

Introduction

This week Pastor Bryan led us through part two of the story of Cornelius as Peter arrives to share the gospel with his entire family and close friends. It's a clear example of how Jesus *invites* us to come to Him just as we are; but accepting that invitation involves complete transformation which shows itself in repentance, forgiveness, baptism and receiving the Spirit.

To get the most out of your group time, we invite you to look over the questions below and write your thoughts down before you meet with your group.

Warm Up *(Suggested time: 20 min)*

Here are some suggestions to get your conversation started:

1. If you've had a chance to try any of the Personal Spiritual Exercises at the end of the questions each week, share something you've gained through the experience.
2. When you were young, what did you look forward to most about summer vacation?

Getting Started

Transition into group discussion.

- 1) Open group discussion with prayer. Here are a few potential prayer items:
 - a. For the Spirit of God to lead you in truth
 - b. For the fruit of the Spirit to be cultivated in your lives
 - c. For grace to hear and apply what the Spirit says to you
 - 2) Invite someone to read the passage in the group.
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Study Questions *(Suggested time: 40 min)*

- 1) What part of the service on Saturday/Sunday has stuck with you this week?
- 2) In part one of the Cornelius story (Acts 10:1-23), God prepared Peter in a very dramatic way to share the gospel with him. **What are some reasons God needed to prepare Peter's heart in this way?**

Can you think of a time when you were resistant to share Jesus with someone because of a bias you held? Share what happened.

- 3) When Peter shared the gospel in Cornelius' home (Acts 10:23-48), **what evidence is given that these Gentiles truly became part of the body of Christ?**

How was the gift of tongues used in this text? (See Acts 11:15-18)

What can we learn from this example about how miraculous gifts can be viewed today?

- 4) In Galatians 2:11-14, Paul recounts a time when he had to confront Peter about the way he was bowing to peer pressure rather than living out the gospel of grace. **What warning do you hear in this example of Peter and Barnabas in these verses?**

When are you tempted to divide the world into camps of "us" and "them"?

How might you encourage each other this week to pursue unity in our divided world?

Prayer *(Suggested time: 20 min)*

Prayer opens us up to the leading of the Holy Spirit which makes it an important part of the Christian life. We realize that everyone has their own comfort level with group prayer, and we want this to be a time of safety and care. You may verbalize your prayer or pray silently to yourself; that way everyone is a participant in sharing this time before God together.

Some things to consider during prayer time:

- What did the message or group discussion cause you to notice about your relationship with Jesus?
- How can you express gratitude for what God's teaching you?
- What questions are stirring that only God can answer?
- Are there troubling things in your life that need to be confessed to God?
- Is there an unmet need that only God can fulfill?

Personal Spiritual Exercises

Each week we're suggesting a couple of spiritual exercises. These are not required, but they may help us to actively live our faith and grow as followers of Jesus. Feel free to practice one or both. If a certain exercise is helpful for you, we encourage you to find a way to incorporate it into your daily life.

(Upward Look) Begin your day reading Psalm 16. Notice the characteristics of God; write them down, repeat them back to Him, or form them into a prayer of gratitude.

(Outward Look) Using Psalm 16 again, pay attention to people who come to mind as you read those verses. Perhaps you know someone who needs a safe refuge right now; insert their name in verse 1 as a prayer on their behalf. If you think of another who needs direction and peace, you might personalize verse 11 for them. Praying for others using God's Word as a guide is a powerful tool for them—and for you!