

## I like Church... that welcomes everyone! Acts 10

*Small Group & Personal Bible Study Lesson: Pastor Dennis Hadley*



### Daily Scripture Reading:

1. Acts 9:1-19
2. Acts 9:20-43
3. Acts 10:1-23
4. Acts 10:24-48
5. Acts 11

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

### Welcome All People

Jews and Gentiles knew they weren't welcome in each other's worlds. But that was changing. Acts 10:1–35 is a pivotal passage in Scripture, and Peter got it right: "God does not show favoritism." Christ's church was to be inclusive, not exclusive.

Welcoming others may not be hard, but it takes work. We must work at changing attitudes, at repenting of past wrongs, at learning how to show openness, at treating others in a Christ-like fashion, at recognizing the benefits of welcoming those we've kept at arm's length. Peter and Cornelius were surprised by what God had in mind. But their discovery allowed those of us who are Gentiles to be received into the family of God. *Excerpt used by permission from 50-day Spiritual Adventure*

### Small Group Lesson: Revelation 7:9-10

1. Who are the worshipers in this passage? What does this tell you about the believers you will be spending eternity with in heaven?
2. Have you ever experienced a worship service in a different culture? What did you like about it? How was it similar to your worship experience?

3. What are some specific ways in which you can help welcome all people to your church and get a taste of what heaven will be like?

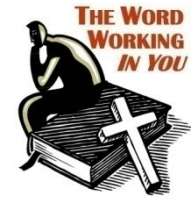
### Read James 2:1-5

4. Do you think our church welcomes all people regardless of how they look or dress? (Even bikers that ride in on Harleys)
5. According to this passage, why are we not to show favoritism?

*Optional Lesson: Stretch Your Comfort Zones by Roger Haber (Copies Available in Lobby)*

### Action Step #5: Connect with Individuals Outside Your Circle

How warmly do you welcome people who differ from you in race, class, age, or other ways? Not just in church, but in your whole life. How broad is your circle of friends? Do you feel comfortable with different kinds of people? We need to make it a point to get to know people who are not like us. In so doing, we will broaden our own horizons, breaking barriers, learning to understand and accept those of different backgrounds. Only then can we hope to see the same attitude within our churches.



**Directions:** Evaluate the circle of friends and associates you have now and think about ways in which you could enlarge your circle. Consider areas such as age, race, religion, economics, education, or marital and family status. Then, select a person who is outside your normal circle of friends. This may be someone you vaguely know at work or church or in the neighborhood, or just someone you pass every day but don't really know. Finally, find a way to get to know this person.

Arrange to go out for lunch or coffee, or brunch after church. Go bowling or attend a concert together. Remember, your purpose is simply to get to know someone new. Be a friend.

### Action Step Follow-up

- I have evaluated my group of friends and determined areas in which I can enlarge my circle of friends
- I have selected someone who I want to get to know better
- I have thought about ways in which I can become closer to that person
- I am listing one good thing every week about my church sharing it with someone
- I am asking the Holy Spirit to help me identify pollution in my life
- I am prepared to meet with My King in worship this week
- 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: How will expanding your circle of friends improve your walk with God?*



October 26, 2008

Pastor Tim Wood

### I Like Church: God is for Everyone Acts 10 – 11:18

The voice spoke to him a second time, "Do not call anything impure that God has made clean." Acts 10:15

Then Peter began to speak: "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right." Acts 10: 34 – 35

When they heard this, they had no further objections and praised God, saying, "So then, God has granted even the Gentiles repentance to life." Acts 11:18

#### 1. Two visions meet

a. A seeker of God – Cornelius

b. A servant of God – Peter

#### 2. What Peter learned about prejudice – Lessons for all of us in the church.