

Community Groups are the primary vehicle for discipleship at The Gathering. It is through the interaction that takes place in each of these groups that will enable people to begin moving from being drawn to God to a life that is being deepened by God. Use it as a resource to lead your group in discovering, owning, and applying the truths of God's Word. There may be aspects you do not want to use and there may be instances where you just want to focus on a particular point or truth. Some questions may bring out emotions and cause people to dwell on an aspect of their relationship with God. Use this as a flexible teaching tool not a rigid group task list.

Consider...

Use the summary and discussion to review and apply this week's message:

Message Summary

This week – Week 16 in our journey through the book of Acts – Paul talked about what was one of the biggest key moments in the life of the early church: the extension of the gospel to the Gentiles. While we may not fully understand terminology like Jew, Gentile heathens and God-fearing Gentiles, we do understand how hard it is to extend the love and mercy of Jesus to those who are different from us. Paul broke the 2 chapters into the following 4 sections:

1. **The dreams:** Acts 10 is about dreams that God gave to 2 people: Cornelius and Peter. The dreams they both had were used by God to bring together 2 groups of people that, until now, had nothing to do with each other. The result was that the gospel went to the gentiles, and Cornelius and his household were the first to receive it. Immediately they received the Holy Spirit and were baptized.
2. **The drama:** It seems that anytime God does something new, it ruffles feathers and causes drama, and the early church was no different! In Acts 11, Peter was criticized by the religious leaders for associating with the Gentiles. Thankfully, Peter was patient and explained to the leaders what exactly God had done in Cornelius and his family.
3. **The decision:** After hearing Peter's explanation, cooler heads prevailed and the leaders acknowledged that God was indeed moving towards the Gentiles. They decided to see the Gentiles differently than they had previously.
4. **The difference:** What difference did it make? Well, Acts 11:26 tells us that the disciples were first called Christians at Antioch, most likely by outsiders! This week's Big Idea says that **the key to being seen differently is seeing differently**, and that's exactly what happened for the church in Acts and what will happen for us today. When we see "outsiders" as target of God's grace, we accept them and they see the church as more Christ-like.

Discuss

Use the following questions to review and apply the points learned in the message.

- What was one helpful, eye-opening, or troubling insight or principle from this week's message?
- Have you ever had a vision or a dream from God that you lived out later? If not, have you ever known someone who did? Discuss.
- In Acts 10:15, Peter was commanded not to call anything impure that God had made clean. Today, we don't think of food or animals as unclean anymore. What (or who) do we put the unclean label on in modern culture? How do we live this out when God "cleans" people we don't like?
- Numerous times the Bible tells us to love each other (John 13:35; John 15:17; 1 John 4:20). Is it enough to just love "brothers and sisters in Christ" (other believers) and have unity IN the church? How do verses like Luke 6:27, 35 and Matthew 5:44 affect your answer?
- What does it mean that the early believers were first called "Christ-like" (Christians) in the unholy city of Antioch and not the holy city of Jerusalem? Does this have any implications for church and culture today? Where is the love of Christ more impacting?