

I like Church... that feels the presence of God! Acts 4:23-35

Small Group & Personal Bible Study Lesson: Pastor Dennis Hadley



Daily Scripture Reading:

1. Acts 3:1-10
2. Acts 3:11-26
3. Acts 4:1-22
4. Acts 4:23-31
5. Acts 4:32-37

➤ What has God revealed to you from the book of Acts this week?

Encounter the Living God

In Acts 4:23–31, Peter and John report their meeting with the Sanhedrin. The passage doesn't specify their location, but we do know that they were speaking to the gathered church. After the believers raised their voices together in prayer, the Lord revealed himself in three ways: The meeting place was shaken, the people were filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God boldly.

Would it be exciting to have your church meeting place shake because of the presence of the Lord? What about knowing that everyone around you was being filled with the Holy Spirit and would leave the gathering ready to speak boldly to others about Jesus? Maybe these experiences are more than most of us are prepared for. But God wants to meet us right here, right now. We must prepare our hearts and our minds to meet God whenever we come together in His name.

Certainly we all should come together with expectancy, believing that God will be present and will make himself known to all who truly seek him.

Small Group Lesson: Read Acts 4:23-35

1. What does this passage reveal about the presence of God?

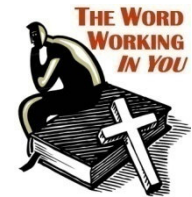
Read Psalm 84

2. In your own words express the desires and longings of the psalmist. Which of these longings do you share for yourself and our church?
3. According to this Psalm, what are some of the benefits that come when one's heart is set on God?
4. Reflect on a time when you have felt the presence of God is a powerful way. Share your experience with the group and how that has impacted you walk.

*Optional Lesson: The Church Encounters the Living God
By Dr. Charles Lake (Copies Available in Lobby)*

Action Step #2: Prepare to Meet with Your King

Whatever else you long for church to be, it is first and foremost a place to meet with God. But so often we walk away from church not having found him. That is not because he is not present but rather because we don't come prepared to meet him. A busy distracted life can prevent us from opening our hearts and mind to seeking to worship God. Unconfessed sin can be an obstacle when it comes to encountering the Lord. Who looks forward to meeting with a creditor you haven't made things right with? So instead of attending church as a routine part of your schedule or coming in feeling guilty, come prepared and come clean before God prior to entering his house. And come expectantly to meet your best friend and your God!



Directions: If you are struggling with sin, find a place to be quiet with the Lord sometime Saturday. "I feel really embarrassed about what I've done . . ." you can begin. Tell him how you have mixed feelings about going to church tomorrow; that you don't want to be a hypocrite. Then confess your sin and plead his forgiveness. When you've made things right before God, you'll be much freer to meet him in church and hear what he has to say to you. Assure him that your heart is open to his voice and you will hear from Him!

Before you come to worship at church, just spend some time with God, just the two of you, no distractions, and no agenda, except to praise and worship him in the quietness of your heart!

Be ready and excited to worship the Lord. Say, "I'm not sure what others want to tell you, but this Sunday I personally want to praise you for being . . . forgiving, kind, good, patient, true, etc." Know what your thoughts are and express them quietly during the music, prayer, and communion time. When we prepare ourselves to meet the King, we will. And when we stand in the presence of God, we are forever changed.

Action Step Follow-up

- I am prepared to meet with My King in worship today
- I am praying the looking & listening with Jesus Prayer

The Looking & Listening With Jesus Prayer

Lord, I long to be part of a caring church family,
But often I'm not sensitive to how people are really suffering.
Please teach me to see people like you do and to listen with your ears
of compassion.

I pray for [FILL IN A NEED YOU'VE HEARD RECENTLY].
Lord, help me respond with a heart that cares the way you do. Amen

Reflection: Describe your encounter with your Lord this week.



**I Like Church: Experiencing the Presence of God
Acts 4:32-35**

Headlines from Acts 3 and 4

- Peter and John heal a crippled man
- Peter preaches another sermon
- Peter and John arrested
- The Sanhedrin don't know how to stop this
- The Church gathers for prayer

How God's presence is experienced

(32)All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had. (33)With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all. (34)There were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales (35) and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone as he had need.

1. God's presence is experienced in their _____
2. God's presence is experienced in their _____
3. God's presence is experienced in their _____
4. God's presence is experienced in their _____