

BIBLE TEACHING AND WORSHIP GUIDE



FOR THE HOME-BASED CHURCH

Produced Weekly

Minister to People's Needs

Acts 2:43-45; 3:1-8; 1 Corinthians 16:1-3; James 2:14-17

Copy this sheet for the Gathering Time, Bible Study, and Worship Experience leaders for the next meeting of the church.

Leaders' Responsibilities:

Important: Each person who will be leading one of the three parts of a session during a Unit of sessions needs to have access to the "Basic Information for Leading the Unit of Study". That information is often provided at the beginning of that Unit of sessions. The weekly session "Background" located in the Teacher Preparation is much more specific to that day's study.

1. **The Gathering Time Leader** will gather all of the people together and help them prepare their minds and hearts for a wonderful worship experience before God. His/her responsibility is to introduce the congregation to the theme (content) and the Scripture that will be central to their worship experience for the day.

2. **The Bible Study Leader** will then help the people understand what the Scriptures have to say and teach us about the content of the study for the day. He/she will guide the people to make a general application of the study (ie: How does this Bible study apply to people today?)

3. **The Worship Time Leader** has the responsibility to use the theme and Scriptures to guide the congregation to make personal commitments to God's will for each one in regard to the study for the day. He/she will use others to lead in the music, taking the offering, ministry moment comments, and other activities and parts of the **Worship Time** that can aid in participatory worship.

Prior to this Coming Session:

Gathering Time Leader:

For the Gathering Time today, ready pre-moistened washcloths for each person of every age and one sign that says, "I am your servant". Make it suitable to be worn by a member.

If you want the group to read the words of the two hymns quoted in the Gathering Time, then make copies from the final page of this session.

Have someone prepare lemonade (with cups or glasses) to be served during the first break.

Bible Study Leader:

Bring items for display that deal with personal financial records such as a chequebook register, Quicken spending chart, perhaps a letter from a charity requesting donations, and an appointment book or electronic calendar of some type.

Copy the form for youth application time found on the next-to-last page of this session (after worship time).

Worship Time Leader:

Music Sources:

“Make Me a Servant” *Maranatha, Music Praise* (1983) #154

“The Servant Song” *Maranatha, Music Praise Expanded 3rd Edition*, (1993) #261

“Because I Have Been Given Much” *The Baptist Hymnal* (1991) #605

“Make Me a Blessing” *The Baptist Hymnal* (1991) #569

Gathering Time: (Suggested time: 15 minutes)***Minister to People's Needs******Focal Text***

Acts 2:43-45; 3:1-8; 1 Corinthians 16:1-3; James 2:14-17

Background

Acts 2:42-47; 3:1-10; 1 Corinthians 16:1-3; James 2:14-17

Main Idea

A New Testament church ministers to people's needs.

Question to Explore

In what ways does our church minister to people's needs?

Teaching Aim

To lead the group to identify ways they will minister to people's needs.

Gathering together:

Just before people arrive, warm a stack of pre-moistened washcloths (disposable, if available). Have someone pass them out to each person as they enter the room. If the person handing out the washcloths is an adult, ask them to wear a sign that says, "I am your servant."

Open the session with the group singing: "Make Me a Servant" (#154, *Maranatha, Music Praise*).

First thoughts:

When the planning committee for Mission 70, an international university student gathering in Atlanta, Georgia, USA, following Christmas, 1969, needed a new song by which to express the theme, they asked Ed Seabough to compose the words. Ed had written music for other occasions, and was a director for the placement of missionaries in a large missionary organization. From the very outset, it was clear the direction the meeting would take. Not only would there be outstanding speakers, great singing,

drama, and small group meetings – there would also be opportunity for university students to get involved in helping in slum areas of the city. They scraped peeling paint and gave tenant houses a new coat of glistening paint. They raked, hoed, and gathered rubbish that had been carelessly tossed aside.

All this was planned, and the program directors needed music that would capture the feeling and excitement of this great mission gathering. Ed's final production was entitled, "Here is my Life". The song was learned then and there, and sung over and over throughout the three-day meeting. When the students left for their far-flung homes across the nations, they went singing, "Here is my Life."

Lord, you placed me in this world of time and space
and missiles hurled,
With eyes I've seen the ghetto gloom,
With ears I've heard the sonic boom,
And man cry out for breathing room,
I cannot wait, I cannot wait!

Here is my life, I want to live it,
Here is my life, I want to give it, serving my fellow man,
doing the will of God,
Here is my life! Here is my life! Here is my life!

Words by Ed Seabough, 1969. © Copyright 1969 Broadman Press. All rights reserved.

Another poet/song writer of another day and time was able to catch the deeper meaning of being a Christian, and expressed it in these words:

"Where Cross the Crowded Ways of Life"

Where cross the crowded ways of life,
Where sound the cries of race and clan,
Above the noise of selfish strife,
We hear thy voice, O Son of man.

In haunts of wretchedness and need,
On shadowed thresholds dark with fears,
From paths where hide the lures of greed,
We catch the vision of thy tears.

From tender childhood's helplessness,
From woman's grief, man's burden'd toil,
From famished souls, from sorrow's stress,
Thy heart has never known recoil.

Frank Mason North, 1903, Public Domain

Closing the Gathering Time:

The call to salvation and church membership is a call to minister to human needs.

Prayer: Lord, we ask for eyes that see, and ears that hear the cries of our fellow humans. We ask for hearts that feel and hands outstretched to lift the burden under which people labour. We ask for wisdom to speak the message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to hearts that are hungry for a word of hope. Amen.

Take time at this point to mention items of prayer concern for the church, announcements of ministry or activities, and anything else that needs to be shared with or by the congregation. Pray for these needs. Remember to praise God in prayer.

Break time! Take five minutes between sessions. Encourage children to use the washroom so that they won't need to leave during the Bible Study time.

Distribute youth/adult Bible study outlines or paper for note taking, if available.

Also hand out the activity sheets for preschool and younger children to use during Bible Study and/or worship.

Note to the Bible Study Leader: Suggested teaching time for the Bible study should be about 35 minutes. Use the “Teacher Preparation” for your personal study during the week before the session. Use the “Bible Study Plan” for the actual session.

Teacher Preparation

Minister to People’s Needs

Focal Text

Acts 2:43-45; 3:1-8; 1 Corinthians 16:1-3; James 2:14-17

Background

Acts 2:42-47; 3:1-10; 1 Corinthians 16:1-3; James 2:14-17

Main Idea

A New Testament church ministers to people’s needs.

Question to Explore

In what ways does our church minister to people’s needs?

Teaching Aim

To lead the group to identify ways they will minister to people’s needs.

Introduction to your personal study:

“Round up for the Hungry” read the notice at the grocery store check-out line. I read that shoppers could round the total of their purchases up to the nearest dollar amount and donate the extra money to a local charity to help the hungry. As I calculated how much I should add to my total, I realized the young woman ahead of me was having difficulty checking out. She was juggling the toddler on her hip, a gallon of milk, some orange juice, and cereal. The store clerk was saying he was sorry but the nutritional vouchers she had planned to pay with wouldn’t be valid until the following week. She studied the vouchers for a minute clearly wishing the validation date would miraculously change, or that somehow her trip to the store wouldn’t be wasted. Finally she sighed in frustration, shifted the toddler to the other hip, dug out some change to pay for the milk, and left the other items. I thought, “What a shame,” as I unloaded my cart and prepared to add a few cents to my tab, for the hungry. It was only after I began to write my check that I thought how easy it would have been to add that young mother’s items to my bill.

I was so busy thinking about “the hungry” I had ignored a needy family right under my nose! After confessing my insensitivity, I prayed that God would open my eyes to the opportunities He brought my way to minister to others’ needs in His name.

Background:

Please ask for and read the information contained in the “**Basic Information for Leading the Unit of Study**”, found at the beginning of this Unit. Whoever downloaded this session for you should have that material for you as well.

Focusing on the Meaning:

Acts 2:43-45 – Ministering by the Church in Jerusalem

The young community meeting in Jerusalem had eyes to see the needs around it. This fellowship shared incredible unity of Spirit. Not just some, but everyone was filled with awe at what God had done in their lives and was continuing to do through the apostles. Not only were these new believers amazed at the spiritual wonders occurring all around them, but their new sensitivity opened their eyes to physical needs of others. This body of believers made a priority of meeting those needs. Believers began selling their personal possessions in order to share with each other. Apparently anyone who had a need made that known to the group. If someone had the needed items to share, he or she did so, otherwise property was sold and the proceeds used to meet the need.

(Acts 3:1-10). Just one instance of God’s miraculous provision is recorded in this passage. One day Peter and John, two of Jesus’ earliest apostles, went to the temple at the time of afternoon prayer. In that day, begging was the primary source of income for the physically challenged. So it was that Peter and John encountered a man who begged daily at the Temple gate. Perhaps the man thought that those who were motivated to join in corporate worship and prayer would also be motivated to express their thanks to God by giving him some money. When he asked Peter and John, they looked straight at him (3:4). It was as though the Holy Spirit had opened their eyes to really see this man, this beloved child of God.

Although Peter and John had no money to give this man, they gave a much greater gift, the gift of healing. When Peter healed him in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, the man rejoiced, praising God. Just as prophesied by Isaiah, he began to leap like a deer (Isaiah 35:6). This man had forty year’s worth of lost walking and leaping to make up for (See Acts 4:22). His joy and praise overflowed through the Temple courts. People came running to see what all the excitement was about. Peter made the most of the attention and began to preach to the onlookers (3:11-24). What began as a response to one person in need became an opportunity to reach many, many people with God’s saving word (4:4).

1 Corinthians 16:1-3 – Ministering to the Church in Jerusalem

In Paul's letter to the church at Corinth, he addressed the needs of the church at Jerusalem. Paul wrote this letter to the Corinthian believers to clarify several areas of faith and practice. One was a monetary collection for God's people. As Paul had instructed the church at Galatia, so he also instructs the church in Corinth: on the first day of each week each believer should set aside a sum of money in keeping with that person's income (1 Corinthians 16:2-3). That way the money would be ready to send as a gift to Jerusalem when Paul came. Paul provides no formula to use in calculating the amount each is to give. Rather he teaches that we are each to give proportionately, in keeping with our income, on a regular basis. The idea of a proportionate gift is also seen in the instructions in Deuteronomy regarding the gifts for the major feasts (Deuteronomy 16:16-17). This regular proportionate giving helps each body of believers to be ready to meet needs when the opportunities arise.

James 2:14-17 – Living Faith

James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, wrote this letter to the Christian Jews who were scattered abroad. This "servant of God" is most often identified as James, the half-brother of Jesus. His practical counsel was also recorded in Acts 15. Here James discusses the need to live our faith and not just talk about it.

James challenges us to prove our claims of faith through works of righteousness (James 2:14). James teaches from the point of view of a pastor, urging his flock to open their eyes to the needs right in front of them. The fruitful Christian life is one in which needs are recognized and acted upon as guided by the Holy Spirit. Our conduct cannot be ignored no matter how loudly we proclaim our faith. James concluded that spoken claims of faith are dead if they are not lived out in actions (James 2:17).

An authentic Christian experience involves both God's free gift of salvation and the believer's response in acts requiring personal sacrifice (See Romans 12:1-2). We who were saved by grace, were created for good works which God has already prepared for us (Ephesians 2:8-10). Let's ask the Holy Spirit to open our eyes to the needs He has prepared for us to meet.

Matthew 25:31-46 – Accountability for Our Response to the Needy

Jesus taught that we will be held accountable for our response to those in need. In this passage Jesus describes a time when He will return to earth in glory. He will separate all people into two groups according to their individual responses to the needs of others. Jesus will reward one group whom He calls, "the righteous" inviting them to inherit the kingdom prepared for them (Matthew 25:34-36). This group fed and clothed Him, welcomed and comforted Him, and nursed Him in sickness. When the righteous ask when did they do these things for him, Jesus the King will reply, "I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me" (Matthew 25:40).

Then He will send the other group to eternal punishment (25:41). This group failed to minister to Jesus' needs. They will ask, "Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison and did not help you?" His reply cuts to the quick for us all, "I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for Me" (25:45). Clearly, Jesus takes seriously our responses to those in need. We cannot claim to love and serve Him if we ignore the needs of His children (See James 4:17).

Your Goal as the Leader of this Bible study:

From the time of the earliest community of believers in Jerusalem, God's people have worked to meet the needs of others. God's people have shared resources, healed physical needs, contributed financially to other believers and otherwise put feet to their faith. In his letter to the Corinthians Paul wrote, "Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful" (1Corinthians 4:2). We who have been entrusted with the most wonderful gift of God's abiding presence must prove faithful to share His love in practical ways to those around us.

So often those in need become almost invisible to the rest of the world. They become a part of the scenery. Yet Jesus says that what we do for the least of them, we do for Him. May we see each person as an individual – made in God's image for His glory. If we prepare our hearts and minds to look for opportunities to minister, we will be ready to act when confronted with a need. We must be ready; God may have a need waiting in the check-out line.

For Personal Reflection:

1. **What have I learned from this study?**

2. **What personal experience does this lesson bring to mind?**

3. **What is one action I will take this week to apply this Scripture passage to my life?**

Bible Study Plan (Suggested time: 35 minutes)

Minister to People's Needs

Regroup the church after the Gathering Time and break by singing a chorus that young children can relate to—or another praise chorus if your congregation does not have children. Children who go to their own Bible teaching session should stay with the group until after this song. Have the preschoolers and children accompany the hymn with rhythm sticks, maracas, bells, etc. Children who stay with their parents in the Youth/Adult study should have the material on worship as suggested in **The Children's Corner** at the beginning of this **Unit** of studies. (Ask your leader who downloads the studies for those suggestions).

Regroup the church after the Gathering Time and break by singing “**The Servant Song**”, (# 261, MMP, 3rd. Ed., 1993) or other songs on servanthood.

Begin the Bible Study by helping the group locate the Focal Text in their Bibles. Also, share with them the Main Idea to be learned from the Scriptures, and the Questions to be Explored by the group.

Focal Text

Acts 2:43-45; 3:1-8; 1 Corinthians 16:1-3; James 2:14-17

Background

Acts 2:42-47; 3:1-10; 1 Corinthians 16:1-3; James 2:14-17

Main Idea

A New Testament church ministers to people's needs.

Question to Explore

In what ways does our church minister to people's needs?

Teaching Aim

To lead the group to identify ways they will minister to people's needs.

Connect with Life:

Display items that deal with personal financial records such as a chequebook register, Quicken spending chart, or perhaps a letter from a charity requesting donations, and an appointment book or electronic calendar.

Say: We all have many demands on our time and money. Often we have all we can do to meet the needs of our own families. Yet God calls us to reach out to others in practical ways. Let's explore how the early churches responded to those in need.

Guide the Study:

Ask the class to turn in their Bibles to Acts 2. Invite someone (a youth or older child?) to read Acts 2:43-45. Discuss how this body of believers responded to needs around them.

Ask a volunteer to read Acts 3:1-10.

Ask: Why was the temple gate a good place for this man to lay? Point out that Peter and John looked straight at the man. Discuss how the needy sometimes become unnoticed.

Say: Many people will try to respond to needs if they are just made aware of them. Ask for examples of need in your community.

Say: The man asked for money, but Peter and John responded with the gift of healing. Discuss which is easier to give: money or personal involvement.

Now ask: How do you decide which is better to give in a particular instance?

Discuss the resulting opportunity to preach that Peter was given. Have the class list all those who benefited from this man's healing.

Say: When we respond to needs God brings to our attention, He often opens other doors of opportunity and multiplies the blessings.

Ask the class to turn to 1 Corinthians 16.

Share the background information from the Study Guide regarding this monetary collection.

Ask someone to read 1 Corinthians 16:1-3.

Ask: How were the Corinthian believers to prepare for this collection?

Discuss how your fellowship handles finances using the following questions to guide the discussion:

Is regular giving a part of your worship?

Does your fellowship set aside funds to meet needs?

If so, how is this portion calculated?

Invite the class to explore this concept further by turning to the book of James. Share the background material from the Study Guide.

Say: Christians have debated the place of faith and works of righteousness for years. The conflict arises when someone insists that true believers only focus on one to the exclusion of the other.

Ask for examples of teaching that promotes confession of faith and excludes the place of works of righteousness.

Say: Both profession of faith and the evidence of faith through works of righteousness are important elements of life in Christ.

Ask a volunteer to read James 2:14-17.

Say: We have learned that all Scripture is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction and for training in righteousness so that we may be equipped for every good work (2 Timothy 3:16).

Tell the group: In this passage the Holy Spirit corrects the mistaken assumption that there is a conflict between faith and works in the lives of God's people.

Discuss how we can demonstrate our faith through meeting others' needs.

Say: Proverbs 20:11 teaches that "Even a child is known by his actions, by whether his conduct is pure and right."

Say: Jesus taught that we will be held accountable for how we respond to those in need.

Have someone read Matthew 25:31-36.

Emphasize that all the nations will be gathered before Christ for this judgment.

Invite a volunteer to read Matthew 25:37-40.

Have the class list the types of needs that were met by the sheep in this parable.

Have someone read Matthew 25:41-46.

Say: We can sin by doing something that hurts God. We can also sin by failing to do something we should do.

Ask someone to read James 4:17.

Ask: How does our church meet physical and emotional needs of those around us?
Make a list of several ways that are suggested.

Ask: What are other needs that we could address? Record the responses.

Encourage Application:

If you have two or more youth, this is the time to give them the **Youth!!! Take Ten** page and allow them to go away from the adults and apply the lesson by and for themselves.

Say: God allows us to minister in His name. He urges us not to grow weary in doing good, for we will reap a harvest if we do not give up Read: Galatians 6:9-10.

Ask: How is our faith in Christ demonstrated by our response to the needs in our community?

Pray, asking for forgiveness for the opportunities to minister you may have missed and for eyes to see the opportunities He has prepared for each member of the group.

Take a five minute break to separate the Bible Study and Worship Time. Children may need to use the washroom again before worship.

Youth!!! Take Ten

Bible Study Application for Youth

You may wish to move away from the adults for the final five to ten minutes of the Bible study and help each other as youth to apply the lesson to your own needs.

Minister to People's Needs

Acts 2:43-45; 3:1-8; 1 Corinthians 16:1-3; James 2:14-17

A youth will lead the following activity and comments. No adults need to be present. If possible, teens should take turns in leading the application time.

“Random acts of kindness” are actions on the part of persons who deliberately go find people who have physical, financial, social or other needs – and then do whatever is necessary to meet those needs.

Many teens have responded to the challenge to do “random acts of kindness”. What are some random acts of kindness that you have heard about?

Can you think up possibilities of other such acts that can be done by teens? Now, decide on something that you can do this week that will minister to someone in need. You can do something by yourself. It might be more fun to do it with other Christian teens – and easier to explain that it is being done because you are Christians who care.

OK, each of you take a sheet of paper and a pen and write the following:

“I commit myself during this week to the following “act of kindness”

_____.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Or, get copies of this from the person who downloaded this session. Enough copies should have been made from the one found on the next to last page of this session.

Worship Time (Suggested time: 30 minutes)***Minister to People's Needs*****Acts 2:43-45; 3:1-8; 1 Corinthians 16:1-3; James 2:14-17****Beginning the Service:**

Call the congregation to worship by singing: "Because I Have Been Given Much" (#605, *B.H.* 1991) and "Make Me a Blessing" (#569, *B.H.* 1991). Or choose other hymns or choruses with a theme of blessing and ministering to others.

Offering:

Ask a teen to receive the tithes and other offerings.

Sing: "Serve the Lord with Gladness" (#495, *B.H.*, 1991).

Praying for the World:

Have someone share a ministry project or community need in which the church can be involved.

Sharing Guide:

This sharing guide is written to assist the person who directs the worship time to reemphasize the teaching for the day and help guide the congregation to respond to God's call and will for their lives in regard to the scripture studied. The leader may choose to follow the guide closely. Or, he or she may wish to only use it to give direction and a concept for preparing an original message. The leader is free to choose other ways to communicate and share the concepts presented here.

True Servants**Acts 2:43-45; 3:1-19; 1 Corinthians 16:1-3; James 2:14-17****Introduction**

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Minister to People's Needs – 01-03-12-en

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In the church born on the day of Pentecost, four concerns were held in dynamic tension: they did not do one without doing all four: ***“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teachings and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer”*** (Acts 2:42). ***“All the believers were together and had everything in common”*** (v.44). Then the author of the text adds: ***“And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved”*** (v.47b). It would be difficult to single out only one of these elements of the life of the church born on the day of Pentecost, and conclude that it was the most important element. In fact, it would not only be difficult, it would do violence to the text of scripture.

I. The background of the practice of ministering to people’s needs.

That church, the one born on that day, practiced what the people in that church had learned at the temple and in the synagogues of their day: they were Jews who had elected to follow Jesus and to become his disciples. Nothing new is added to the curriculum of the old scriptures: they devoted themselves to teaching, in this case, a new study guide was used (the apostle’s teaching), to the fellowship, the breaking of bread, and to prayer. Evangelism, or witness to those who had not become disciples of Jesus, was not a planned program that was added to what the church was already doing. Evangelism, or the spread of the good news, came as a result of what the church was already practicing.

The Jerusalem church, the one born on the day of Pentecost, practiced a form of the principles they had learned from the study of their Bible, the Old Testament. When the needs presented themselves to that church, they did not need to resort to their Bibles to find the “biblical basis for giving to the poor” – they already knew what that Bible said: they were undoubtedly familiar with the teaching in the book of Leviticus (chapter 25) about the ***Sabbatical Year*** and the ***Year of Jubilee***.

The Sabbatical Year was a command by God to the Israelites to allow their land to rest or lay fallow for one year after each six years of sowing and gathering. During the seventh or sabbatical year, the poor could harvest whatever came up on the land. Then, animals and birds could have the remainder. Each fifty years (at the end of seven sabbatical years) God commanded to be a Year of Jubilee. That year, all the land in Israel was supposed to be returned to the original owners or their heirs. As well, all Israelis who were enslaved or imprisoned for debts at that time were to be freed. These sabbatical and jubilee years were designed to give rest to the land and the people. Moreover, they allowed for new beginnings and new opportunities for all Israel.

They were also familiar with the practice of leaving the corners of the grain fields every year for the poor, the widows, and the strangers within the community. They were familiar with the year of Jubilee, although there is no indication that it was practiced during the time of Jesus. But it taught that man did not own the land: it belonged to God; it was his, and man was only the custodian.

II. The church, God's people, practiced what they had known from their life in Judaism.

But now, something new and radical had happened. The new kingdom of God had arrived in the person of Jesus Christ (Matthew 4:17, 23) and for the first time there was a community of faith that would practice taking care of one another as God intended his creation to do.

Yet there was an added dimension to the manner in which God's new people would take seriously the sabbatical year and the year of Jubilee – they did not just leave the land fallow, or leave the corners of fields for the poor. They even sold property and distributed to those in need. One of their members did this so well that he earned a new nickname. A fellow by the name of Joseph was called Barnabas, which meant "Son of Encouragement." Barnabas became a prototype of the Christian attitude of ministering to people's needs. They practiced a principle that was at the very heart of God – taking care of one another.

Thus the apostolic church, the church born on the day of Pentecost, is honoured because of their well-rounded, full-bodied, practice of the new life in Christ. Simon Peter, following the healing of a crippled beggar, took ministering to the needs of people a step further (Acts 3:6). The scriptures make less of the incident than it does of the tremendous opportunity it opened for Peter and John to share the Good News, the Gospel, to all who witnessed the healing.

III. Ministering to people's needs was a primary concern of the Apostle Paul.

Paul started the practice of taking a free will offering from among the churches he established on his missionary trips across Asia Minor and Greece. It was a major concern of the apostle. In his letter to the church at Corinth he added this admonition:

"Now about the collection for God's people: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do. On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collection will have to be made. Then when I arrive I will give letters of introduction to the men you approve, and send them with your gift to Jerusalem. If it seems advisable for me to go also, they will accompany me."

IV. In the letter of James, taking care of people's needs is balanced with faith.

James seems to drive the point home (James 2:14-17). Defending the proposition that faith cannot be divorced from deeds, he asserts: ***"Suppose that a brother or a sister is without clothes or food. If one of you says to him, 'Go, I wish you well. Be warm and well fed,' but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it?"***

James makes it even more definite: Faith, without deeds, is dead, and a dead faith is no faith. A faith that is merely words is an empty sham, an offence to the one whom, by example, cared about and cared for people's needs.

Call to Commitment:

When filled by the Holy Spirit, the Jerusalem church had all things common; when armed with nothing but the name of Jesus, Peter healed a crippled man; when knowing of a great famine, Paul took an offering from sister churches; when defending the teaching that faith cannot be separated from deeds, James drove home the point – Churches must minister to people's needs or else be considered dead.

Concluding the Service:

Before you dismiss: If you choose to serve a fellowship meal after worship, ask every age-group to help with the meal – setting the table, serving the food, cleaning up, and any other servant opportunity. Teens could cut up the preschoolers' food or spoon feed the babies, for instance.

Ask someone to close with a prayer – asking God to guide your church to discover and commit to His plan for your church to minister to others.

Make a copy for each youth.

Random Acts of Kindness

“Random acts of kindness” are actions on the part of persons who deliberately go find people who have physical, financial, social or other needs – and then do whatever is necessary to meet those needs.

Many teens have responded to the challenge to do “random acts of kindness”. What are some random acts of kindness that you have heard about?

Can you think up possibilities of other such acts that can be done by teens? Now, decide on something that you can do this week that will minister to someone in need. You can do something by yourself. It might be more fun to do it with other Christian teens – and easier to explain that it is being done because you are Christians who care.

OK, each of you take a sheet of paper and a pen and write the following. (Or, the Bible Study leader may have given you copies of this “box”).

“I commit myself during this week to the following “act of kindness”

_____.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

If you choose to share the songs used in the content of the Gathering Time, make copies from this page.

“Here Is my Life”

**Lord, you placed me in this world of time and space
and missiles hurled,
With eyes I’ve seen the ghetto gloom,
With ears I’ve heard the sonic boom,
And man cry out for breathing room,
I cannot wait, I cannot wait!**

**Here is my life, I want to live it,
Here is my life, I want to give it, serving my fellow man,
doing the will of God,
Here is my life! Here is my life! Here is my life!**

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“Where Cross the Crowded Ways of Life”

**Where cross the crowded ways of life,
Where sound the cries of race and clan,
Above the noise of selfish strife,
We hear thy voice, O Son of man.**

**In haunts of wretchedness and need,
On shadowed thresholds dark with fears,
From paths where hide the lures of greed,
We catch the vision of thy tears.**

**From tender childhood’s helplessness,
From woman’s grief, man’s burden’d toil,
From famished souls, from sorrow’s stress,
Thy heart has never known recoil.**

Frank Mason North, 1903. Public Domain