DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to help you talk about God's word and Pastor Brian's message with friends and family. You of course can use your own questions, but we'd like to give you this tool to encourage Biblical fellowship and discipleship in your circle of relationships. ***Enjoy discovering more about Him!***

"WAITING - PREPARING" |ACTS 1: 12-26 | PASTOR BRIAN BELL

WARM-UP QUESTION:

- **What is something you tend to do while you have to wait for something you want?**

"Stay Together In Prayer" Acts 1: 12-14

Jesus' followers return to the upper room in Jerusalem. They were united in their devotion to prayer.

- **When is it appropriate to pray alone and when is it good to pray with others?**
- **What benefits have you experienced from praying in a group with others?**

"Bring the Pain Under God's Word" Acts 1: 15-20

Peter meets with Jesus' followers to talk about the pain of Judas' betrayal. Scripture shows them they need to fill his spot.

- **When has the Bible helped you understand your circumstances and to know how to respond?**

"Value Faithfulness That Bears Witness" Acts 1: 21-23

Peter explains the new apostle must be one who has faithfully been with Jesus from the beginning so they can share about Him.

- **Whose quiet faithfulness to serving Jesus is an example to you?**
- **How could you encourage or thank them for their faithfulness?**

"Entrust the Next Step to Jesus" Acts 1: 24-26

The group prays, acknowledging Jesus is in control, and then cast lots. Mattias becomes one of the apostles.

- **What steps could you take in a decision that would show humility, responsibility and sensitivity to the Holy Spirit?**

REFLECTION AND APPLICATION QUESTIONS:

The followers of Jesus obeyed and waited for the Holy Spirit through prayer. They also let Scripture guide them as they faced pain and had to make a decision. They humbly trusted Jesus with the outcome, knowing He was in control.

- **What clear step of obedience can you take while you wait for further direction from God?**
- **What decision do you need to entrust to the Lord?**
- **What disappointment or betrayal do you need to bring honestly before Jesus?**
- **Make time this week to have a heart to heart talk with God about your pain and your direction.**

Acts 1:12-26 **11-22-26**

Waiting - Preparing

I. Announce:

A. Welcome to those watching online.

B. Slide1-4 AP: CFLC. Welcome Team. R&R. Missions Prayer.

C. Prayer:

II. Slide5 Intro: *Waiting - Preparing*

A. UNLEASHED. Acts 1:12-26

B. Theme: **Prayerful** dependence and **Preparation** for the mission of Jesus.

1. Big Idea: As we **wait** for Jesus to fulfill His promises, we **prepare** through *united **prayer**, attention to **His Word**, and trust in **His guidance***.

C. Waiting can be hard when you know there's something to do. You're ready to move forward, but you're still waiting for an answer, an opportunity, or some direction.

1. Some of us are there right now. We're praying about a family member, a decision, or *the next season of life*. We'd like to know what happens next.
2. That's where we find the disciples. Jesus is alive. He has commissioned them to be His witnesses to the ends of the earth. Then He has ascended to heaven, leaving them with a **promise** and an **instruction** *to wait in Jerusalem.*

D. Between the **ascension** and **Pentecost** - Luke lets us into the room where they're gathered. They **pray**, face the **painful vacancy** left by Judas, and **seek** the Lord's direction. Jesus is preparing a people to carry His message.

E. Notice how ordinary this part of Acts feels. People walk back to town, gather in a room, open the Scriptures, and pray about a decision.

1. We may recognize more of our own normal week here than we expect.

III. Slide6 1. STAY TOGETHER IN PRAYER (12-14) Our Dependence

A. (12-14) *Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away. 13 And when they had entered, they went up to the upper room, where they were staying, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot and Judas the son of James. 14* ***All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer****, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.* [**Focus:** vs.14]

B. **They returned where Jesus told them to go.** Vs.12 brings them from the Mount of Olives back to *Jerusalem*. (*Remember*, Jesus had already told them in vs.4 to wait there)

C. *What did they do during the 10 days between the **promise** of ***power*** & its **arrival**?

1. They **prayed** with persistence, **obedient** to Jesus' command to wait, and **unity** - gathering *with one accord*. [10 days? 40 + 10 = 50/Penta]
2. Also, These disciples had experienced *competition, criticism, denial, and doubt*. Perhaps these days also brought reconciliation, as different notes began to form a harmony. Their prayerful dependence created an **atmosphere** of readiness to receive what God had promised.
   a) Together, **they cried out** for His **power** in what would become one of history's **most significant prayer meetings**!

D. **They gathered with one another.** Luke names the 11 apostles, then includes the women, Mary the mother of Jesus, and His brothers. This is important: *This praying community reaches beyond the apostles.* People with different stories are learning to depend on the same Lord.

1. Think about the grace in that room. **Peter** is there after ***denying*** Jesus. **Thomas** is there after ***struggling to believe***. **Jesus' brothers**, who had earlier been ***unbelieving***, are now among those praying. Their presence reminds us how much Jesus can change a person's story.

E. **They devoted themselves to prayer.** *"With one accord"* describes their shared purpose. They kept turning toward God together. Their **waiting** had something to do in it. They brought themselves ***before*** the Father and ***depended*** on His promise.

1. For us at CM, **prayer** needs room in the actual life of our ministries. We can ask the Lord *to open hearts, strengthen weary servants, give wisdom, and make us ready to follow Him*.

F. **Eg:** A family waiting at the hospital may have very little control over what happens next. Sitting together, holding a hand, and praying become ***meaningful acts of love***.

1. Sometimes the most faithful thing we can do is **stay close** to one another, and bring our ***helplessness*** to God.

G. **Application:** If **waiting** has made you withdraw, consider inviting someone to **pray *with* you**. You don't need a polished explanation. You can say, *"This is where I am. Would you help me bring it to the Lord?"*

H. What clear step of **obedience** can you take while you **wait** for further direction? **Who** could **pray** with you about what you're *carrying* right now?

IV. Slide7 2. BRING THE PAIN UNDER GOD'S WORD (15-20) Our Perspective

A. (15-20) *In those days Peter stood up among the brothers (the company of persons was in all about 120) and said, 16 "Brothers, **the Scripture had to be fulfilled**, which the Holy Spirit spoke beforehand by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus. 17 For he was numbered among us and was allotted his share in this ministry." 18 (Now this man acquired a field with the reward of his wickedness, and falling headlong he burst open in the middle and all his bowels gushed out. 19 And it became known to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the field was called in their own language*(Aramaic) *Akeldama, that is, Field of Blood.) 20 "For it is written in the Book of Psalms, 'May his camp become desolate, and let there be no one to dwell in it'* (Ps.69)*; and 'Let another take his office.'* (Ps.109) [**Focus:** vs.16]

B. **Peter Speaks About a Painful Loss.** About 120 believers are gathered when Peter stands. Judas had ***shared in*** their ministry and then **guided** those who arrested Jesus. Luke's account of his death, and the *Field of Blood* underlines the terrible outcome of his betrayal.

1. Vs.17 makes it personal. Judas had been numbered among them and had received *a share in the ministry*. These believers had *traveled, eaten, and served* alongside him. Now - his place - was empty.
2. A betrayal can raise questions that reach *beyond* the person who hurt us. We may wonder whom to trust, or what to make of *our own judgment*. **A church** can feel that pain, too. This passage gives us room to acknowledge **how serious** *a breach of trust* can be.

C. **Peter Turns to the Scriptures.** He understands what has happened in light of what the Holy Spirit spoke *beforehand* through David. In vs.20 he draws on Psalms 69 & 109, applying words of judgment and replacement to Judas.

1. Judas was responsible for his betrayal. At the same time, that betrayal fell within the events Scripture anticipated. Jesus' enemies had been unable to overturn God's purpose. Even through *the suffering of the cross*, the Lord had carried out His saving work.

D. **God's Word Helps Them Take the Next Step.** Peter's use of Scripture leads toward the appointment of another *apostolic witness*. The community can face what happened and prepare to **continue** its calling.

1. We need the **patience** to let God's Word *shape our response* to painful circumstances. That means **hearing** it in context, receiving its **correction**, and allowing its **promises** to steady us. Some wounds also need *time, wise care, and honest conversation*.

E. **Eg:** After a storm, a family checks what has been damaged and what is still secure. They need to see **both** before they can *begin repairs*.

1. In seasons of **disappointment**, Scripture helps us see *the **faithfulness of God***, while we deal honestly with ***the damage***.

F. **Application:** If another person's failure has shaken you, bring that wound to Jesus. Talk with someone trustworthy. Let the Lord ***care for the places*** where trust has been broken. His work in your life can continue … as you heal.

G. What **disappointment** or **betrayal** do you need to bring honestly before the Lord? What **passage of Scripture** is helping you understand your circumstances and

respond faithfully?

V. Slide8 3. VALUE FAITHFULNESS THAT BEARS WITNESS (21-23)

Our Preparation

A. (21-23) *So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, 22 beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us - one of these men must become with us* ***a witness to his resurrection****." 23 And they put forward two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also called Justus, and Matthias.* [**Focus:** vs.22]

B. **Peter Explains What This Role Requires.** The replacement must have accompanied them during Jesus' ministry, from the baptism of John until His ascension. He must **join** the apostles as ***a witness to the resurrection***.

1. These requirements belong to this particular appointment among the 12. The church's testimony would rest on people who knew Jesus' ministry and could testify that He had risen. This helps us understand the **weight** of ***the apostolic witness*** we receive in Scripture.

C. **Two Men Are Put Forward.** Joseph, called Barsabbas aka Justus, and Matthias meet the qualifications. They have already been present for years. By the time their names appear here, they have ***a history of walking*** *with the other disciples*.

1. It's easy to *read past them* because we know so little about them. But consider the life behind that brief mention. They had stayed close enough to Jesus and His followers to be considered for this responsibility.

D. **Much Preparation Happens In Ordinary Faithfulness.** We can draw encouragement from their years of presence and service. Following Jesus over time matters. So does growing in character, listening to His Word, and learning to care for people.

1. In our own church, think of the people who **keep showing up**. Someone visits a person who's lonely. Someone prepares a lesson for children. Someone prays for a missionary and stays in touch. The Lord sees the love behind that service.

E. **Application:** What does faithfulness looks like in the responsibility you already have? There may be a person to encourage, a commitment to honor, or a habit the Lord wants to reshape. Let Him prepare you through your present calling.

1. And as we **raise up leaders**, we should take time to notice ***character and a steady walk with Jesus***. We need people who will help others know & follow Him.

F. Where is Jesus inviting you to be faithful in an ordinary responsibility? Whose quiet faithfulness could you recognize and encourage this week?

VI. Slide9a **4. ENTRUST THE NEXT STEP TO JESUS (24-26)** Our Confidence

A. *24 And they prayed and said, "You, Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which one of these two you have chosen 25 to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place." 26 And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.* [**Focus:** vs.24]

B. Slide9b **They Pray Before They Decide.** They have considered Scripture, identified the qualifications, and put forward 2 men. Now they ask the Lord to show which one He has chosen.

1. Their prayer acknowledges something deeply reassuring. The Lord knows every heart. These believers could recognize experience and testimony. Jesus knew each man *completely*. They entrusted the choice to Him.

2. We often reach the limits of what we can know about a decision. We can *gather information, seek wise counsel, and examine our motives*. Then we bring *our limitations* to the Lord who knows us fully.

C. **They Cast Lots, And Matthias Is Chosen.** The use of lots had an OT precedent. Here, it follows *Scripture, shared consideration, and prayer.* Luke records Matthias being numbered with *the eleven*, & in Acts 2:14 Peter stands with *the eleven* again.

1. Luke gives us no rebuke of this appointment. The narrative presents *the apostolic group restored* as they approach Pentecost. This account describes how they sought the Lord in this particular moment. The

broader lesson for our decisions is their humble dependence on His knowledge and choice.

2. Peter doing it this way, right or wrong? Some question whether Peter acted too quickly in choosing Matthias, suggesting they limited God to 2 men, or should have waited for Paul.

   a) Yet Paul didn't meet the qualifications in (vs.21,22), and Matthias's absence from the rest of Acts tells us little, since Matthew and Bartholomew also disappear from its narrative. Luke records no correction of their decision.

   b) What stands out is their process: They took initiative, searched the Scriptures, prayed together, and entrusted the choice to the Lord, *who knows every heart*. Matthias had faithfully accompanied Jesus and the apostles for years before this moment.

D. **We Can Move Forward With Prayerful Trust.** We seek guidance through *Scripture, prayer, wise counsel, and the Spirit's leading.* We also remain teachable as we act. The Lord understands *our desire to obey* & can *correct us* along the way.

1. **Eg.** A child taking a parent's hand can walk into an unfamiliar place with greater confidence. The parent understands things the child cannot yet see. We can bring **that kind of trust** to Jesus as we *take a responsible* **next step**.

E. **Casting Lots was an Established Way of Seeking God's Direction**. Prov.16:33 says, *The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD.*

1. Acts 1 records **its final use** for guidance in the NT, after Pentecost, Acts emphasizes the Holy Spirit guiding believers through *prayer, Scripture, and His direction*. - Luke offers *no criticism* of the apostles' decision here, but their example invites us to consider how we seek guidance today. Are we growing in our *attentiveness to the Spirit* and learning to follow His leading?

F. **What decision** do you need to entrust to the Lord - who knows every heart? What would humble, responsible **action** look like - as you seek His guidance?

VII. Slide10a **JESUS CONNECTION**

A. The Resurrection Stands at the Center of this Passage. The church needs **a witness** who can testify that **Jesus is Alive**. Their future depends on the risen Lord who has promised to send His Spirit.

B. And look at Peter. The man who denied Jesus is now helping the gathered believers prepare for the mission. Jesus had met him in his *failure* and restored him. **There is grace here** for those of us who know how badly we've stumbled.

1. Slide10b **If** you have sinned, turn toward the Savior who died for you and rose again, bring Him the **truth**. **If** you've been wounded, bring Him your **hurt**. **If** you've been waiting, stay close to Him, and to His people.

C. This week, we can pray together, open His Word, and serve the people He has placed before us. As we do - we entrust the future to the living Jesus who knows our hearts.

D. Prayer:

E. Keywords: waiting, preparing, praying.