

Growing God's Family

Acts 8

Welcome (10 mins)

Can you remember facing a particularly difficult situation where you were put 'on the spot' in a group? Was your response a knee jerk reaction or a considered and discerning response, one you felt was 'Godly'?

Worship (10 mins)

CONSIDER - This time of worship we want to take the trials to Jesus and ask God how he is going to use this for redemptive intent. Just like persecution of the church leads to the church being proclaimed all over.

Read Psalm 126. Joseph told his brothers (Gen 50:20) that what they intended for evil, God intended for good. God knows the things coming against us and calls us while we are still in the difficulties promising that He is sovereign. He has the final say.

Sing - Battle Belongs by Phil Wickham

Play the lyric video [here](#)

Download the chord chart [here](#)

Word (30 mins)

Read Acts 8:1-25

1. Describe what it would have been like to be a Christian in the Church in Jerusalem following the stoning of Stephen (v1-3). How might you have felt and reacted in their shoes?

2. What were the results of the persecution and scattering of the church? (v4-8)
3. What did Simon and Philip have in common and how were they different? How did the crowd respond to both men? (v5-11)
4. In what ways does Simon's reaction to the apostles (v18-19) show his misunderstanding of the Gospel? Do you think that his response suggests a change in heart?

Wonder (5-10 mins)

The Christian family grew as people heard the gospel and believed and were baptised for the repentance of their sins. But it took a visit from Peter and John to pray for them to 'receive the Holy Spirit' - the power to life in Christ. Pray for each other to receive the Holy Spirit and be filled up again. Philip had this extraordinary encounter with this Ethiopian treasurer on a remote road. Think a moment - who do you encounter in your life? Divide into pairs and share who you might pray for in your daily life. Pray for the courage and boldness to share in those unusual encounters as well.

Witness (5-10 mins)

As we consider our witness to others, there are some sobering challenges and warnings in this passage. Discuss what you think these are and how they relate to our current context.

Spend some time praying for those that are being persecuted for their faith. Pray especially for the witness of Christians in Syria and Turkey as they respond to the devastating earthquake in this region. Pray that they will be beacons of hope and faith in Jesus Christ.