

Community Groups are the primary vehicle for discipleship at The Gathering. It is through the interaction that takes place in each of these groups that will enable people to begin moving from being drawn to God to a life that is being deepened by God. Use it as a resource to lead your group in discovering, owning, and applying the truths of God's Word. There may be aspects you do not want to use and there may be instances where you just want to focus on a particular point or truth. Some questions may bring out emotions and cause people to dwell on an aspect of their relationship with God. Use this as a flexible teaching tool not a rigid group task list.

Consider...

Use the summary and discussion to review and apply this week's message:

Message Summary

No matter how long we've lived and no matter if we even live our lives following Jesus, we all have one thing in common: jerks. In Acts 12, the early church encountered a jerk by the name of Herod, who had James arrested and beheaded and then turned his sights on Peter. But what the young church learned (as well as the jerk) was that the church is an unstoppable force, and because it is, we should do 3 things:

1. **Pray again:** It's one thing to pray, but when things don't go the way we had hoped (like James being killed in prison instead of being delivered from prison), we have to make the decision to pray again, and when Peter was arrested, that's exactly what the early church did. They knew that even though individual members of the church may be stopped, the church cannot be, and that changes how we pray.
2. **Look again:** It's amazing to think about, but these early believers prayed again, but didn't have the faith to believe that God would actually answer the prayers! In fact, when Peter showed up at the door, they didn't believe the servant girl who heard him. Yes, it's important to have growing faith, but it's so much more important that we put whatever faith we do have in the right object. When we know God is able to sustain his church, it gives us the faith we need to look again, just like the believers did when they went back to the door and opened it to see the answer to their prayers.
3. **Consider again:** Herod stood against the church and died, but the word of God and the church of God lived on. Understanding that the church is an unstoppable force should cause us to consider again which side of that force we are on! We need to make sure that we have put ourselves on the same team as the best player (see Romans 8:31).

Discuss

Use the following questions to review and apply the points learned in the message.

- What was one helpful, eye-opening, or troubling insight or principle from this week's message?
- How does it affect you when your prayers seem to go unanswered? Does it make it easier or harder to pray for other things?
- Read Colossians 4:12 and discuss how much the word "wrestling" accurately describes your prayer life? What parts of wrestling can you relate to in your prayer life? What parts can't you relate to?
- Have you ever been surprised by an answered prayer (like the disciples were when Peter showed up after being set free from prison)? Why do you think we get so surprised?
- What does it mean to "watch and pray" like Jesus said we should in Mark 14:38?
- How does knowing that the church is an unstoppable force change the way you view the church? Jesus? The circumstances you're facing right now in your life?
- Read Daniel 10:12 and 1 John 5:13-15. Discuss the difference it makes in our prayers when we know that God hears us. How can reading and learning the Bible (the written referred to in 1 John 5:13) help us pray according to God's will in 1 John 5:14?