

THE BOOK OF

ACTS

GROUP DISCUSSION | Week 7: Time to Move

SERIES OVERVIEW

In this series, we examine the remarkable spread of the Gospel and the Kingdom of God from Jerusalem, to Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth...and how we fit into the story God is continuing to write through His Church.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE:

Think of this discussion guide as a springboard. Use what's helpful to your group!

CONNECTION

Have you ever been involved with Global Missions? In what capacity? From child sponsorship to missionary support to mission trips, there are all kinds of ways to be involved. Share some of your applicable experiences with the group.

TRUTH

Read Acts 8:1-4. Stephen was martyred and then persecution broke out against the church. At that moment, the cost of following Jesus just went up. What in life is worth suffering for? What in life is worth dying for? Have we truly counted the cost of following Jesus?

Read Matthew 7:13-14. What does the narrow gate and narrow road mean regarding counting the cost of following Jesus?

Why were the apostles able to stay in Jerusalem, while other believers were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria?

How did the persecution of Christians in Jerusalem contribute to the spread of the Gospel message in other regions? How did the believers respond to the news of Stephen's death, and how did it impact their ministry?

Why do you think Saul (later known as Paul) was so eager to persecute Christians? What can we learn from the way the early Christians responded to persecution, and how can we apply those lessons to our own lives?

Warren Wiersbe writes, "Persecution does to the church what wind does to seed: it scatters it and only produces a greater harvest. The word translated scattered in Acts 8:1, 4 means "to scatter seed." The believers in Jerusalem were God's seed, and the persecution was used of God to plant them in new soil so they could bear more fruit." Read Matthew 13:37-38. If Jesus is the sower of the seed and we are the seed, do you believe you are producing fruit? Explain.

APPLICATION + PRAYER

In what ways do you think the persecution of Christians today is similar to or different from the persecution described in Acts 8:1-4? What does this passage teach us about the importance of unity and solidarity within the Christian community, especially in the face of persecution?

What role do you think prayer played in the early Christian community's response to persecution, and how can we incorporate prayer into our own responses to persecution and suffering?

We took time to pray over and for our globally persecuted mission partners during service. Here's a list of countries/regions where we have mission partners:

Nigeria	China	Middle East	North Africa	South Africa	Romania
Tanzania	Philippines	Japan	Central Asia	Eurasia	Guatemala

Would you commit to praying for our mission partners in one of these locations for the next week? Which do you choose?

**If you'd like more information about NorthEast Missions or would like to get involved, contact our Missions Team Leader, Donna Hancock at missions@ncclex.org.*

The people in the first church were ordinary people (like us, seriously) who chose to follow Jesus and they changed the world. Do you ever think you could change the world? If so, how could you change it?

Sharing the Gospel can change the world. It actually can change a person's eternity. Who in your life needs the Gospel? Wrap up by praying for Gospel expansion both in our lives and globally through NorthEast Mission Partners.