

**Week # 2**  
**“Acts: Mission, Movement, & Mandate of the Church” Series**  
**Cedar Grove Church – April 10, 2016**

**Leaders Guide**

**Acts 6 – 11**  
**Pastor Kevin Cavanaugh**



**NOTE TO LG LEADERS:**

Each Study guide provides you with more questions than you may have time to get through in your discussion. You do not need to cover them all. Choose the ones that will best suit your group and focus on those. Thanks, Pastor Ross

**GROUP DISCUSSION:**

1. An outline of chapters 6 to 11 of Acts was given as follows:
  - Ch. 6 – Complaint (v.1); Stephen (v.8-9)
  - Ch. 7 – Stephen’s Speech (v.1-3); Stoning (v.54-60)
  - Ch. 8 – Scattering (v.1-8); Samaria (v.14-18); Ethiopian (v.26-36)
  - Ch. 9 – Conversion (v. 1-6,26); Healings (v.34-35;40-42)
  - Ch. 10 – Gentiles (v.1-3); Vision (v.17-19); Reformation (v.27-29;40-46)
  - Ch. 11 – Criticism (v.1-4); Church Planting (v.25-26)
  
2. Sometimes complaints are justified and helpful. What was it that caused the Hellenistic Jewish Christians to complain against the Hebraic Jewish Christians in the early Church?
  - Hellenistic Jews were Jewish followers who had been raised in Greek culture, not Hebrew.
  - Their complaint was that their widows were not being fairly cared for in daily food distribution.
  
3. The Jewish leaders rose up in fury against Stephen and stoned him to death! What was it that Stephen did that caused such anger and evil reaction?
  - Stephen was healing and doing miracles that Jewish leaders could not do and that reminded them of Jesus, thus making them angry. When they confronted Stephen, he preached a message that showed, based on their own Scriptures, that they were fighting against God and that Jesus was the Messiah they claimed to be looking for. Accused and found guilty they killed the messenger!
  
4. Were these Jewish leaders justified in their complaints against Stephen? Yes or no? If not, why not? What circumstances or guidelines make a complaint legitimate?
  - One principle supporting necessary complaint, is to address behaviour, leadership decisions or teaching that is directly contradictory to the clear teaching of the Word of God.
  
5. As a result of the stoning of Stephen, persecution arose against the Church causing many of these early Christians to scatter all over the then-known world. As a result, the Gospel

spread, the church grew, and many more people came to faith in Jesus Christ (e.g. in Samaria, Ethiopia, Caesarea, Tarsus, Antioch, etc.! **Do you** (truly, really, from the bottom of your heart) **believe** that God can work ALL things out for good, as He did here? Share some of your experiences of how you've seen God work in your own life, in the midst of and out of bad events or circumstances.

- Romans 8:28 is one of the best known instructions for believers on this reality.
  - Repeatedly we are commanded to trust in the Lord with everything we have and promised that God will direct our steps, take care of us, work things out for our good.
6. What is the difference between a legitimate “complaint” and “a complaining spirit?” Please define the two.
- See # 4 above for on a legitimate complaint.
  - Someone with a complaining spirit is also referred to as a “gossiper.” They are never happy about anything, always fault-finding and critical and tend to respond to any positive observation with a “Yes, but ...” They breed division and discontent. This is destructive, not up-building.
7. Someone with a complaining spirit tends to be divisive in the Body of Christ. What is the biblical way to address someone who has a complaining spirit?
- Be friendly. Be fair. Be firm. Forewarn them, then hold them accountable to change.
8. Leaders can face many criticisms. Sometimes they are legitimate. Often they are not. **Hebrews 13:17** gives us this biblical reminder and guideline: *Have confidence in your leaders and submit to their authority, because they keep watch over you as those who must give an account. Do this so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no benefit to you.* (NIV) Ultimately every leader will give an account to God for the greater responsibility they have before God as leaders. List some things you/we can do individually and as a group that will make their work a joy and not a burden?
- Pray for them (take time to pray for church leaders in your prayer time).
  - Speak well of them; encourage them; build up the positive things they do.
  - If upset about a specific leadership action, talk directly to that leader privately and do not mention it to anyone else (i.e. don't gossip about it).

## **PRAYER TIME:**

1. Make time to share needs that members may have and close in prayer.
2. Pray especially for leaders of your church by name and pray wisdom, protection and blessing upon them.

[Encourage all group members to read the passages and memorize the verse this week . . .]

**This Week's Reading Assignment:** Acts, Chapters 6-11

**Memory verse:** Acts 11:18 – “When they heard this, they had no further objections and praised God, saying, ‘So then, even to Gentiles God has granted repentance that leads to life.’”