debates against John Warr, but he could not help but shake many of the words his fellow apprentice spoke to him. He would often walk home with conscience stinging.

About two years into his apprenticeship, he received a coin as a gift from the local ironmonger. He tried to buy a treat with it, but discovered the coin was counterfeit. Carey went to the shop of his teacher and swapped out the counterfeit coin with a real one, and then later lied and blamed the presence of the counterfeit coin on one of the customers who had come to the shop that day. However, Carey's master discovered the truth. Wracked with guilt and sorrow for what he had done, Carey stopped attending church services, and he instead started going to prayer meetings. It was at these meetings he inevitably found the grace and forgiveness of Jesus Christ. William Carey turned his entire life around and was eventually baptized.

It would be impossible to list all of Carey's accomplishments here, for there are many. He lived in India for 41 years as a missionary, laying the groundwork for the gospel to take hold in that country. He founded the Serampore University, the very first degree-awarding university in India. He established schools where children were given an education. He fought to end the Hindu practice of sati, where a widow would sacrifice her life after the death of her husband.

He translated the Bible into Bengali, Oriya, Assamese, Marathi, Hindi, and Sanskrit. He singlehandedly reformed the way that Christian missions was conducted in the world, and inspired many missionaries after him to go to greater lengths to befriend and help the people they were trying to save.

William Carey stands to us as an example of what can happen when someone goes through the waters of baptism and takes a hold of their faith.

Reference — S. Pearce Carey, *William Carey* (Frome: Butler and Tanner, 1923).

PRAYER AND PRAISE

Group: With your remaining time, think of some people you can invite to your Life Group or to a church service. As followers of Jesus, many or all of you have already been baptized, but there are still many who need to make that decision. Brainstorm and pray about those whom you and your group could invite to your Life Group or to a weekend service, so that they can know salvation and take the first step toward eternity with God.

As a group, have each person grab a pen and paper and list out names of people who do not yet know Christ. You can use the following prompts in order to come up with names:

- Family members, immediate or extended
- Neighbors, classmates, teammates
- Friends or acquaintances
- Co-workers, bosses, employees
- Gym members, Fellow hobbyists, Coffee Shop Regulars

Select three names from this list and commit to invite them to a weekend service or to a Life Group meeting before the series is over.

Individual: During this session, we've discussed how baptism is the moment when our faith truly belongs to us. But baptism is only the first step in a journey toward becoming like Christ. We are not meant to remain as we are now. Instead, we are called to move forward into maturity.

On your own, take time this week to sit down with a pen and paper. At the top of the page, write this question: What is the next step in my journey toward Christ?

Take some time to assess where you're at in your spiritual walk and where the next milestone lies on your journey ahead. Make a plan for how you will walk forward to that next spiritual milestone.

If you're just at the beginning of your journey to Christ, head to shepherdchurch.com/101 to get started.

Maybe it's time for you to join one of our upcoming Encounters in order to have a life-altering weekend with God. Perhaps you need to join our School of Discipleship in order to grow deeper in your faith and to learn even more about God's Word. If that's true, head to shepherdchurch.com/encounters to learn more.

Or it could be God is calling you to lead a Life Group on your own. You can learn more about that at shepherdchurch.com to see how you can impact the spiritual lives of others at Shepherd Church. Regardless of what is next for you, it's essential that we move forward in our faith, so that we can continue to grow to be more like Christ.

This is a place where you can write each other's prayer requests and make notes when God answers prayer. Pray for each other's requests out loud together as a group. If you're new to group prayer, you may pray silently.

Prayer Requests

Praise Reports

Session FIVE

Bold Preaching

Patterned After the New Testament Church

Standing Up for Christ

The Importance of Baptism

Evangelism and Missions

Prayer and the Holy Spirit

Service and Leadership

Each session will begin with a few questions to help you connect with and get to know one another.

What product under \$100 do you believe every person should own?

If you have ever traveled outside of the country, where did you go?

Play the *“Session Five: Evangelism and Missions”* video.

What stood out to you in the video?

“Even in the chaos, people’s souls are craving to know contentment, love, forgiveness, and joy. And we as Christians have the good news, and we have been commanded to share it with the world.”

— Noelani Jones

In the following section, you will explore Bible passages and take part in discussion to apply insights from this session. If time is a concern, please choose just a few questions to discuss in your group.

Read Acts 1:1-11

1. How would you define the word “witness?” Why are people who tell others about Jesus known as “witnesses?”

2. When Jesus says “the ends of the earth,” what place popped into your mind? What place would you consider to be the most difficult place to take the gospel? What would your first step be to take the gospel there?

Read Acts 2:1-12

3. During the festival of Pentecost, Jewish men and women from all over the world would flock to Jerusalem to celebrate before returning home. Why would the Holy Spirit choose this occasion to begin the ministry of sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ?

4. In this story, the Holy Spirit empowered the apostles to overcome language barriers in order to share the gospel. What other barriers might prevent us from telling others about the love of Christ? In what ways can the Holy Spirit help us overcome them?

Read Acts 8:4-8

5. Judeans and Samaritans did not get along. What do you think Philip experienced when he brought the gospel to a group of people who may have distrusted or even despised him?

6. In verse 8, we see that there was great joy in Samaria from the spreading of the gospel. Explain a time when you witnessed the joy of a person who had come to know Jesus. How did that inspire or encourage you?

Read Acts 16:11-15

7. Typically, when Paul began his ministry in a Gentile city, he would try to find the local Jewish synagogue first. However, there was no synagogue in Philippi. Imagine you are the apostle Paul. How would you feel entering a city that is completely foreign to you in order to share the gospel?

8. The Lord ultimately provided Paul with an opportunity to share the good news in this story. Describe a time in your life when God provided you with an opportunity to share your faith. What was the outcome?

DEEPER STUDY QUESTIONS

Read Acts 13:1-12

9. What is the role of fasting, prayer, and being “set apart” in this story? How do these practices connect to the work of evangelism?

10. In verse 12, you might notice it was the teaching of the Lord that amazed Sergius Paulus more than the miracle he had witnessed. What makes the gospel more powerful and miraculous than the supernatural act of making a man blind?

“Whenever, wherever, however You want me, I’ll go. And I’ll begin this very minute. Lord, as I stand up from this place, and as I take my first step forward, will You consider this is a step toward complete obedience to You? I’ll call it a step of yes.”

— Brother Andrew

Brother Andrew (1928 — Present)

Andrew van der Bijl was born in the town of Witte in the Netherlands in 1928, but many among the Christian Church know him simply as “Brother Andrew.” He is the founder of Open Doors, a ministry that supports missionaries and Christians all across the globe, especially in countries where believers face persecution.

But Brother Andrew’s impact goes far beyond that. He was a Christian missionary famous for smuggling Bibles into communist countries during the Cold War.

As a child, Andrew was quite the rascal and often went on adventures. When Germany invaded his country during World War II, he would pretend to be a soldier and actually play pranks on the Nazi forces occupying his town. As he grew, he became a commando in the Dutch Army. He was shot through the ankle at the age of 20, and while bedridden and dealing with the emotional turmoil of battle, he latched onto the Bible. He decided to become a missionary.

Brother Andrew travelled beyond the Iron Curtain into the communist countries of Poland and Czechoslovakia, so he could see how Christians there were forced to practice their faith in secret and avoid capture with their Bibles. These trips emboldened Andrew, so much so, he travelled beyond the Iron Curtain in a Volkswagen Beetle that was loaded up with hidden Bibles, in order to share the gospel in communist countries where it was forbidden.

On many occasions while crossing the border, Brother Andrew would actually leave forbidden Christian materials and even Bibles out in the open for communist soldiers to see. For him, this was a show of trust in the Lord, that God would protect him. He often prayed in these moments, “Lord, make seeing eyes blind.” Time and time again, Brother Andrew would go unnoticed and unpunished for the work he was doing for the Lord.

During his ministry, Brother Andrew has shared the gospel and the word of God in communist Russia, in communist China, in war-torn Lebanon, and in many Muslim countries in the Middle East. His work provided the foundation for Open Doors, a ministry that supports persecuted Christians around the world. His story is told in his book *God’s Smuggler*, a book that has sold 10 million copies and has been published in 35 languages.

Brother Andrew is an example to us of how God can use a courageous person to take the gospel across borders to those who desperately need to hear it.

Reference — Brother Andrew, *God’s Smuggler* (Grand Rapids: Chosen Books, 1967).

PRAYER AND PRAISE

Group: For this group activity, imagine that together you are planning to be missionaries in another country. Have one member of the group find a list of every country in the world and select one at random. Once your country is selected, come up with a plan together for how you would share the gospel to the people of that country.

What is the language spoken there? What is the main religion? Would you select a large city for your ministry or a small town? How would you make a personal connection to the people in that country to show them the love of God? Would you meet together in one building or would you meet in homes? What persecution might you face in that country? What would your role be as a missionary? Would you translate the Bible into the language of the people or is there already a translation available?

The more you get into specific details with this exercise, the better. The purpose of this game is to envision the kind of work and preparation that missionaries must go through in order to prepare to share the gospel across borders and boundaries. If this exercise excites you, then maybe you should consider a life of sharing the Good News to a different culture!

Individual: We want to encourage all of our Life Groups to connect with one of our Global Partners, men and women who are taking the gospel all around the world. These Global Partners are an extension of Shepherd Church, sharing the good news of Jesus with those who may not have an opportunity to hear it. Our hope is that you would take part in what God is doing in our world through Shepherd Church.

On your own, visit lifegroups.org/GlobalPartners for a list of all the Global Partners that Shepherd Church is supporting.

The best way you can bless our Global Partners is with your time and prayers. We encourage you to sign-up to receive their newsletters, follow them via social media, and email or hand-write letters to encourage them in their ministry. These regular communications from home are uplifting and crucial for many of these missionaries. Through our support, Global Partners are reminded that they are loved, known, and sustained by the work God is accomplishing through them.

Shepherd Church is one of their many financial supporters, along with other churches and individuals. We ask that you pray about your individual participation. Your encouragement, friendship, and prayers make a significant difference, and any financial support could alter the eternities of men and women all around the world.

This is a place where you can write each other's prayer requests and make notes when God answers prayer. Pray for each other's requests out loud together as a group. If you're new to group prayer, you may pray silently.

Prayer Requests

Praise Reports

Session SIX

Bold Preaching

Patterned After the New Testament Church

Standing Up for Christ

The Importance of Baptism

Evangelism and Missions

Prayer and the Holy Spirit

Service and Leadership

Each session will begin with a few questions to help you connect with and get to know one another.

If you could choose any person in the world and add their contact information to your phone, whose would it be?

If you could receive the answer to a question that has confused you for a long time, what question would you choose to be answered?

Play the *“Session Six: Prayer and the Holy Spirit”* video lesson.

What stood out to you in the video?

“When Christians devote themselves to prayer and seeking the Holy Spirit, they find the boldness to survive the unique challenges of each generation. And although these challenges are different, the Spirit remains the same.”

— Callie Smith

In the following section, you will explore Bible passages and take part in discussion to apply insights from this session. If time is a concern, please choose just a few questions to discuss in your group.

Read Acts 4:23-31

1. The apostles Peter and John had just been threatened to stop sharing their faith. What did the apostles ask from the Lord in this prayer? On the other hand, what did they not ask in this prayer?

2. How can prayer help us move forward during difficult circumstances in life?

3. Describe a person who is filled with the Holy Spirit. What do they sound like? What impression do they give you?

Read Acts 1:12-14 & 2:1-4

4. In Acts 1:14, it says that the first believers were “constantly in prayer.” Why is it essential that our prayer is “constant” and not “every once in awhile?”

5. Imagine you were present in the room when the Holy Spirit descended upon the apostles. What would you think was happening?

6. In this story, we witness the beginning of the mission of the church to preach the good news. Why was it so important that this mission began with prayer and the empowering of the Holy Spirit? Why is it important that anything we attempt for the kingdom of God must begin with prayer and empowerment from the Holy Spirit?

Read Acts 20:22-36

7. What do you imagine it would feel like to be “compelled” by the Spirit? How did Paul find the courage to travel to Jerusalem despite the uncertainty of knowing precisely what would happen to him?

8. What is the most difficult answer you’ve received from God while in prayer? On the other hand, what is the most comforting answer you’ve received while in prayer?

DEEPER STUDY QUESTIONS

Read Acts 10:1-48 & Genesis 11:1-9

9. In this story, we see that Peter had to leave behind his bias in order to see what God wanted to accomplish through him. How is prayer a powerful way to move beyond personal bias?

10. To signify that Cornelius and his household—the first Gentile converts—had received the Holy Spirit, they spoke in tongues (or in foreign languages that they did not know how to speak). Why would the Holy Spirit choose this sign, especially in light of the story from Genesis 11?

“No one ought to expect to see much good resulting from his labors in word, and doctrine, if he is not much given to prayer and meditation.”

— George Müller

George Müller (1805 – 1898)

George Müller was a Christian evangelist and the director of the Ashley Down orphanage in Bristol, England. He oversaw the care of 10,000 orphans during his lifetime. As a man who believed in education, he established 117 schools in Britain that provided a Christian education to more than 120,000 children.

There is much inspiration to glean from this man’s life, but where we ought to pay attention most is to his prayer life. In one famous story, as George was working in his study, his wife came in to inform him that they were completely out of milk and that they would not be able to feed their children oatmeal in the morning. At the time, they had about a hundred children in their orphanage, which meant a hundred bellies would be empty come morning.

George was used to situations like this. Money was often tight, and he never asked for funds or borrowed money to run his orphanage. He always relied on the Lord to take care of his needs. Instead of rushing to a friend’s house in the middle of the night, he took his wife’s hand and began to pray. Soon, two of the orphanage employees joined them in their prayer. As George ended the prayer, he said, “Be assured, if you walk with Him and look to Him and expect help from Him, He will never fail you.”

At that moment, someone knocked on the door. George’s wife went to answer it and returned with an envelope with enough money to purchase milk for oatmeal the following day. Within a few minutes, two more letters arrived with money and promises of financial support.

Stories like this one happened to George on a regular basis. As a pastor, he never took a salary. Instead, he relied on prayer and on the provision of the Lord to take care of his and his family’s needs.

Nearly 200 years later, the George Müller Charitable Trust in Bristol still works today to carry George’s legacy, as well as his commitment to seek financial support only through prayer. Tens of thousands of orphans and other children in need have been helped through this continued ministry.

George spoke powerfully of prayer when he said, “Every child of God is not called by the Lord to establish schools and orphan houses and to trust in the Lord for means for them. Yet, there is no reason why you may not experience, far more abundantly than we do now, His willingness to answer the prayers of His children.”

Reference – George Müller, *The Autobiography of George Müller* (Boston: Gould and Lincoln, 1861).

Group: During a time of group prayer, it might be easy to lose focus. That is why we're introducing a prayer technique that may be completely new to you. It is called "One Sentence Praying" or "Popcorn Praying."

Here is how it works: One of you in the group opens up in prayer to God, but the prayer can only be one sentence long. Then, someone else in the group follows up and prays for one sentence. And then someone else prays after that. And so on and so forth. After about five to ten minutes of One Sentence Praying, you can have one designated person finish the session of prayer.

You do not have to pray in a circle. Anyone who feels led to pray something aloud can do so. Do not worry if you experience some periods of silence or if two people begin a prayer at the same time. This exercise helps us simplify our prayers, but more importantly, it helps us listen to the prayers of others, as well as listen to the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Individual: Once every two years, Shepherd Church sets aside one day as a Day of Prayer and Fasting. During this time, our Senior Pastor Dudley Rutherford shares a tool given to him by one of his former professors entitled "The Sweet Hour of Prayer." The tool is designed to help you pray for one hour straight, breaking up the prayer into twelve sections that each last five minutes.

On your own, set aside one hour to pray and use the twelve prompts below to guide your time. Each prompt should take five minutes. As you read through these prompts, notice how each one leads you into a different dimension of prayer. The Sweet Hour of Prayer is designed to help you see the full scope of a healthy prayer life.

1. Adoration. Praise God for who He is and what He has done.
2. Thanksgiving. Thank God for what He has given to us.
3. Confession. Spend time confessing sins and wrongdoing to God.
4. Sing a Scripture to God. The rabbis of ancient Israel would sing the verses of Scripture aloud. Open up your Bible, pick a verse, and use it as the words of a song to sing to God.
5. Scripture Reading. Open up your Bible to either a familiar verse or pick one at random and use that verse in your prayer to God.
6. Journaling. Take a piece of paper and a pen, and write down what you feel God is saying to you in the moment.
7. Petitions and Requests for Family. Pray on behalf of your family.
8. Petitions and Requests for Leaders. Pray on behalf of your leaders.
9. Intercession for Healing. Pray on behalf of those who need physical healing.
10. Intercession for Salvation. Pray on behalf of those who need to be saved.
11. Worship. Either sing a worship song you know or write one that comes to mind.
12. Commission. Ask God to send you out to go and share the good news with those who need to hear it.

PRAYER AND PRAISE

This is a place where you can write each other's prayer requests and make notes when God answers prayer. Pray for each other's requests out loud together as a group. If you're new to group prayer, you may pray silently.

Prayer Requests

Praise Reports

Session SEVEN

Bold Preaching

Patterned After the New Testament Church

Standing Up for Christ

The Importance of Baptism

Evangelism and Missions

Prayer and the Holy Spirit

Service and Leadership

Each session will begin with a few questions to help you connect with and get to know one another.

What was the toughest job you've ever had? What was the easiest?

If you could become the CEO of any company tomorrow, which company would you choose and what would your first decision be?

Play the "[Session Seven: Service and Leadership](#)" video lesson.

What stood out to you in the video?

"What has made the church so rare for the two thousand years it has been around is because Christians have been called to a rare duality: of service and leadership."

— Michael Johnson

In the following section, you will explore Bible passages and take part in discussion to apply insights from this session. If time is a concern, please choose just a few questions to discuss in your group.

Read Acts 6:1-8

1. On a sheet of paper, make two columns. Under the first column, list the qualities you believe make a great leader. Under the second column, list the qualities you believe make a great servant. What do the two lists have in common?

2. Why would it be wrong for the Twelve Apostles to focus on taking care of the widows in Jerusalem instead of the ministry of preaching the gospel?

3. How do you think Stephen's role of service grew into a role of leadership? Why do you think roles of leadership tend to grow out of roles of service?

Read Acts 1:15-26

4. Why is the "heart" of a person so critical when it comes to leadership and service?

5. What do you think would've happened if the Apostles had selected the wrong man to take over the position as the Twelfth Apostle? What qualities or motives do you believe would make someone unqualified for the position?

6. If you were selected to be the Twelfth Apostle, what part of your spiritual life would you need to work on in order to be worthy of the position?

Read Acts 4:36-37, 9:23-31, & 11:19-26

7. What qualified Barnabas to lead the young church in Antioch? Why do you think Barnabas sought out Saul (who would later be called Paul) in order to share in his ministry? What quality did Barnabas see in Saul that perhaps Barnabas lacked?

8. If you were leading a young church like the one in Antioch, what do you think your leadership strengths would be? And if you were looking to bring on someone to assist you in your weaknesses, what strengths would you look for in a fellow leader?

DEEPER STUDY QUESTIONS

Read Acts 20:25-35

9. What purpose do the “wolves” have in leading some of the “flock” astray? Why do people try to lead Christians away from Christ?

10. Paul goes to great lengths to describe himself as a humble and hard worker for Jesus Christ. What role does humility and hard work play in protecting the truth of the gospel from those who would seek to corrupt it?

“Love cannot remain by itself – it has no meaning. Love has to be put into action, and that action is service.”

— Mother Teresa

Mother Teresa (1910 – 1997)

Born as Anjezë Gonxhe Bojaxhu in Skopje, the capital of North Macedonia, today she is honored by the Roman Catholic Church as Saint Teresa of Calcutta. However, most know her as “Mother Teresa.” She was the founder of the Order of the Missionaries of Charity, and she received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979 for her work in India.

From an early age, she felt the call to serve the poor. Her mother was an excellent example for her, often inviting the unfortunate of the town to dine at her table. Her mother would say, “My child, never eat a single mouthful unless you are sharing it with others.”

At the age of 18, she travelled to Ireland where she became a nun. It was there she took the name Sister Mary Teresa. A year later, she travelled to Calcutta in order to teach at Saint Mary’s High School for Girls, a school that taught some of the poorest children in the city. While she was there, she learned to speak Bengali and Hindi fluently and dedicated herself to alleviating the poverty she encountered in that city.

On September 10, 1946, Mother Teresa experienced a calling that would forever transform her life. As she rode on a train from Calcutta to the Himalayan foothills for a retreat, she said that Christ spoke to her and told her to abandon teaching to work in the slums of Calcutta, helping the poorest and sickest people in the city. A year and a half later, she received approval to begin her work in Calcutta.

Upon convincing the city government to donate a dilapidated building, she began a school and established a hospice for the dying. News of her work began to spread, and donations poured in from around India and across the globe. Over the course of the 1950s and 1960s, she established a leper colony, an orphanage, a nursing home, a family clinic, and a line of mobile health clinics. For her work, she received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979, in addition to many other awards and recognitions.

Today, her legacy lives on. The Missionaries of Charity have continued her work around the world, managing homes for those afflicted with HIV/AIDS, leprosy, and tuberculosis. They run soup kitchens, mobile clinics, counseling services, orphanages, and schools.

All of this happened because one woman answered the call to serve and to use her service as a platform to lead believers to care for the poorest and sickest in our world.

Reference — Kathryn Spink, *Mother Teresa: An Authorized Biography* (New York: HarperCollins, 2011).

Group: It is our desire to see the members of our Life Groups serve in their communities. Serving in your community is a way for you and your Life Group to be a light for Jesus to your neighborhood and to show the love that God has shown to you.

Though this is the last session in this Life Group series, your Life Group experience does not have to end here. You can continue by getting together in order to serve your community. Use this time in your Life Group to develop a plan for how you will develop a Community Impact Project.

If you go to lifegroups.org/impact, you can find names, contact information, and descriptions of organizations with whom you can partner. You will need a large range of ideas to serve in different areas of the city. Feel free to be creative. If you have an idea that is not listed, please contact us so we can share it with other Life Groups and help you bring your Community Impact Project to life.

Individual: At Shepherd Church, we have multiple ways and multiple ministries where you can serve. We believe we will not grow deep roots of faith unless we are putting what we learn into practice. One of the best ways to do that—and one of the best ways to meet people at Shepherd Church—is by volunteering and serving with one of our ministries. Whether its directing traffic in a parking lot or serving communion during a weekend service or teaching children about God’s love for them, we all need opportunities to serve in the same way Jesus served each and every one of us.

Go to shepherdchurch.com/serve in order to sign up and learn more about how you can serve at Shepherd Church.

For some of you reading this, God may be calling you to lead a new Life Group. It may be your turn to step out in faith and lead a group through a Bible-led discussion and watch others grow to become more like Christ! If this is you, text the word “**Leader**” to **818.626.5433** and prepare to attend a Life Group New Leader Training!

PRAYER AND PRAISE

This is a place where you can write each other’s prayer requests and make notes when God answers prayer. Pray for each other’s requests out loud together as a group. If you’re new to group prayer, you may pray silently.

Prayer Requests

Praise Reports

BECOMING A LEADER

What does it take to be a leader?

Have a heart for people.
Open to hosting people in your home.
Serve some coffee or soft drinks.
Tell others about the group!

Basically, you need a desire to apply the Bible to your life, as well as a desire to share it with others. The group does not have to meet at your home, and you do not have to have a Bible college degree to lead. You only need some basic people skills and a drive to grow in the Lord.

How can you become a leader?

First, you must be a member of Shepherd Church. To become a member, you must complete the "101: Saved in Christ" class. These classes are usually about two hours long, and are offered every two months. You may call the church office at 818.831.9333 to find out when the next class will be held. You may also visit: shepherdchurch.com/member

Second, you need to sign-up for the New Life Group Leader Training. It is a two-hour training and orientation on Life Groups. Here you will learn the philosophy of Life Groups and how to effectively begin leading a group. Completing this course does not obligate you, but does allow you to become a new leader. To register online and find more information, please visit: lifegroups.org/leader