

# **BIBLE DISCUSSION GROUP QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION**

**New Testament  
Weeks 11-15**



**book of faith**  
Open Scripture. Join the Conversation.

## **Reading Through the Bible**

### **Questions for Reflection and Discussion**

#### **WEEK 11**

#### **Luke 1-6**

What do learn about Luke from verses 1:1-4?

How would the birth of Zachariah and Elizabeth's son affect them?

What do you think was the hardest thing for Mary to comprehend from the angels message about her birth to be?

The US is currently conducting a census ... How do you think Joseph and Mary felt about the timing of the census, then?

Why was it important that Jesus was born in Bethlehem? (see Micah 5:2)

What Mosaic laws are being fulfilled by Jesus' presentation in the Temple? (see Leviticus 12:1-8, Exodus 13:2, 12-13)

Why do you think Luke included the story of the boy Jesus in the Temple? (Luke 2:46)

Why is John the Baptist confused with Christ? (3:15)

In each temptation, what is its appeal? Its price? How does Jesus resist them?

What is Jesus' five-fold mission outlined in 4:18-19?

What is Simon Peter beginning to grasp about Jesus in 5:8?

What motivates the Pharisees' response in 5:21?

In 6:17-26, who is the crowd? Why have they come? How does Jesus meet their needs?

#### **Luke 7 - 12**

In what way is the centurion's response in ch.7 related to what Jesus says in 6:43-45?

In Jesus' explanation of the Parable of the Sower in Cha.8, what is the seed? The birds? The soils? The fruit? The farmer?

What is the promise for those who do and don't listen when Jesus talks about not hiding the light (8:18)?

What decision does Jesus make about his ministry in 9:1?

What does Jesus do the day after his transfiguration? How could that fit in with Mt. Horeb's tag line - *Experiencing and Sharing God's Presence*?

Why does Jesus send out the disciples two-by-two (10:1)?

What may be some reasons the priest and Levite didn't stop to help the hurt man (10:25-35... see Leviticus 21:1-3; Numbers 19:11-22)? How does the parable answer the question "And who is my neighbor?"

What motivates the disciples to ask about prayer (11:1)?

In 12:1 how does hypocrisy work like yeast (see 11:37-54)?

### **Luke 13-16**

In 13:6-9, who does the fig tree represent? The owner? The Farmer? Why the urgency?

In 13:18-19 what does the contrast between the seed and the tree teach about the power of God?

What character of the Great Banquet parable (14:1ff) can you most identify with?

What does the salt analogy (14:34) emphasize about discipleship?

How does Jesus' parable of the sheep (15:3-7) relate to the muttering of the Pharisees? What is the point (v.7)?

What does the story about the Rich Man and Lazarus (16:19ff) teach you about comfort? Suffering? Why is it so difficult for people to be convinced of God's ways?

### **Luke 17-21**

What is it like to be a leper? What would healing mean for them?

In 18:1-8 how is God like and unlike the judge?

Since wealth was commonly considered a sign of God's blessing, what was the problem for the disciples (18:26)?

How does Zacchaeus compare with the rich, young ruler in his approach and response to Jesus (19:1-10)?

In 19:28-44, what were people expecting Jesus to do when he reached Jerusalem (see v.11; Zechariah 9:9)?

How does the parable of the tenants (20:9-19) relate to the question of authority raised in 20:1-8?

Who asked the question in 20:22? What is so insightful about Jesus' response?

What prompts Jesus to use the widow's offering (21:1-4) as a lesson?

In the midst of heavy news concerning the end times, how does Jesus caution his followers (21:34-35)?

## **Luke 22-23**

What was the significance of the Passover? The Passover lamb (see Exodus 12:1-13,21-28)?

What are the differences between Judas and Peter (22:21, 31-34), since both failed Jesus?

What strikes you about Jesus' prayer (22:41-45)?

Given what is said in 22:33, what accounts for Peter's actions in 22:54-62?

What do you learn about Herod's character in 23:8-11?

In 23:44-48, what is the meaning of darkness (see 22:53)? The torn curtain (see Hebrews 9)? Jesus' prayer (see Psalm 31:5)? The centurion's confession?

## **WEEK 12 (Gospel Passion Stories)**

### **Matthew 26-27**

Whereas the woman in 26:7 gave lavishly for Jesus, Judas wanted to see what he could get from Jesus. In what ways are you like the woman? Like Judas?

Why do many people struggle with guilt if Jesus provides the forgiveness of sins in worship/communion?

What impresses you most about Jesus at the last Supper?

What has been your "Gethsemane" – a place where you really wrestled with God?

Who is the Sanhedrin (or Jewish court of elders), and what kind of cases were brought before it (see Acts 4:1-22)?

Why is Judas suddenly seized with remorse – 27:3?

Who is ultimately on trial (27:11-26)? For what?

Why does Jesus cry out in 27:46?

Why does Matthew emphasize the presence of the armed guards?

How have you tried to guard against God breaking through in your life?

## **Mark 14-15**

How would you have felt if you had been sharing this Passover meal with Jesus?

What profound new meaning does Jesus give to the Passover bread and cup?

Like Peter, have you ever denied Christ when you could have stood up for him? Why can it be difficult to be bold for Christ?

Jesus received the “third degree” before the Sanhedrin. How do you react when someone gives you the “third degree”?

How are the cry of Jesus (15:34; also Psalm 22:1), the tearing of the temple curtain (v.38; also Hebrews 10:19-22), and the faith of the centurion (v.39) all related?

## **Luke 22-23**

What does sharing in the Lord’s Supper mean to you?

What do YOU mean when you pray “your will be done”?

When have you felt like Peter? What “rooster” reminds you of failure? What helps you work through guilt?

When did the meaning of the death of Christ make sense to you? How would you explain the crucifixion to a non-Christian friend (or someone who isn’t a “church person”)?

How would you describe to someone what Jesus’ death was all about?

Jesus had apparently failed, but Joseph and the women did not abandon him (23:55). What do you learn from this for your own life?

What does Jesus crucifixion teach you about success, power, wealth, and status?

## **John 18-19**

In seeing how He deals with the soldiers and Peter (18:4-11), what do you learn about Jesus?

How does the story of Peter both humble and encourage you?

What does Jesus tell Pilate about his Kingdom (18:36-37)? Who is included in it?

What do you think Pilate meant by his concerns in v.38?

Why do the Jewish leaders clamor (19:6) for Jesus to be crucified?  
What does Pilates' fearful response to the charge show about him?  
When have you made a decision based on fear and ambition, rather than on what is right?  
Given Jesus' mother's faith in him at the outset of his public ministry (2:3-5), what must she be feeling now at the end?  
Why did secret believers, Joseph and Nicodemus, risk public exposure now(19:38-42)?

## **Reflection**

Think of past images and experiences of Holy week. What worship experiences stand out?  
What Lenten disciplines have you found to be most helpful?  
How does understanding God's Passion for you through Christ help you know Grace – "God's unmerited love"?  
What sacrifices have you made for others?  
What do you think of the comment, "It is not until we deal with our own death that we can begin to live?" How does God's dying for you make you feel?  
God is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. How does that help you find your "place" in your faith journey (your story is part of God's bigger story)?

## **WEEK 13**

### **Luke 24-Acts 2**

Luke 24- What did the two men standing beside the women at the tomb ask? 24:1-7  
With which words of Jesus did the two men remind the women?  
Why did the inconspicuous Jesus call the disciples walking back to Emmaus foolish?  
What caused the two disciples eyes to be opened when Jesus stayed with them?  
How did the two disciples refer to their experience of hearing Jesus open Scriptures to them?  
Have you ever felt this way? When?

What has been your experience of opening the Scriptures as part of the Book of Faith?

What did Jesus show the group of disciples to convince them of his resurrected presence?

What did Jesus say will be preached in his name? 24:47

How did Jesus depart in 24:51?

Acts 1- How many days did Jesus appear after his resurrection? 1:1-5

What gift was promised in 1:4-5 and for what purpose?

Who was appointed to replace Judas' position among the 12 apostles? How was it done? 1:15-26

What two metaphors were used to describe the dramatic experience of Pentecost?

What was so miraculous about the disciples speaking in tongues?

What was the response of the people to Peter's message? 2:37

What two things did Peter tell them they must do in order to be forgiven and receive the Holy Spirit? 2:38

To what four things did the new converts devote themselves? 2:42

### **Acts 3-5**

By what name and power did Peter enable the crippled man to walk? 3:1-10

What command and promise was given in 3:19-20?

Considering Peter's statement in 4:12, how are we called to relate to people of other religions?

How do we reconcile Peter's words in 4:19-20 with Romans 13:1-4?

When are we called to speak out against the governing authorities?

What happened initially as a result of the prayer that the people prayed?  
4:31

What ways does our church reflect the witness that is described in 4:32-35?

Compare the stories of 4:36-37 and 5:1-11. What point is being made?

How did the apostles make a jail-break? 5:17-20

Who was the man who appeals for the release of the apostles from jail and what did he say to convince them? 5:33-40

### **Acts 6-9**

What was the reason for the appointing of seven men? 6:1-7

What qualities are described about Stephen? 6:8,10

Why do you think Stephen's face is described as like the face of an angel?  
6:15

Note how Stephen tells the story of God's people in the Old Testament (7:1-53). What does he mean by calling the people "stiff-necked" with "uncircumcised hearts and ears?"

What reaction did Stephen get from his preaching? 7:54-60

Who is the man that persecutes the followers of Jesus? 7:58, 8:1-3

There are a number of references to "signs and miracles" being done. Does God perform signs and wonders through his followers in the Church today? If so, how?

What was Peter's response to Simon's offer of money for the Holy Spirit?  
8:9-24

How does Philip help the Ethiopian eunuch to understand what he is reading? 8:26-35

Who has been instrumental in your life in helping you to understand the Scriptures?

How has God given you opportunities (like Philip) to witness to your faith?

According to 9:2, what were early Christians called?

In Ananias' vision, what did the Lord say about why he was calling Saul?  
9:15-16

How did Barnabas describe Saul's preaching? 9:27

## **Acts 10-13**

How is Cornelius' and his family's witness described? 10:2

Why was Peter initially resistant to the Lord's words in his vision? 10:9-15

Take a moment to refer to Leviticus 11:1-47 (espec. vss.44-47). What can we understand to be the purpose of God's laws regulating food?

What conclusion does Peter draw from the vision? 10:27-28, 34-36

What outward sign was given that indicated that the Holy Spirit had been poured out as a gift to the Gentiles? 10:44-46

Where were the disciples first called Christians? 11:25-26

What was the purpose of the gift collected and sent by the disciples to the people in Judea? 11:27-30

How did Peter get out of jail? 12:5-11

For what action was King Herod struck down and killed? 12:21-23

What action did the proconsul (Sergius Paulus) observe that led him to believe? 13:6-12

What did Paul conclude from his words of preaching in the synagogue (13:16-37) in 13:38-39?

How did Paul and Barnabas respond to the Jews jealousy and resistance to their message? 13:46-47

## **Acts 14-19**

What type of resistance did Paul and Barnabas encounter in Iconium? (14:1-7)

After healing the crippled man, who did the people in Lystra think Paul and Barnabas were? (14:11-13)

Who were appointed to each church? 14:23

What report was given when Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch? 14:27-28

What was the issue that caused such debate in chapter 15?

What happened between Paul and Barnabas in 15:36-41?

What caused Paul to go to Macedonia? 16:6-10

Who was converted at Philippi? What was her trade?

Why were Paul and Silas thrown in jail? 16:19-21

What did Paul and Silas tell the jailer he must do to be saved? 16:30

What does 16:33 say about how (what age) people were baptized?

Describe how Paul in 17:2 and the Bereans in 17:11 approached the Scriptures.

What was Paul distressed about in Athens? 17:16

What did Paul refer to when he said that God doesn't live in temples built by human hands?

What did God command everyone to do? 17:29-32

How would you explain the difference between John's baptism and Jesus' baptism?

What happened when Paul placed his hands on the disciples at Ephesus? 19:6-7

## **WEEK 14**

### **Acts 20-24**

According to the story of Eutychus(20:7-12), what can happen if you fall asleep listening to someone preach?

Of what did Paul warn the elders of the church in Ephesians? 20:27-31

What were the accusations brought against Paul? 21:27-28

Where did the Lord call Paul to go? 22:21

What was Paul's criticism of Ananias' actions in 23:1-3?

Paul referred to himself as a follower of the \_\_\_\_\_. (24:13-16)

### **Acts 25-28**

Why did the chief priests and Jewish leaders consider sending Paul to Jerusalem for trial? 25:1-5

Paul's accusers did not charge him with any crimes, but what was the subject of their dispute? 25:17-20

Why did governor, Festus, think Paul was crazy? 26:24

What gave Paul reassurance amidst the storm at sea? What did he tell the others on board to do? 27:21-26

How many people were on board the ship? What plan did the soldiers have for the prisoners? Why did they not carry it out? Upon what island did they safely arrive? 27:33-28:1

What caused the island natives to think Paul was a god? 28:1-6

For what reason did the islanders honor the people on board the ship and provide for their supplies? 28:7-10

Why is 28:28 considered a summary of the book of Acts?

### **Romans 1-5**

In writing to the people of Rome, what did Paul say was the reason he longed to see them? 1:8-13 Why was Paul not ashamed of the gospel? 1:14-17

How is idolatry described in 1:22-23?

Paul says that God allows for the sinful desires of idolatry to bring judgment through the actions of sexual impurity, shameful lusts, and depraved minds (1:24-32). How does Paul explain the reasons for idolatry? (1:19,21, and 28)

What are some of the ways that people commit idolatry today? (hint: What is the first of the Ten Commandments?) How are you most susceptible to the sin of idolatry?

What is the problem with passing judgment on others? 2:1-3

In what ways does God's mercy lead us to repentance? 2:4

What warning does Paul give for those who fail to obey God's law? 2:5-16

According to 2:13-16, in God's judgment of who is righteous, does it matter if one is Jewish or Gentile?

How does Paul suggest that God's name is blasphemed (or shamed) by some? 2:17-24

Circumcision was required by God's Law (Genesis 17). How does Paul reinterpret this requirement of the Law in 2:25-29?

When did your faith become more than ritual?

What custom do you have that needs to become less of a ritual and more of a matter of the heart?

What type of responsibility comes with being "entrusted with the very words of God?" 3:2

What is the purpose of God's law? 3:9-20

From where does the righteousness of God come? 3:21-26

How do you understand the phrase: God freely justifies you by his grace through faith?

What two Biblical figures are referred to chapter 4 to explain how righteousness comes through faith?

How do we discover peace with God? 5:1

When and how does God demonstrate his love for us? 5:8

Who was the one man in whom sin and death entered the world? 5:12-14

What follows the gift of God's grace? 5:16

## **Romans 6-10**

What does it mean to be baptized into Christ's death? 6:3-7

What does it mean to be united with Christ in his resurrection?

Why do you think it is important to remember the promise of your baptism into Christ?

Why does Paul say the wages of sin is death? 6:23

Why is it essential that eternal life be understood as a gift of God? 6:23

When Paul wanted to do good what was it that lay close at hand?  
Who rescued him?  
How would you describe what Paul is saying about our struggle with sin in 7:14-25?  
What do you see as the difference between living according to the sinful nature and living according to the Spirit? 8:1-17  
What are your present sufferings? Why are they not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us? 8:18  
In what ways do you see creation subject to frustration, in bondage to decay, or groaning? 8:19-22  
How does God's Spirit help you in your weakness? 8:26  
What prayers do you think the Spirit prays according to 8:26-27?  
How has God worked something good out of an unfortunate or tragic happening in your life? 8:28  
What is it that most separates you from knowing and experiencing God more fully? 8:35  
How is God's love revealed to you most clearly? 8:37-39  
Why does Paul have sorrow and anguish for the people of Israel? 9:1-3, 31-32, 10:1  
What two ways of responding to God's word are described (10:9-10) as leading unto salvation?  
What do the words, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news," mean? See Isaiah 52:7 and Romans 10:15

## **Romans 11-16**

What is the point of Paul's discussion of olive trees and their branches? Who do each of the parts represent and why is grafting necessary? (olive tree, broken branches, other branches, wild olive shoot, the root) 11:17-21  
In what ways do you offer your life as a "living sacrifice" to God? 12:1  
How have we as people in the church conformed our lives to the world? 12:2  
How have you discovered the transformation of God's Spirit by the renewal of your mind? 12:2  
What grace gift has God given you as part of the body of his people? 12:4-8

How are we told to relate to those who are the governing authorities?  
13:1-7

What one commandment sums up God's law? 13:8-10

If you were to describe your "spiritual wardrobe" as the way you live your faith in Christ each day, what kind of variety, fashion, and quality of clothes do you wear (or not wear)? 13:11-14

What were the disputes of which Paul is speaking of in chapter 14?

What disputes are there in the church today? How do Paul's words, "Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind," (14:5) apply to our disputes?

How can both sides stop judging one another and start accepting one another?

When Paul says, "Stop judging one another,"(14:10) does he mean we are never to judge between right and wrong where others are concerned? Why or why not?

When has your freedom been a stumbling block to someone else?(14:13)

What can you do to help build a spirit of unity among God's people?  
15:1-7

What has been Paul's continual ambition in preaching the gospel? 15:20-21

Of whom does Paul warn the people of Rome and why? 16:17-18

## **WEEK 15**

### **Revelation 1-4**

When have you had a "revelation" you were eager to share with someone?

What three things does Christ do for us (1:5-6)?

What is the meaning of the seven stars? The seven lamp stands?

What does it mean for a church (and for you) to be a light?

What do Jesus' words to the church in Smyrna teach about suffering?

How are the Christians in Pergamum being tested? Which do you think is easier to endure: persecution by enemies or seduction by the culture?

What are the strengths and weaknesses of the church in Thyatira?

What is the contrast between reputation and reality in Sardis?

What dangers exist for Christians who rely on an image instead of nurturing a genuine spiritual life (3:2)?

What does the key of David open (3:7-8; 4:1; see also Isaiah 22:22-24; Matthew 16:19)?

What does the faithful and true witness see when he looks at the Laodicean church (3:15-16)?

What does the heavenly scene include in Chapter 4? Note its many OT images (Genesis 9:12-17; Exodus 19:16-19; 25:31-40; 2Chronicles 4:2-6; Ezekiel 1)?

What about the four living creatures suggests the eternal power of God?

### **Revelation 5-9**

In 5:1ff, what do you think makes the scroll so significant (see Jeremiah 36:2-32)?

Who or what do each of the four horsemen represent?

Who can stand the wrath of God? How? (6:16-17)

Is 144,000 a symbol or a statistic? Why (see 7:9; 14:1-5)?

What do altars and incense teach about prayer (8:3-5; 5:8; 6:9-10; 9:13)?

What events are inaugurated by the sixth trumpet? What kind of response should this woe elicit from the unbelieving world? Why?

### **Revelation 10-14**

Describe the angel who announces the coming of the seventh trumpet. In what ways does this picture contrast with the traditional view of angels?

What purposes did the disasters of the first six trumpets serve?

If God's witness is faithfully maintained for 1260 days to offset the 42 months (which are the times of the Gentiles), then what do the three and a half days mean in 11:11-12?

What do you learn in the passage about what it means to be a witness?

Describe the woman and the dragon and the child (12:1-6). Who does each represent?

When has Satan seemed very real to you?

What is the beast of the sea like (13:2; see Isaiah 27:1)? What is its source of power?

Since “7” is the number of completeness in Revelation, what might “666” mean?

Given the chaos described in Chapters 12-13, what comfort do you find in 14:1-5? Sights? Sounds? Feelings?

### **Revelation 15-18**

What picture does John paint in 15:2?

Compare Moses’ song of deliverance from Egypt (Exodus 15:1-18) with the song sung by those delivered from the beast (Rev. 15:3-4). What praise is given to God?

What contents are in each bowl of wrath (Ch. 16)? How do these plagues differ from the trumpet plagues?

If “war is hell” could John be envisioning that “hell is war”?

How is the book of Revelation making you feel?

Who is the central figure in Ch. 17 (see 14:8; 16:19)?

Geographically, historically, and spiritually, what do you think the beasts seven heads and ten horns represent (see Daniel 7:15-28)?

How does Babylon symbolize what is wrong in society today (for example, what institutions have been overthrown by revolution, only to be replaced by new regimes which surrender to the same godless ideology)?

How does God’s perspective on Babylon (18:2-6) differ from Babylon’s self understanding (v.7)?

How do the voices from the world greet the fall of Babylon (vv.9-20)? Why do they mourn?

### **Revelation 19-22**

In contrast to the silence that comes with the fall of Babylon (18:22), what’s the new scene in heaven?

What do you find interesting in the contrast between the prostitute in Chs. 17 & 18 and the Bride in Ch. 19 (see also Ephesians 5:25-27)?

How has your interest in worshiping God increased or decreased in the past year? Since beginning the Book of Faith initiative to read through the Bible?

What regarding the horse, the rider, and the setting commands your attention in 19:11-21?

Who is following Christ: the church militant (still on earth) or the church triumphant (now in heaven)?

How has Jesus been your deliverer this year?

Why is Satan bound (Ch. 20)? By whom? How?

What is the final fate of the beast, false prophet and Satan (20:7-10)?

What is your biggest spiritual battle today? Does this passage bring hope?

Where will the new world be lived out – on earth or in heaven? Why do you think so?

Who will be the residents of the New Jerusalem?

What is the goal of all redemption?

What words of Christ are repeated three times in the closing chapter (22:7,12, 20)?