

# REACHING THE HURTING AND LOST

## GROUP GUIDE

Message: *Why the Church Matters*

Message Date: February 15, 2026

This guide has been written to help you think, learn and grow. May you, and those you walk with, find Jesus to be more than enough. May we grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (2 Peter 3:18), so that His love would compel us to reach those around us who are hurting and lost.

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### CONNECT

1. If new people have joined your group, take time to introduce yourselves to each other.
2. When you hear the word *church*, what words come to mind?
3. Name one way the church has influenced you.

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### PRAY

Spend a few minutes quieting your hearts and turning your attention toward God. Allow time for people to voice their prayers (open to anyone who wants to chime in), using these prayer prompts as a guide:

*God, I thank You for...*

*God, we pray for Brookwood that...*

*God, we pray for our community that...*

*God, we pray that during our time together You would...*

Add your own words of prayer and praise.

*The church is not meant to call people out of the world into a safe place, but to send them back into the world as agents of redemption.*

*– Leslie Newbigin,  
Foolishness to the Greeks: The Gospel and Western Culture*

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## SCRIPTURE MEMORY

Memorizing Scripture enables us to carry within us the life-giving, life-shaping words of God at all times in all places. Here's a verse to memorize based on this week's teaching:

*Nevertheless, more and more men and women believed in the Lord and were added to their number.*

**Acts 5:14 (NIV)**

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## STUDY AND DISCUSSION

- Don't worry about getting to all the questions. That's not the point. Be thoughtful and prayerful. Let the Holy Spirit guide your reflection and discussion.
- If your group has eight or more people it might be helpful to break into circles of four or five for greater participation and deeper discussion. When you come back together, invite each group to share a few takeaways from their conversation.

## READ ACTS 5:12-32

1. How would you describe the overall scene in verses 12-16? What repeated words, images or actions stand out to you?
2. What *signs and wonders* were happening among the people?
3. God's work through the apostles in the early church is described as *signs and wonders* in several other places in the New Testament (Acts 2:22, 43; 4:30; 6:8; 14:3; Romans 15:18-19; 2 Corinthians 12:12; Hebrews 2:3-4). What signs and wonders have you seen or experienced that convince you God is real?
4. What do you notice about how people responded to the apostles?
5. When have you seen God work powerfully in a way that also created discomfort, resistance or misunderstanding?
6. What kinds of needs do people bring to the apostles in this passage? What does that tell you about what people hoped Jesus could do?
7. The apostles go right back to teaching after being freed. What do you think motivates that kind of courage?
8. When the apostles are brought before the council again (verses 27-28), how do the leaders frame the problem? What are they most concerned about and what does that mean?
9. What does Peter mean by saying, "*We must obey God rather than men*" (verse 29)? What's an example of how that would look in your life if you had that perspective? What happens when we worry about what others think?
10. How does Peter describe Jesus in verses 30-31? What words or ideas stand out to you?

11. What would it look like for you or your group to live out the full message of this *new life* (vs. 20) in practical ways?
12. What does this passage suggest about what following Jesus might cost someone?
13. What emotions does this story stir in you—hope, curiosity, skepticism, confusion, admiration? Explain.
14. What questions does this passage raise for you about God, faith or authority?
15. How does this story challenge or confirm your expectations about faith and religion?
16. Where do you see people today searching for healing, hope or meaning like the crowds in this passage?
17. If this was the only passage of Scripture you had, how would you describe what it means to be a follower of Christ?

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## **THE BIG TAKEAWAY**

After reading this passage, what's one thought, question or takeaway you're sitting with right now? Pause and ask God what He wants you to know or think about. Allow time for Him to speak, being sensitive to thoughts that come to mind. Growing often comes by simply making yourself available to God.

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## **PRAY**

Invite someone to close your time in prayer.