

Questions for personal reflection and/or discussion

1. If you have not yet done so, read the entire book of *Acts* at one sitting. If you did it last week, try and do it again this week. Try and get a feel for the overarching story of the book. What is the main purpose and what are the major points in the story?
2. The early followers of Jesus had great expectations—but their expectations were misguided. In what ways might you and I bring misguided expectations to God? In what ways might we bring misguided or unrealistic expectations to church life? How can we become more aware of our inappropriate expectations?
3. Jesus promised the early followers that they would experience the “power” of God through the presence of the Holy Spirit. This power would transform their lives and values and also their ability to be witnesses. Do you think this same power of God is available for us today? If it is, why is the witness of Christians (and the Church as a collective group) not having the impact that it once did?
4. The first followers of Jesus struggled to reconcile their Jewishness (with all of its laws and traditions) with what God was doing. In what ways do we struggle with the same problem—reconciling our traditions and culture and expectations to what God appears to be doing?
5. It seems that the issue of *leadership* was a critical concern for the early followers of Jesus. There is a lot of talk today in our world about the need for good leadership. How would you define “good leadership” and how should congregations today choose leaders? Can you give biblical support to your opinions? If you had to list the three primary tasks for congregational leaders, what would they be?

Moving Forward (II)

Pastor Alan Robinson, February 15, 2009

Acts 1:6-26 (church Bible page 770)

They gathered with high _____ and

they left with a _____

and a _____.

(6) So when they met together, they asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" (7) He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. (8) 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." (9) After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. (10) They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. (11) "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."

They gathered to _____

(12) Then they returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day's walk from the city. (13) 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. (14) They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.

They gathered to _____

(15) In those days Peter stood up among the believers (a group numbering about a hundred and twenty) (16) and said, "Brothers, the Scripture **had to be** fulfilled which the Holy Spirit spoke long ago through the mouth of David concerning Judas, who served as guide for those who arrested Jesus— (17) he was one of our number and shared in this ministry." (18) (With the reward he got for his wickedness, Judas bought a field; there he fell headlong, his body burst open and all his intestines spilled out. (19) Everyone in Jerusalem heard about this, so they called that field in their language Akeldama, that is, Field of Blood.) (20) "For," said Peter, "it is written in the book of Psalms,
" 'May his place be deserted;
let there be no one to dwell in it,' and,
" 'May another take his place of leadership.'
(21) Therefore **it is necessary** to choose one of the men who have been with us the whole time the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, (22) beginning from John's baptism to the time when Jesus was taken up from us. For one of these must become a witness with us of his resurrection."
(23) So they proposed two men: Joseph called Barsabbas (also known as Justus) and Matthias. (24) Then they prayed, "Lord, you know everyone's heart. Show us which of these two you have chosen (25) to take over this apostolic ministry, which Judas left to go where he belongs." (26) Then they cast lots, and the lot fell to Matthias; so he was added to the eleven apostles.