



The American church is struggling. The culture has become hostile toward Christianity. Financially we are not as secure as we used to be. And many people view the church as irrelevant. Yet the answer is not some new program or improved way of doing ministry – we need revival! We desperately need to experience the power and presence of God. In the book of Acts we learn that the only way for this to happen is by depending upon God together in prayer. So, if you're ready for a fresh encounter with God, come learn to pray together and expect him to do great things.

Discussion Questions: (Leaders please review each question and pick those that will be most beneficial for your group.)

1. How do you see the kingdom of God advancing in the world today? In our community? In your life?
2. In the book of Acts we see God's kingdom advancing (Acts 11:19-30). Yet in the midst of this growth they encountered severe persecution. The question we want to answer is this: How did they respond when someone in the body of Christ was persecuted for the gospel and how should we? **Read Acts 12:1-25.** What happened? How did the church respond? What were the results?
3. In order to respond like they did, we must believe three truths: First, **Christ-followers can expect opposition to the gospel.** Describe the opposition to the gospel in Acts 12. According to 1 Corinthians 1:18 why should we not be surprised when people directly or indirectly oppose the gospel?
4. The second truth we must believe is that **Jesus Christ is the Sovereign King and his kingdom will prevail.** Who seems to be in charge at the start of this story (Acts 12:1-4)? Who is clearly in charge at the end of this story (Acts 12:21-25)? Despite what you see and feel today, do you believe God's kingdom is advancing and that he will triumph in the end?
5. The third truth we must believe is that **God uses the prayers of his people to advance his kingdom on earth.** God does not need us but he chooses to involve us to accomplish his purposes. One of the primary ways he does this is through our prayers for others. How does this affect your view of prayer?
6. Hebrews 13:3 summarizes what we see lived out in Acts 12. It says "Remember those in prison as if you were their fellow prisoners, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering." Why should persecuted Christians be a concern for us? How can we better remember to pray for the persecuted Christians around the world today? What will you do to remember those brothers and sisters who are being persecuted for Christ today?