

# The Church Is Sent to Encourage New Believers

## Summary and Goal

As the Lord Jesus Christ builds His church, He uses believers to encourage other believers. Mature believers encourage new believers. All believers help one another follow Jesus so we all look more and more like Jesus everyday. Through our generosity, we meet one another's needs. And when the church lives together in these ways, it provides a powerful witness to the unbelieving world. In this session, we will consider how those who belong to the church encourage one another in faith, toward Christlikeness, and through generosity.

## Session Outline

1. The people of God celebrate and encourage new believers (Acts 11:19-24).
2. The people of God disciple new believers (Acts 11:25-26).
3. The people of God provide for the needs of other believers (Acts 11:27-30).

*Background Passage: Acts 11:19-30*

## Session in a Sentence

God has formed the church as a community of believers who nurture and care for one another.

## Christ Connection

Jesus came to break down the dividing wall between us and God as well as the walls that separate people. Through the atoning work of Jesus, we are joined together with Him and the church as one people of God. As followers of Jesus, we are to celebrate, welcome, and care for all who trust in Jesus.

## Missional Application

Because we have been joined together with God through Jesus, we celebrate all who come to faith in Christ and, as part of the church, nurture, disciple, and care for them.

# Group Time

GROUP MEMBER CONTENT

## Introduction

**EXPLAIN:** Use the paragraphs on page 20 in the Daily Discipleship Guide (DDG) to observe how young people tend to possess a negative outlook on the church while longing for the types of relationships the church was meant to provide.

In 2007, California pastor Dan Kimball published a book titled *They Like Jesus but Not the Church: Insights from Emerging Generations*. The book is a compilation of coffee shop interviews with older teens and twenty-somethings. The gist of the book is that many young people like Jesus, but they have strongly critical views of the church. The church, to them, is political, judgmental, oppressive, homophobic, arrogant, and full of fundamentalists.

The irony is that these same young people long for authentic relationships, a place where they can be vulnerable and ask their questions, a place to belong, that is, to experience true community. Why is that ironic? Because that is what the church of Jesus Christ is meant to be—a community of baptized believers who share a common life together, encouraging one another and helping each other look more and more like Jesus.

**INTERACT:** Ask group members the following question.



What might the young people in your community think about the church? (be prepared to give an answer of your own to jump-start the conversation)

**SAY:** We can't blame young people for not liking the church when the church at times fails to be what it is supposed to be. Rather, we ought to listen to their critiques and learn from them, especially where their critiques line up with what Scripture says. If we are to be the church of Jesus Christ, bringing Him glory and providing a powerful witness to the world, then we need to understand what the church is and what should characterize her.

**SUMMARIZE:** As the Lord Jesus Christ builds His church, He uses believers to encourage other believers. Mature believers encourage new believers. All believers help one another follow Jesus so we all look more and more like Jesus everyday. Through our generosity, we meet one another's needs. And when the church lives together in these ways, it provides a powerful witness to the unbelieving world. In this session, we will consider how those who belong to the church encourage one another in faith, toward Christlikeness, and through generosity.

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## Point 1: The people of God celebrate and encourage new believers (Acts 11:19-24).

**READ** Acts 11:19-24 (DDG p. 21).

<sup>19</sup> Now those who had been scattered as a result of the persecution that started because of Stephen made their way as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, speaking the word to no one except Jews. <sup>20</sup> But there were some of them, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, who came to Antioch and began speaking to the Greeks also, proclaiming the good news about the Lord Jesus. <sup>21</sup> The Lord's hand was with them, and a large number who believed turned to the Lord. <sup>22</sup> News about them reached the church in Jerusalem, and they sent out Barnabas to travel as far as Antioch. <sup>23</sup> When he arrived and saw the grace of God, he was glad and encouraged all of them to remain true to the Lord with devoted hearts, <sup>24</sup> for he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And large numbers of people were added to the Lord.

**EXPLAIN:** Use the first paragraph in the DDG (p. 21) to point out how persecution led to the birth of the church in Antioch, a church made up of both Jews and Gentiles.

No one wants to experience persecution. Yet here we see that the Lord uses even persecution as a means to spread the gospel: The church gathered in Jerusalem was now scattering throughout the Gentile world because of persecution. Antioch served as a mile marker, of sorts, in terms of the gospel mission because it was there that Gentiles were first incorporated freely into the church. Just as Jesus had announced in Acts 1:8, the gospel spread from Jerusalem to the beginnings of the ends of the earth.



### Voices from Church History

“But do your worst, and rack your inventions for tortures for Christians—it is all to no purpose; you do but attract the world, and make it fall the more in love with our religion; the more you mow us down, the thicker we rise; the Christian blood you spill is like the seed you sow, it springs from the earth again, and fructifies the more.”<sup>1</sup>

—Tertullian (born c. 160)

- Imagine how exciting it must have been to be a part of the early church in Jerusalem, witnessing the miracles at the hands of the apostles and celebrating many others coming to faith in Christ with each passing day. You might have been tempted to remain in Jerusalem just to see what amazing things the Lord would do next. But then, under God's providence, Stephen was martyred, an event that caused the Jewish Christians to scatter and start their return journeys home or to find new homes.
- God's use of persecution to spread the gospel doesn't mean we should go looking for it. However, it is encouraging to consider the fact that the killing of Christians cannot overpower the church. So even in persecution, we can rejoice in the Lord that He is saving and building His church.

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**EXPLAIN:** Use the second paragraph in the DDG (p. 21) to explain from the passage that every new Christian, regardless of age or background, needs ongoing encouragement from the church.

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The apostles had a responsibility to affirm and oversee the expansion of the gospel and the church. So they sent Barnabas to Antioch. What Barnabas found was a cause for joy—new Christians, both Jew and Gentile! He then encouraged all these newborn believers so they would endure and grow in wisdom, stature, and in favor with God and humanity.

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- Coming to faith in Christ is a cause for celebration. A citizen of the kingdom of darkness has been transferred to the kingdom of God’s beloved Son (Col. 1:13). Yet it is also a cause for investment. When a person is born again, he or she is a baby in Christ. New believers need to be cared for and nurtured as we would with a baby.
  - Because the world hates Jesus, it hates Jesus’ followers (John 15:18-20). This means that we will always be strangers in this world. Even as we celebrate new believers, we need to remember that they need encouragement to remain wholeheartedly devoted to the Lord. Whether a high school student or a senior adult, every new Christian needs encouragement.
    - New Christians need encouragement in learning the first steps to take as a Christian.
    - New Christians need encouragement to know how to read and study the Bible.
    - New Christians need encouragement in practicing prayer.
    - New Christians need encouragement to remain steadfast when their unbelieving family and friends mock them, curse them, or just ignore them.
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**INTERACT:** Ask group members the following question.

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What are some ways you have received encouragement from other believers to grow in the faith and remain steadfast in the face of trials? (be prepared to give an answer of your own to jump-start the conversation)

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**SAY:** The church has always and will always face persecution of one type or another. This doesn’t mean, however, that we cannot celebrate what the Lord is doing in saving sinners and encourage those new believers to endure faithfully. In fact, it is especially necessary during difficult times to encourage new believers—indeed, all believers—to persevere in the face of suffering for the name of Christ.

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## Point 2: The people of God disciple new believers (Acts 11:25-26).

**READ** Acts 11:25-26 (DDG p. 22).

<sup>25</sup> Then he went to Tarsus to search for Saul, <sup>26</sup> and when he found him he brought him to Antioch. For a whole year they met with the church and taught large numbers. The disciples were first called Christians at Antioch.

**PACK ITEM 4: DISCIPLESHIP:** Read the **Dietrich Bonhoeffer quote** on this poster and use the first paragraph in the DDG (p. 22) to emphasize that discipleship is more than merely a transfer of knowledge; it is becoming more and more like Jesus. Saul and Barnabas disciplined Christians in Antioch through teaching, presumably in some formal context.

Discipleship requires the passing on of knowledge, but not for its own sake, and not just any knowledge will do. It's passing on and obtaining knowledge of the Scriptures for the sake of becoming more and more like Christ. When Saul and Barnabas remained in Antioch for a year teaching the church, the content of their teaching was the teaching of the apostles (see Acts 2:42), namely, all of Scripture and how it points to and is fulfilled in Jesus (2 Tim. 3:15-17).

- In Ephesians 4:11, the apostle Paul helps us see that the Lord Jesus gave ministers of the Word to the church: apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. These leaders have the goal of building up the body of Christ, discipling believers so they learn about Jesus in order to become more like Him. Paul (also known as Saul) and Barnabas served in the role of pastors and teachers in the church at Antioch.
- For discipleship to happen, we need the Bible, we need wisdom, and we need experience. That is to say, to help others follow Jesus, we need to encourage them with the Word of God to walk in wisdom and holiness so that they may grow in maturity and reflect Christ's likeness.

**INTERACT:** Ask group members the following question.



What are some truths and teachings new believers need to be taught early in their discipleship? (how to read the Bible; how to pray; sacrificial giving; the Trinity; relationship between law and gospel; importance of the church; the Great Commission; the call to holiness; readiness to repent of sin; the truthfulness of God's Word)

**EXPLAIN:** Use the second paragraph in the DDG (p. 22) to show that discipleship is more than just a formal function of the church—biblical discipleship is a church culture rather than a church program, and it involves every believer.

We tend to think of discipleship exclusively in formal terms; we're tempted to think that it must be done by pastors or at least really spiritual Christians—just not us. But that's not the teaching of the New Testament. Jesus structured His church for every-member discipleship. The pastors and teachers equip the church for the ministry of discipleship by teaching God's Word. Then the church receives that Word and speaks it to one another in order to build each other up that we may grow in Christlikeness as well as to those outside the church so they too may believe and be called Christians.

- Discipleship is the process of following Jesus to become like Him. Jesus taught His disciples the ways of the kingdom of God and prepared them to live by faith with the power of the Holy Spirit. The original disciples (apostles) then passed on these teachings to the next generation of believers, and so forth. They followed in the steps of Jesus. Therefore, discipleship is not simply a church program; discipleship is a church culture in which all believers follow the example of their Master and Savior, learning and passing on.
- Returning to Ephesians 4, the leaders of the church seek to build up the body of Christ through a specific responsibility: “to equip the saints for the work of ministry, to build up the body of Christ, until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of God’s Son, growing into maturity with a stature measured by Christ’s fullness” (vv. 12-13). The work of discipleship is building up the church until we all reach Christlike maturity. The ministers of the word equip the church with the Word to do this work.

*Application:* If you're still stuck on the idea that discipleship is limited to a formal training program or study, then just think back to the global Coronavirus pandemic of 2020 (COVID-19) that forced cities to shelter in place and churches to stop meeting for a period of time. Did discipleship stop while Christians weren't able to gather in churches or meet in homes? If discipleship is, by definition, something formal and programmatic where groups of people go through a curriculum, a program, or a course, then discipleship came to halt. But even in a pandemic or in persecution, discipleship can still take place. It must take place. Why? Because discipleship is the mission of the church (Matt. 28:18-20). Discipleship is simply helping one another follow Jesus with the goal of becoming more and more like Him. That's the only way we can endure faithfully through pandemics and persecution, prosperity and poverty.

**FILL IN THE BLANKS:** Provide group members with the answers for the call-out in their DDG (p. 22).

**Discipleship:** Discipleship is a **process** that takes place both formally and informally to effect spiritual **maturity** as people follow Jesus. We make disciples through our words and actions, providing verbal instruction from God's **Word** and non-verbal **examples** through our lives.

**Essential Doctrine “Discipleship”:** Discipleship is a **process** that takes place both formally and informally to effect spiritual **maturity** as people follow Jesus. Informal discipleship, as passages like Deuteronomy 6:4-9 suggest, happens everywhere, in every arena of life. Growing in our faith and deepening our walk with Christ is something that requires our whole life, not just the mind. Formal discipleship refers to periods of instruction. We make disciples through our words and actions, providing verbal instruction from God's **Word** and non-verbal **examples** through our lives (Acts 20:17-24).

### Point 3: The people of God provide for the needs of other believers (Acts 11:27-30).

**READ:** Ask a volunteer to read Acts 11:27-30 (DDG p. 23).

<sup>27</sup> In those days some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. <sup>28</sup> One of them, named Agabus, stood up and predicted by the Spirit that there would be a severe famine throughout the Roman world. This took place during the reign of Claudius. <sup>29</sup> Each of the disciples, according to his ability, determined to send relief to the brothers and sisters who lived in Judea. <sup>30</sup> They did this, sending it to the elders by means of Barnabas and Saul.

**EXPLAIN:** Use the first paragraph in the DDG (p. 23) to establish that nothing is outside the sovereignty of God, including our suffering.

Adam's sin introduced suffering into the world (Rom. 5:12-21; 8:18-25), whether a common cold or cancer, tornadoes or tsunamis, floods or famines, diabetes or death. Nonetheless, nothing is outside the sovereignty of God, and that includes our suffering. Jesus prepared His followers to experience troubles in this world (John 16:33). Here the Holy Spirit prepared the church in Antioch through a prophet. But curiously, their preparation focused on helping others.

- Believers need to be careful that we don't live by the notion that Christians aren't supposed to have it hard. Jesus promised suffering in this world, even suffering directly related to being His followers (John 15:18-20; 16:33). The prophet Agabus foretold a famine throughout the Roman Empire. This, of course, would affect believers and unbelievers alike. But the Holy Spirit inspired this prophecy so as to prepare the church for what to do next.

*Application:* Health, wealth, and prosperity teaching is rampant throughout the world. Whether it's the softer, gentler kind that's more akin to "the power of positive thinking" or the stronger, heartless kind that makes God out to be a vending machine, prosperity theology teaches that there are divine laws in operation that, if you follow them, will gain you health, riches, and success. As with many errors or false teachings, there are elements of truth to the prosperity message. God does promise healing and wholeness, abundance and prosperity—just not necessarily in this life. What the false teachers of prosperity doctrine do is take the future promises of the eternal kingdom and claim they are available to all now, that is, if you have enough faith. The danger of this teaching is that many who have placed their hope in the distorted words of these false teachers tend to blame God when they don't receive what was wrongfully expected. This kind of disappointment leads to doubt in the true God and despair over present circumstances.

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**INTERACT:** Ask group members the following question.

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 How should God's knowledge of and sovereignty over natural disasters affect the believer's response to them? (we should trust God to work good in our lives through them; natural disasters are opportunities for believers to demonstrate their love for one another and help those who are suffering; we should testify to our faith in our good and sovereign God who sent Jesus to save us from our sin)

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**EXPLAIN:** Use the second paragraph in the DDG (p. 23) to highlight the pattern of how the Lord has provided for the needs of His people through the generosity of His people.

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By sharing the news of the coming famine with the newly planted church in Antioch, the Holy Spirit prepared the disciples to respond. The church in Antioch chose to collect an offering and send it to the elders of the church in Jerusalem. Their first thought was not for their own welfare but provision for their brothers and sisters in crisis. From the very beginning of the life of the church, the Lord has provided for the needs of His people through the generosity of His people (Acts 2:42-47; 4:32-37).

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- Generosity and care for others wasn't just a New Testament principle. Under the old covenant with Israel, God established commands by which the people of God were to care for one another through generous giving and personal sacrifice. Their sacrifices and offerings, for example, were the means by which the priests were cared for (Num. 18). Because God is the same yesterday, today, and forever, He provides for His people through the generosity of His people.
- The Lord Jesus taught His followers to pray for their "daily bread" (Matt. 6:11). That is, we are to ask God to provide for our needs in daily dependence on His provision. What we fail to realize is that God answers our prayers for provision in many different ways. Oftentimes He provides through the normal means of our jobs. But when individual Christians face hardship or are unable to work, the Lord typically provides for His people through His people, namely, through the generosity of the church.

*Illustration:* Paul encouraged the churches in Macedonia and in Corinth to prepare an offering for the church in Jerusalem, which was suffering under persecution (see 2 Cor. 8-9). The Philippian church cared for the needs of Paul while he was in prison through a generous financial gift (Phil. 4:13-20).

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**INTERACT:** Ask group members the following question.

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 What are some results that come from the church caring for brothers and sisters in Christ? (affirmation that we are part of God's family; mutual love and encouragement through giving and thanksgiving; a testimony of the love and grace of Jesus to the church and the world; a reminder that we are not alone; the blessing of being used by God to fulfill His will of providing for His people's needs)

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# My Mission

**EXPLAIN:** If we're to provide a powerful witness in our communities, we need to be steeped in the gospel and live out the Lord's purpose for us. The Lord Jesus took on our humanity in order to unite all things in Himself (Eph. 1:9-10). One of the things Jesus is uniting is fractured humanity. By His sacrificial death, Jesus broke down the barrier of hostility that stood between Jews and Gentiles and brought the two peoples together into "one new man"—the church (Eph. 2:11-22). As a result of the work of Christ, as declared in His gospel, we are now one people (Eph. 4:4-6). This unity works itself out in the life of the church as we celebrate and encourage one another, as we help one another follow Jesus to look more like Him, and as we meet the needs of one another through generous giving and personal sacrifice. This unity, in turn, gives witness to the world of the power of the gospel of Christ to save and change sinners.

**READ** the following missional application statement in the DDG (p. 24), and encourage group members to choose at least one of the options below as a way to respond to the truth of God's Word.

Because we have been joined together with God through Jesus, we celebrate all who come to faith in Christ and, as part of the church, nurture, disciple, and care for them.

- **How will you encourage believers in your church to remain steadfast in the faith?**
- **What are some ways your group can provide for the needs of others in your church or in churches throughout the world?**
- **Who is the Holy Spirit leading you to share the gospel with, even though he or she may be different from you?**



## Voices from Church History

"Therefore, since, thanks to our good Master, we are sharers of the greatest and the most divine and the first of names, those honored by the name of Christ being called Christians, it is necessary that there be seen in us also all of the connotations of this name, so that the title be not a misnomer in our case but that our life be a testimony of it."<sup>2</sup>

—Gregory of Nyssa  
(c. 335-395)

**CLOSE IN PRAYER:** Father, You have saved us and made us a people zealous for good works, both for Your glory and the good of one another. Thank You for the provision of Your Son, Jesus, and for His body, the church, through which You grow, shape, and care for us. Equip us by the Spirit to love and serve one another well as we seek to make disciples of others for Jesus' sake. Amen.

**INSTRUCT:** As your group departs, encourage group members to read and respond to the **Daily Study** devotions in their DDG (pp. 25-27), which build and expand upon the group study. Also advocate for small groups or families to use **Encourage One Another** (p. 28) for mutual accountability and fellowship grounded upon the foundation of God's Word.

# Daily Discipleship

Throughout the week following the session, use the ideas below to remind and encourage your group members to live as disciples of Jesus Christ. The **Daily Study** devotions in the DDG (pp. 25-27) will help group members get into God's Word and study it for themselves. **Encourage One Another** (p. 28) will help group members and families fellowship with one another with purpose.

## Daily Study

Brief daily devotions in the DDG (pp. 25-27) will help group members take initiative in their own discipleship.

- Make sure all group members have access to a Bible to read. Have some Bibles available to give to guests who may need one, or offer to get one and arrange a time to meet to give it and show how to navigate it for the devotions.
- Share the following idea from the devotion for **Day 1** as a part of point 1 in the session: **When we remember that the Lord Jesus is in control over all things and recognize that this includes persecution, we realize that the Lord is at work even through our Christian suffering.**



Consider leading by example and reading the daily devotions yourself with your own DDG. Based on your study, use brief messages throughout the week (group text, email, social media) to encourage your group to keep up with their daily time in God's Word and to live it out. Here are a couple of examples you can use:

- **Day 2:** “**This is what discipleship is all about: following Jesus so that you and others can become more like Him.**”
- **Day 3:** “**One of the ordinary means by which the Lord cares for His people is through the generosity of His people.**”



Visit [www.GospelProject.com/Blog](http://www.GospelProject.com/Blog) for additional content and resources you can use to help group members gain more insight into their daily studies. Send group members a link or a portion of a blog post or other content that you believe will be helpful and encouraging for their time in God's Word.

## Encourage One Another

This brief plan for fellowship and accountability in the group member's DDG (p. 28) will help groups of 2-4 people to meet sometime during the week to reflect on the session and to share how God is working and they are responding. It could also be used for family discipleship with students and children who are using *The Gospel Project* in their groups.

- **Encourage group members to reflect on how their interactions as a smaller group express intentional discipleship like that at Antioch.**
- See yourself as a member of the group who also needs encouragement in the faith, and participate in such a group this week.

# Additional Commentary

## **Point 1: The people of God celebrate and encourage new believers (Acts 11:19-24).**

“Luke now moves from recognition of God’s dealings with the Gentiles (11:18) to a description of the expansion of the gospel among them, picking up where Acts 8:4 left off. Believers who had been scattered by persecution travelled as far as the great city of Antioch in Syria, 480 kilometres (300 miles) to the north, proclaiming the gospel to their fellow Jews as they went (11:19). However, some of them who had grown up in the Gentile regions of Cyprus and Cyrene also started to tell Gentiles, specifically the Greeks, the good news about Jesus (11:20) ... The power of God was with those unnamed missionaries with the result that a *great number of people believed and turned to the Lord* (11:21). It is not surprising that Antioch in Syria would soon become the centre of the Gentile mission, sending out the renowned missionaries, Paul and Barnabas (13:1-3).”<sup>3</sup>

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“The basic sympathy of the church in Jerusalem with the news of what was happening in Antioch may be deduced from the choice of *Barnabas* as their delegate. Although he came of a Dispersion family, he was regarded with complete confidence in Jerusalem and acted as a pivot or link between the Hebrew and Hellenistic elements in the church. His character was well adapted for this function, for he was outstanding for the Christian quality of his life; no other man is described by Luke as *good* in Acts, and in his spiritual gifts he stood on a level with Stephen. He could not help seeing the hand of God in the growth of the church at Antioch, and rejoiced at this evidence of divine grace. So far from urging any legalistic demands upon the new converts, he rather instructed them to remain firm in their faith; here we see how Barnabas merited being called ‘Son of encouragement’ (4:36). The fact that Barnabas had the spiritual insight to recognize that God’s plan was being fulfilled at Antioch was of decisive significance for the growth of the church.”<sup>4</sup>

## **Point 2: The people of God disciple new believers (Acts 11:25-26).**

“The term (*Christianoi*) consists of the Greek word for Christ/Messiah (*Christos*) with the Latin ending *ianus*, meaning *belonging to, identified by*. Examples of similar formations are *Herodianoi*, partisans of Herod, and *Augustianoi*, the zealous followers of Nero. The term was often used by Roman writers to designate followers of Christ. The early usage in Antioch is perhaps indicative of two things. For one, it is the sort of term Gentiles would have used and perhaps reflects the success of Antioch’s Gentile mission. Gentiles were dubbing their fellow Gentiles who became followers of Christ ‘Christians.’ Second, it reflects that Christianity was beginning to have an identity of its own and no longer was viewed as a totally Jewish entity. Again, the success among Gentiles would have hastened this process in Antioch.”<sup>5</sup>

“For a whole year,’ it says, ‘they met with the church and taught a large company of people; and in Antioch the disciples were for the first time called Christians.’ This is no small praise for the city, but enough to match it against all cities. For Antioch was the first city, before all the others, to have the benefit of listening to Paul for so long, and because of this the people there were the first to be deemed worthy of the name. Look at the success of Paul, to what heights it raised, like a standard, that name! Elsewhere, three thousand or five thousand or so great a number believed, but nothing like this. Elsewhere, the believers were called ‘they of the way’; here, they were given the name Christians.”<sup>6</sup>

### **Point 3: The people of God provide for the needs of other believers (Acts 11:27-30).**

“Christian **prophets** are mentioned elsewhere in Acts (13:1; 15:32; 21:9). Their role involved edification and encouragement as they spoke things that had been revealed to them by the Holy Spirit. Sometimes such prophecies foretold the future, as Agabus did here (see also 21:4,10-11) ... **a great famine**. There were several famines in various parts of the Roman Empire during the reign of **Claudius** (A.D. 41-54) including several in Judea in the early years of his reign. Historians believe that this famine took place in the years A.D. 45-46 or else 47. **Over all the world** is a general prediction of the many regional famines that took place during Claudius’s reign. The reference to **elders** marks a transition in day-to-day leadership of the Jerusalem church (cf. 4:35-37; 6:1-6).”<sup>7</sup>

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“There were some prophets from Jerusalem at Antioch (**11:27**). One of these, named Agabus (see also 21:10), stood up in the church and prophesied that a great famine would come upon the whole world (**11:28**). Luke tells us this took place during the reign of Claudius (see 18:2). The way the material is presented here, it seems that the prophecy was spoken and fulfilled in the space of one verse! However, there must have been a time gap between the prophecy and its fulfillment. When the famine did come, the church in Antioch took a collection to help their fellow believers in Judea (**11:29**). It is important to note that the giving was according to each person’s means. There was no obligation to give beyond what a person possessed. Moreover the term used indicates that each person gave of their surplus, what was in excess of their needs. There was also accountability in the giving recorded here, for Barnabas and Saul were put in charge of delivering the money to the elders in Jerusalem (**11:30**).”<sup>8</sup>

### References

1. Tertullian, *The Apology of Tertullian*, trans. William Reeve (London: Newberry House, 1889), 143, August 19, 2020, [www.tertullian.org/articles/reeve\\_apology.htm](http://www.tertullian.org/articles/reeve_apology.htm).
2. Gregory of Nyssa, *On Perfection*, quoted in Acts, ed. Francis Martin, vol. V in *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2001) [Wordsearch].
3. Babu Immanuel Venkataraman, “Acts,” in *South Asia Bible Commentary*, gen. ed. Brian Wintle (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015), 1482.
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5. John B. Polhill, *Acts*, vol. 26 in *The New American Commentary* (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2013), 272 [Wordsearch].
6. Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Acts of the Apostles*, 25, in Acts, ed. Francis Martin, vol. V in *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament*, 148 [Wordsearch].
7. John B. Polhill, “Acts,” in *ESV Study Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008), 2106, n. 11:27; n. 11:28; n. 11:30.
8. Paul Mumo Kisau, “Acts of the Apostles,” in *Africa Bible Commentary*, gen. ed. Tokunboh Adeyemo (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 1347.