

Series: Purposeful	Reference: Acts 5:29	Title: Peter: The Path to Obedience	Date: 2.24.19
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Community Group Questions

Take time to pray through the Six:Eight Prayer Foci for 2019

*If the Holy Spirit gives anyone a specific word for the church
share them with the other Community Group Leaders.*

1. **FREEDOM:** Pray against spiritual attack on our church body & it's members, so that kingdom ministry goes unhindered.
2. **SPIRITUAL TRANSFORMATION:** Pray we'd abide in the Presence of Christ, honoring the Word & Spirit of God, being transformed & becoming more effective in witness. That we'd be drawn deeply into worship & prayer in powerful ways this year.
3. **LEADERSHIP:** Pray for leadership to be filled with the knowledge of the Word & power of the Spirit, operating out of the two as gracious strong servant leaders.
4. **MINISTRIES:** For all 8 church ministries to run smoothly, having all current & future resources provided for them to thrive (*Kids, Community Groups, Kingdom Opportunities, Stewardship, Impressions, Worship Arts, Prayer, Missions*).
5. **LOCAL EVANGELISM:** That we'd preach the Word boldly & minister in the power of the Spirit to see people come to faith & publicly declare that through baptism. - for divine openings with neighbors, coworkers, friends & Community Partners.
6. **CROSS-CULTURAL MISSION:** To be a '*House of Prayer for all Nations*' (Isaiah 56:7), obedient to the Great Commission (Mt 28:18-20), overflowing to our Kinship Network relationships reaching Arab world Muslims, and other mission endeavors of the church.
7. **GIVING:** Pray that we'd be stretched in faithful giving of our financial resources in order not to be hindered in our kingdom ministry as a church.

Study Questions

1. **ICEBREAKER:** Ask everyone to come up with one word which describes them best & write it on a post-it note. Put that post-it note either on their lapel or in front of them for everyone to see. Ask them to explain why they chose that word. For the rest of the night that is their name - when referring to them, use that word.
2. Prayerfully read through Acts chapter 5 from verse 12 to the end, asking people to highlight words, phrases, or ideas which strike them. Give the group a chance to react to the text. What did they like, what stands out? What is challenging?
 1. We said God's Glory & Mission are our purpose in light of Matthew 28:18-20. How are Peter & the Apostles reflecting this?
3. Read 1 Timothy 3:14-15...
 1. How do you see the church as the 'pillar & foundation of truth'? Does this comfort or overwhelm you? And what does it mean to us as believers in the church?
4. Read Matthew 5:14-16...
 1. What does this passage mean for us in word & lifestyle?
 2. What's the most challenging aspect of 'letting your light shine before others'?
5. Have you experienced *Mission* or *Purpose Drift* in your faith?
 1. What does it mean for us to 'do God's work, God's way'?
 2. And in light of that, what does it mean for us to say, "We must obey God rather than man."
 3. Read 1 Peter 3:15-17 & 4:11 out loud together & prayerfully consider what they mean. In living out our faith before others, and using our words wisely (verbally sharing the Gospel), how do these verses help to define how we do this?
 4. What's it mean to move from being people-pleasing to God-pleasing - more prone to humbly & respectfully obeying God in his Mission & bring him glory?
 5. What are some really practical ways? (Consider conversations, lifestyle, prayer, etc.)
6. Share 3 people whom you'd like to see know Jesus in your life right now. Write their names down on a 3X5 card & pray for them together. What is one thing you can do this week to lead them one step closer to Christ? (All Things Rise Easter postcards, church invite, asking - Can I pray for you right now? Sharing your testimony, etc.)
7. **HOMEWORK:** Take a look at the following page, go home this week and use this to write out your testimony following the directions in it.
 1. Practice it in front of your mirror, and pray for an opportunity to share it once this coming week with someone else.
 2. For the coming weeks, replace your ice-breaker with one person from your group giving their testimony! Give them feedback on things you like, things which could be more clear, and pray with them to have opportunity to share.
 3. If anyone gets a chance to share with someone outside the group, we want to hear about that experience!

“If someone asks about your hope as a believer, always be ready to explain it. But do this in a gentle & respectful way.” (1 Peter 3:15-16)

Sharing your testimony is one of the most powerful & influential evangelistic tools you have! It's worth taking the time & effort to think it through well. Work through the following questions to help you prepare your story. Save this, and review it, since it is something you might use in everyday life if someone should ask about your faith in the future. Although we don't want to be *rote*, we do want to be *ready* to share the story of God in our lives. Remember as you are preparing, pepper your story with relevant verses from Scripture to illustrate what God has done, is doing, or will do in your life.

My Life Before Christ

1. What about my life before Christ will relate to those who've not met Jesus yet?
2. What did my life revolve around? Where did I get my security, identity or happiness from then?
3. How did those things begin to let me down?

How I Came to Christ

1. When was the first time I heard the gospel? What were my initial reactions?
2. When & why did my perspective begin to change toward Christ?
3. What were the final struggles that went through my mind just before I accepted Him? Why did I finally decide to accept Christ (give Him complete control)?

My Life After Coming to Christ

1. How is my life different now? List some specific changes in your character, attitude & perspective on life.
2. What motivates me now? What do I live for?
3. Even though my life still isn't perfect, how does knowing Christ help me deal with that fact?

Vital Hints

- Pray before you develop & share your story, asking God for wisdom & words.
- Write out your story in light of your answers to the questions above. Write honestly, as if you were telling someone, and in the way you would normally speak.
- You want to boil your story down to its essence. The goal is to keep it to no more than 3 minutes; a length of time in conversation which doesn't feel overwhelming, or like a monologue. You'd be amazed at how this helps clarify details. Like cooking off the fat you get to what is really nutritious.