

TAKEAWAY:

God prepares His church through prayerful dependence and trust in His sovereign plan.

INTRODUCTION QUESTIONS:

- Describe a time when you had to wait for God's direction. What was that experience like? What was the outcome?
- Why is it so hard to wait when we're uncertain about the future?
- Have you ever encountered anyone rejecting the resurrection of Jesus?

UNDERSTANDING:

Have a group member read Acts 1:12-26

- How did this sermon help you better understand this passage of scripture? Is there anything that was mentioned during the sermon that stuck out to you?
- What's the difference between passive waiting and the active, prayerful waiting described in V.12-14?
- How did the apostles use Scripture to make sense of Judas's betrayal?
- The apostles prayed and then cast lots, trusting God's providence. How do you balance seeking God's will with taking action?
- Why was it important that the candidate for apostle be an individual who accompanied the other apostles “during the whole time the Lord Jesus went in and out among us- begining from the baptism of John until the day he was taken up from us” (1:21-22)?

APPLICATION:

- What current confusion or pain in your life might God want you to bring to Scripture?
- Where in your life do you need to trust God's sovereignty instead of trying to control outcomes?

GO DEEPER:

The Go Deeper section has two potential functions. It can supplement your small group discussion by providing extra discussion material.

You can also use these sections as short devotionals to carry you through the week until your next group meeting and to deepen your study of our text from this week. Here are two "Going Deeper" discussion prompts that build upon the above provided questions without repeating them:

The Heart-knower: The prayers in the Bible portray people who believe God knows what is going on and can intervene in their situation. In Acts 1:24-25, the disciples call the Lord “the heart-knower or heart-searcher” (καρδιογνωστής, *kardiognōstēs*); here this word is in the vocative case and therefore a clear use of it as a title for God. Similarly, in Rev 2:23 God is described as the one "who searches

hearts and minds"; 1 Sam 2:3, "the God who knows." That God sees all and knows all, see also 1 Sam 16:7; 1 Kings 8:39; 1 Chron 28:9; Ps 7:9; 26:1-3; 139:1-2, 15-18, 23-24; 19:11-14; Pro 15:11; 17:3; 21:2; Jer 11:20; 17:10; 20:12; Matt 6:3-4; Luke 16:15; Acts 1:24; 15:8; Rom 8:27; 1 Cor 4:4-5; 1 Thes 2:4.

- How should the realization that God is the knower of hearts change the way believers approach personal hypocrisy and secret sins?
- How should God's knowledge of the heart challenge the human tendency to judge others by outward cultural or religious appearances?
- Why is it ultimately comforting rather than terrifying that the God who selects and calls individuals "knows the hearts of all men" (Acts 1:24) better than they know themselves?
- How can contemporary search committees practically rely on the *kardiognōstēs* when interviewing candidates whose outward resumes and credentials all appear equally flawless?
- In what specific areas of modern church life is there the greatest disconnect between outward declarations and inward reality?

Doing verse Waiting: Explore with your LG the tension between the urgency of the Great Commission and Christ's command to wait in Jerusalem (Acts 1:12-14).

- What psychological tensions arise when believers are commanded to pause rather than act?
- How does the biblical concept of "waiting" differ from mere passive delay or idleness?
- In what specific ways does modern culture actively condition individuals to resist the discipline of waiting?
- How can a community discern the difference between a divine command to wait and human procrastination?
- What recent personal experiences illustrate the spiritual fruit that is cultivated solely through periods of delayed gratification?

Quotes:

- "Thou, Lord, who knowest the hearts of all men, which we do not, and better better than they know their own." John Wesley
- "The word *kardiognōstēs*, the searcher of hearts, seems to be used here as an attribute of God; he knows the hearts, the most secret purposes, intentions, and dispositions of all men..." Adam Clarke
- "Waiting on the Lord is not a passive thing. Waiting on the Lord means... going into the tower... putting things in perspective... it also means being obedient." Tim Keller
- "Active waiting means to be present fully to the moment, in the conviction that something is happening where you are and that you want to be present to it. A waiting person is a patient person. The word 'patient' comes from the Latin verb *patior*, which means 'to suffer.' To wait patiently is to suffer through the present moment, tasting it to the full, and letting the seeds that are sown in the ground on which we stand grow into strong plants." Henri Nouwen
- "Hurry is the great enemy of spiritual life in our day. You must ruthlessly eliminate hurry from your life... We must identify the psychological and social forces that drive us to be in a hurry and then we must strip them of their power." Dallas Willard

PRAYER:

Pray for patience in waiting, wisdom from Scripture, and trust in God's sovereign plan for your life and church.