

# START 5 NEW CONGREGATIONS

## ACTS 1-14

## CHURCH GROUP SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE - FEBRUARY 15, 2026

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### SCRIPTURE READING

*Acts 14:21-23 (ESV)*

*When they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God. And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, with prayer and fasting they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed.*

*See also: Acts 1:8; 8:1-4; 9:31; 11:19-26; 13:1-3; 14:21-23*

### ICE BREAKER QUESTION

Think about a church, a small group, a campus ministry, or any Christian community that played a significant role in your life. Who invited you, and what made that community meaningful to you? Take a moment to share briefly with the group.

### SERMON RECAP

- Every Christian in the world is part of a 2,000-year story of churches planting churches. (MBC exists because J. Albert Ford and five families stepped out in faith 65 years ago.) The book of Acts shows how this pattern began—from Jerusalem to Judea and Samaria to the ends of the earth—exactly as Jesus promised in Acts 1:8.
- Rather than being an optional add-on to the Great Commission, church planting is the entire story of the New Testament. In every city Paul and Barnabas visited, they didn’t just share the gospel but established churches with appointed elders (Acts 14:23). The spread of Christianity has always moved through the planting of local congregations.
- The Dead Sea illustration: A body of water with no outlet becomes lifeless. In the same way, a church that only receives and never sends will stagnate spiritually. God designed his life to flow through us to others. That outward flow is life-giving both for those who receive and for those who send.
- Your life is God’s to spend for the spread of his church. Being a Christian means surrendering lordship of your life to Jesus (Luke 9:23). That includes where you live, what you do, and how you give. At any point, God could call any one of us to go, just as the Holy Spirit set apart Barnabas and Saul in Acts 13:2.
- The success of a church is measured not by its seating capacity but by its sending capacity. The church at Antioch was willing to send its best—Barnabas and Paul—because they obeyed the Holy Spirit. MBC’s 2030 vision calls us to start five new congregations in the DMV so more neighbors are within reach of a gospel-centered church family.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

*Observation: What does this passage say?*

1. Trace the geographic spread of the gospel through Acts 1-14. Where does it start, and what key events cause it to move outward? How does this progression connect to Jesus’ words in Acts 1:8?
2. Look at Acts 13:1-3. What was the church at Antioch doing when the Holy Spirit spoke? Who did he call, and what was the church’s response? What details stand out to you?
3. Read Acts 14:21-23. After preaching the gospel and making disciples, what additional step did Paul and Barnabas take in every city? Why do you think this detail is included in the narrative?

*Interpretation: What does the passage mean?*

1. Pastor David says that “starting churches is the entire story of the New Testament.” Do you agree? Why might some people separate evangelism and disciple-making from church planting, and how does Acts challenge that separation?
2. In Acts 13:2, the Holy Spirit calls Barnabas and Saul, two of the most gifted and important leaders at Antioch. What does the church’s willingness to send their best teach us about how God’s people should relate to the Spirit’s direction? What would it have cost the Antioch church to obey?
3. What is the significance of the summary statement in Acts 9:31 that the church “multiplied”? How is this different from

simply growing numerically in one location?

***Application: How can we apply this passage to our lives?***

1. Pastor David used the Dead Sea illustration to describe a church (or a Christian) that only receives and never sends. In what areas of your own spiritual life might you be “stagnating” rather than allowing God’s grace to flow through you to others? What would it look like to create an “outlet” this week?
2. The sermon challenged us with this statement: “Your life is God’s to spend for the spread of His church.” Is there an area of your life—your time, your finances, your location, your career—where you are holding back from full surrender to God’s direction? What would it look like to pray, “God, I will go wherever, do whatever, and give however You call me”—and mean it?
3. Not everyone is called to move across the city to plant a church, but everyone has a role. What is one practical step you can take this week to support the multiplication of gospel-centered churches? Consider prayer, financial giving, inviting someone to church, or simply asking God how he wants to use you.