

Acts 1:12–26: Staying in the Room

HOUSE GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE — IN (LOOKING BACK) · UP (LOOKING UP) · OUT (LOOKING FORWARD)

Before You Meet: This week we continue our series in Acts. After Jesus ascended, the disciples were given only one instruction — return to Jerusalem and wait. No roadmap, no timeline, just a room to sit in together. Through Peter's presence despite his recent failure, the disciples' devotion to prayer and Scripture, and the choice to stay near one another rather than scatter, we're invited to ask what it looks like to wait well instead of running ahead of God or running away from him.

The sermon content below is the **UP (Gospel)** portion of tonight's meeting — one third of the night. Don't let it swallow the whole evening. Give real time to IN and OUT as well; that's what makes this a House Group and not just a Bible study.

1

IN — Looking Back *(Community)*

Care · Worship · Celebrate Faithfulness · Motivation & Encouragement

Care

Go around the room and let people check in — highs and lows from the week, what's weighing on them, what they need prayer or practical help for. Take note of needs that might call for a meal, a text check-in, or a helping hand this week.

Worship

Take a few minutes to praise God together — a song, a moment of silence to reflect, or simply going around the room naming one thing from the week you're grateful to God for.

Celebrate Faithfulness

Before diving into the text, follow up on last week: did anyone take a step from last meeting's application — a conversation, a prayer, an act of obedience? Celebrate it out loud. Naming wins reminds the group that God is actually at work in each other's lives, not just in the abstract.

Motivation & Encouragement

Take a moment to encourage someone in the room — call out something you've genuinely seen God growing in them lately. This isn't flattery; it's naming grace at work.

2

UP — Looking Up *(Gospel — Sermon Discussion Guide)*

Feel free to reword questions or skip some — you don't need to cover them all. Pray through them and ask God to use them to create genuine conversation.

Background to Keep in Mind

- Acts 1:12–26 takes place in the days between Jesus's ascension and Pentecost — a stretch of time with nothing to do but wait.
- The upper room gathering included the eleven apostles, several women, Jesus's mother Mary, and his brothers.

- Peter's proposal to replace Judas draws directly on Psalm 69 and Psalm 109, showing how the earliest church read their present moment through Scripture.
- Acts 1:8 already named the mission ahead; this passage shows the disciples' posture in the room just before that mission begins.

Key Takeaways

- 1. Choose to Stay.** The disciples returned to Jerusalem rather than running ahead to fix things themselves or running away from what had just happened there. Waiting well starts with a deliberate choice to stay present to God, not a passive drift into either extreme.
- 2. Grace for the Failure.** Peter had just denied Jesus three times, yet he's in the room, and it's Peter who stands up to lead. His presence is a picture of how God uses even our most broken moments to prepare us for what's next — not because we've earned a place, but because grace already secured one.
- 3. One Step, Not the Whole Map.** Jesus gave the disciples a single clear instruction — wait in Jerusalem — not a full plan. Faithful obedience is usually about the next thing in front of us, not certainty about everything beyond it.
- 4. Near the Fire.** The disciples gathered together at the exact moment nothing was resolved. Like a coal pulled from the fire, isolation during a hard season costs us both our own warmth and our ability to warm anyone else.
- 5. Prayer and the Word.** The disciples discovered what to do next only through prayer and Scripture, not strategic planning. God's Word didn't just comfort them in the confusion of Judas's betrayal — through Psalm 69 and Psalm 109, it reframed what looked like disaster into something God had already anticipated.

Opening (Choose One)

- What's the longest you've ever had to wait for something, and how did you handle it?
- When life gets uncertain, are you more likely to take control and push ahead, or pull back and avoid it? Give a recent example.

Digging Into the Text

Read Acts 1:12–14. The apostles return to Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives and join together constantly in prayer, along with the women, Mary, and Jesus's brothers.

The sermon describes waiting as something we instinctively resist — we'd rather fix things ourselves or escape the discomfort. Where in your life right now are you most tempted to either run ahead of God or run away from a season of waiting? What does that temptation reveal about your trust in him?

Returning to Jerusalem meant going back to the place where Jesus had just been crucified — not the safe or convenient option. What is a form of obedience God may be calling you to right now that feels costly or uncomfortable?

Jesus gave the disciples only one clear instruction, not a full roadmap. How comfortable are you with obeying the one next step God has made clear, even when you cannot see the steps beyond it?

Read Acts 1:15–20. Peter stands up among the believers and interprets Judas's betrayal in light of Psalm 69 and Psalm 109.

Peter had just failed Jesus in the most public way possible, yet he's the one who stays in the room and leads. What does his presence there suggest about how God uses even our most broken moments to prepare us for what comes next?

Peter turned to Scripture to make sense of something that looked like pure disaster. How has God's Word ever helped you reinterpret a painful or confusing circumstance in your own life?

Read Acts 1:21–26. The group prays, casts lots, and Matthias is added to the eleven — a direction they never could have planned for when they started waiting.

The disciples discovered the need to replace Judas only through their time in prayer and Scripture, not through strategic human planning. What might God be trying to show you in your current season of waiting that you would never discover if you rushed past it?

Going Deeper

- The illustration of a coal pulled from the fire suggests that isolation during hard seasons causes us to lose both our warmth and our ability to warm others. In what ways might your current season of waiting be calling you deeper into community rather than away from it?
- The pastor argues that embracing the gospel is the only foundation that truly enables us to wait well — we don't run ahead to earn God's favor, and we don't run away in shame over past failure. How does reflecting on what Christ has already accomplished change the way you approach seasons where God seems silent or slow?
- Acts 1 describes the disciples as devoted to prayer in a way that kept it the nearest thing to them during their uncertainty. What does your default response when you do not know what to do reveal about how central prayer actually is in your life?

Closing Reflection

What would it practically look like in your daily life this week to rest in God's presence as sufficient — rather than waiting for your circumstances to change before you experience peace?

3

OUT — Looking Forward *(Mission)*

Preparing for the Mission · Going on Mission · Praying for the Mission

Preparing for the Mission

Set aside 30 minutes this week to honestly examine how you handle waiting. Ask: Am I tempted to run ahead, or to run away? Is prayer my first response or my last resort? Am I isolating in this season, or staying near the people God has put around me? Bring what you find to God in prayer, not performance.

- If your season of waiting feels heavy or confusing, spend time this week in a psalm that names it honestly — Psalm 27, Psalm 40, or Isaiah 40 are good starting points.
- Standing question: Who's willing to share next week how a season of waiting has shaped their faith? Let your leader know if you're willing. An honest, ordinary account of where God met you in the waiting does more to build real conviction in a group than a highlight reel.

Going on Mission

Identify one person in your life who is currently in a hard season of waiting — grief, uncertainty, a diagnosis, a delay — and commit to praying for them by name this week. Let God examine your own motives first: are you hoping to fix them, or do you actually want to sit with them in it?

- Read through Acts 1 again this week, slowly, and notice every place the disciples chose togetherness, prayer, or Scripture over control.
- Look for one ordinary way to stay near that person this week — a text, a meal, simply showing up without an agenda to fix anything.
- Don't wait until you have the right words. Make one concrete, low-pressure invitation this week — a coffee, a call, an invite to House Group — and let God carry the outcome.

Praying for the Mission

Go around the room and share, by name, someone you know who is in a hard season of waiting. Pray for them together — that God would be near, that they wouldn't have to wait alone, and that his presence would be enough.

Closing

Close your time together by praying as a group for the postures we saw in this passage — that you would choose to stay rather than run ahead or run away, that you would obey the one next step God has made clear, that you would stay near community rather than isolating, and that prayer and Scripture would be the first place you turn rather than the last. This is what it looks like to wait well — not because the waiting has ended, but because God is enough while it lasts.