

TABLE TALK

FAMILY DISCUSSION GUIDE for October 9-October 15, 2022

“ACTS IN 30” Chapter 20: The Pastoral Heart of the Apostle Paul

CHAPTER OVERVIEW: Since the riots in Ephesus initially caused Paul to leave, he decides to travel throughout Macedonia to re-visit and strengthen some of the other churches he helped establish on his previous missionary journeys. Throughout Acts 20, Luke the narrator gives beautiful descriptions of how “pastoral” the Apostle Paul was in his everyday ministry. The chapter ends with a powerful scene of Paul pulling together the Elders from the church in Ephesus where he spent 3 years helping to establish. This Apostle is also a Pastor.

DAY 1: A Pastor of Encouragement

READ: Acts 20:1-6

REFLECT: Luke the writer of Acts joins with Paul and the other missionary companions. This enables Luke to record Paul’s actions from an eye-witness perspective. One of the primary ways Paul ministered to churches was through much “*encouragement*” (v.1 and v. 2).

JOURNAL or DISCUSS:

Context Question: The Greek word for “encouragement” here is “*parakaleo*” which means to, “call,” to “comfort” and or to “exhort” from an up-close and personal distance. Why do you think Paul chose to encourage them in-person versus in a letter?

Application Question: Who is someone in your life who is an “encourager” to you? Do you have encouragers around you who are older, younger, or around the same age as you? Why is it important to have encouragers in your life?

DAY 2: The Holy Spirit Uses Pastor Paul to Resurrect a Teenager from the Dead

READ: Acts 20:7-12

REFLECT: As Paul is preaching in Troas, a youth named Eutychus was sitting in a window, listening to the message. However, when the message went on well past midnight, Eutychus fell into a deep sleep and plunged 3 stories down to his death. The Holy Spirit led Paul to lay himself on him and breathe new life back into him! The whole city was greatly encouraged by this miracle.

JOURNAL or DISCUSS:

Context Question: This story is remarkably similar to two Old Testament stories: I Kings 17:21-23 and II Kings 4:32-34. Read those two stories and compare them with Paul’s ministry to Eutychus in Acts 20. What are some similarities that you notice?

Application Question: The Holy Spirit gives believers today the power do miracles, just like we read about in the Book of Acts (see I Corinthians 12:8-11). It’s important to note that these powers **do not originate from a person**, but **from the Spirit** and they are to be used to build up the church. Have you experienced or heard of a physical healing before?

DAY 3: The Humility of Pastor Paul

READ: Acts 20:13-27

REFLECT: Pastor Paul feels led by the Spirit to be in Jerusalem in time for the Festival of Shavuot (Pentecost) in Jerusalem. Instead of traveling back through Ephesus, Paul calls for the churches that he established in Ephesus to send their Elders for a **face to face** meeting with him. He reminds them of how humbly served them for 3 years; encouraging, strengthening and establishing them in their faith.

JOURNAL or DISCUSS:

Context Question: In verse 27, Pastor Paul states that he did not hold back from declaring to them, “*the whole counsel of God.*” Some may shy away from the hard teachings of God’s Word in order to draw crowds – ending up only sharing “part” of the counsel of God. Why is it important to be in a church that shares all of God’s Word and not just “parts” of it?

Application Question: What are some ways you can stay “*humble*” (v. 19) while serving the Lord, like Paul did in Ephesus for 3 years?

DAY 4: Pastor Paul Reminds the Elders that Jesus said, “*It is more blessed to give than to receive.*”

READ: Acts 20:28-38

REFLECT: Pastor Paul warns the Elders of Ephesus that many “*wolves*” (v. 29) will come in to try and draw many of the people in their churches, “*away to themselves*” (v. 30). Having encouraged them to always, “guard” the flock that God has placed under their care, he reminds them of the faithful words of Jesus that they will always be “*more blessed*” when they “*give than*” when they “*receive*” (v. 35).

JOURNAL or DISCUSS:

Context Question: Pastor Paul spells out the traits of good pastor/shepherds (v. 28) and contrasts it with selfish, unhealthy leadership (vs. 30). What are traits of good pastor/shepherds in v. 29 and what are some traits of unhealthy ones in v. 30?

Application Question: Do you agree with Jesus that, “*it is more blessed to give than to receive?*” If so, what are some ways that you demonstrate **giving** in these 3 key areas to the Kingdom of God in your home church: **time, treasure, and talent?** Do you feel more blessed when you give in these areas? Why or why not?
