

Community Groups are the primary vehicle for discipleship at The Gathering. It is through the interaction that takes place in each of these groups around our area that will enable people to begin to move 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

In the second half of Acts 6, we find Stephen under attack because he was taking a stand for Jesus, and while his end seems tragic, his actions revealed three important things that happen when we take a stand for Jesus:

1. **Others will oppose us.** One of the more obvious themes in the history of the early church is that the more they stood for Jesus, the more men stood against them. We find that at work again here, and we see that men don't fight fair when it comes to Jesus! They finally just made stuff up about Stephen in order to turn the crowd against him. Don't be surprised when great opposition from men follows the great things you attempt for God.
2. **God's story becomes more important than our safety.** At some point, even the opposition we face gives us a platform, and Stephen used his to talk about God's redemptive plan through Jesus instead of defending himself against the false accusations. We're not called to play it safe, and we need to see every situation as a platform to point people to Jesus.
3. **Jesus stands for us.** I love the way the story ends! Stephen didn't just see Jesus, but he said he saw Jesus standing! There was something in this great, bold move by a man full of wisdom and the Spirit that caused Jesus to stand in order to defend and applaud him. Even if everyone else opposes you, you can know that **when you stand for Jesus, Jesus stands for you.**

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?
- Read and discuss 1 Peter 4:12-16. How do you handle opposition from others? What is a truth in these verses that could help you handle opposition better?
- The opposition that Stephen faced revealed his character. According to Acts 6:1-4, where or how did that character first get developed? (**by serving and waiting on tables**)
- The church's first martyr was also the church's first servant. What light does Luke 16:10 shine on that statement?
- Discuss platforms and why we build them or use them. How did Stephen use the platform that he was given at the beginning of Acts 7? (**he pointed to Jesus instead of defending himself**)
- What are some platforms that you have right now (areas of influence)? How can you use them to lift up Jesus and not yourself?
- The way Stephen used his platform radically altered the life of a man named Saul, who later became Paul. The possibilities of change are literally endless when we promote God's story more than our safety.
- Have you ever received applause? How did it make you feel?
- How great a motivator is it that when we stand for Jesus, Jesus stands for us?
- According to Hebrews 12:2, how can we make sure that we see Jesus when he stands for us? (**by making sure we've got our eyes fixed on him**)