

BIBLE TEACHING AND WORSHIP GUIDE



FOR THE HOME-BASED CHURCH

Produced Weekly

Get Together with Fellow Believers
Acts 9:10-19; Romans 12:4-5; Hebrews 10:24-25

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

Leaders' Responsibilities:

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:

Have a blindfold available.

Assign the three Bible passages to readers for the Gathering Time.

Bible Study Leader:

Gather materials for making puzzles for children and preschoolers.

Gather pictures – a baby, a flower, a tree, a box of cereal, a pair of shoes, and other common items – for the “**Take Ten**” Bible study application for the youth.

Give the Bible study youth application material to a youth who will direct that time.

Provide 7 wooden pencils for the Bible Study leader. They may be used but need to be long enough to grasp with both hands.

Worship Time Leader:

Ensure that the music you have chosen is known, copied (with permission) or that songbooks are provided.

Music Sources:

“Come, Let Us Worship and Bow Down”

“Come Into His Presence”

“Father, Make Us One”

“Bind Us Together”

all from *Maranatha Music Praise Chorus Book, 3rd Edition* (Red book)

1

Copy this section for the Gathering Time leader.

Gathering Time: (Suggested time: 15 minutes)

Get Together with Fellow Believers

Focal Text

Acts 9:10-19; Romans 12:4-5; Hebrews 10:24-25

Main Idea

Giving to and receiving encouragement from fellow believers by joining in fellowship with them in the church is an essential part of the Christian life.

Questions to Explore

How important is the church in the Christian life?

Gathering together:

Leader: Enlist a volunteer to sit quietly blindfolded in another room as people arrive. When people are seated, ask a youth or child to go and guide the blindfolded person to a seat. Do not remove the blindfold.

Have people in the group identify themselves and shake hands with the blindfolded person.

Ask the young person what extra care they had to use in acting as guide.

Ask the person who was blindfolded how it felt to be dependent on someone else.

Ask the group about their reactions to the situation.

First thoughts:

"As Christians we are all dependent on one another. We need to listen and to learn from each other, to touch each other's lives, to make room for other's needs. All of us wear "blindfolds" that keep us from really seeing those with whom we share a common faith. Today we will see how important it is to appreciate one another as fellow believers."

"Listen to what God wants us to hear from the Scripture today."

Reader #1: Read aloud **Acts 9:10-19**

Reader #2: Read aloud **Romans 12:4-5**

Reader #3: Read aloud **Hebrews 10:24-25**

Closing the Gathering Time:

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.

2

Copy this section for the Bible Study leader.

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

Get Together with Fellow Believers

Focal Text

Acts 9:10-19; Romans 12:4-5; Hebrews 10:24-25

Background Text

Acts 9:1-30; Romans 12:4-5; Hebrews 10:24-25

Main Idea

Giving to and receiving encouragement from fellow believers by joining in fellowship with them in the church is an essential part of the Christian life.

Questions to Explore

How important is the church in the Christian life?

Teaching Aim

To help the group recognize the importance to their Christian lives of joining in deepening fellowship with fellow believers.

Introduction to your personal study:

In the last session we examined how an individual can have a personal relationship with God that results in the forgiveness of sin and the receiving of eternal life. We discovered that salvation comes through belief in Jesus Christ who gave himself as a sacrifice for the sins of the world. An experience with Christ is a personal matter, but it is not totally private. A person's faith is individual, but it is not exclusive. Having a relationship with a fellowship of believers is not optional. Believers are to share their experience with others in order to grow in their own life and to serve others. They are instructed to love others as themselves. These actions cannot be kept private. The benefits of relating to other believers in the church come to both the believer and to the fellowship of believers as a whole. The individual believer receives strength, support, and encouragement from the fellowship. The fellowship of believers receives strength, support, and encouragement from the individual believer. Many of us have seen how

one stick on fire does not last long. However, when an additional stick is placed near the first and catches on fire, both burn brighter and longer than they would individually. As additional sticks are added to the fire, the fire grows even larger and more brilliant. So it is with Christians. The intimate, personal conversion of an individual naturally leads him or her toward a relationship with others who have had the same experience. In union there is mutual support and ministry.

Background:

Preceding our focal passage is the story of Saul of Tarsus and his encounter with Christ on the road to Damascus. Saul had obtained authority to go to Damascus to make prisoners of Christians and return them to Jerusalem. Damascus was about 135 miles northeast of Jerusalem. As he neared the city, he saw a great light, fell down on the ground, and had a discussion with the resurrected Lord. Christ told him to go on to the city where he would receive instructions. Others led the blind Saul into the city. As a new believer, even a powerful man like Saul needed help.

Focusing on the Meaning:

Believers Encourage Each Other (Acts 9:10-17)

Acts 9:10 Ananias was a somewhat ordinary disciple. He was a believer and a follower of Christ, but was not one of the church leaders. In fact, he is only mentioned in the Bible in regard to this incident. In Acts 22:12, Paul describes Ananias as a devout observer of the law and also highly respected by all Jews living in Damascus. Through a vision, Ananias had an encounter with Jesus. When the Lord called him, he gave an immediate response.

Acts 9:11 God gave this little known Christian specific instructions. God told Ananias a name, an address (the house of Judas on Straight Street), and the story of what had happened to Saul. Then He told him to go, lay hands on him and restore his sight. God also told Ananias that Saul was praying, which is an indication that Saul had become a believer.

Acts 9:12 The Lord continued to inform Ananias about the situation. Saul had a vision in which he saw a man named Ananias come to him. Saul also saw the man place his hands on him to restore his vision.

Acts 9:13 At first, Ananias reacted as many disciples have done throughout the ages. He reviewed the difficulties involved in doing what God wanted. He told the Lord that he had heard about things Saul had done and how he had harmed Christians back in Jerusalem. Ananias protested the assignment God was giving him.

Acts 9:14 Ananias reminded God that Saul had come with authority from the chief priests to arrest believers. He spoke of the personal danger he could be in by even getting close to Saul.

Acts 9:15 God answered Ananias by revealing to him the plans he had for Saul's future. No one (not even Saul) was aware of what God had in mind. God told Ananias that Saul would become a witness to the Gentiles, to rulers, and also to the Jews.

Acts 9:16 The Lord continued His instructions to Ananias, telling him that Saul would suffer for Christ's name.

Acts 9:17 Ananias went into the house as instructed by God. His desire to obey God was greater than his fear of Saul. Scripture does not tell us his thoughts as he obeyed. He addresses Saul as "brother," indicating that he truly accepted him as a fellow believer. He put his hands on Saul. Ananias told Saul that the same Jesus he had met on the road had sent him. The purpose of the visit was to restore Saul's sight and allow him to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Believers Are Helped by Other Believers (Acts 9:18-19)

Acts 9:18 It is not known exactly what fell from Saul's eyes; but as it fell, he could see again. We do not know where or by whom Saul was baptized, but it appears that this act of obedience was done almost immediately. God used Ananias' ministry to bring Saul to the place he wanted him. The eternal God used an ordinary but obedient man to accomplish his purpose in the life of a fellow believer.

Acts 9:19 After eating, Saul got stronger. The passage indicates that he was in Damascus several days with the believers. He spent the early days of his spiritual experience with other Christians.

Believers in the Church Have Different Functions (Romans 12:4-5)

Romans 12:4 In this letter to the church at Rome, Saul of Tarsus (now known as Paul) points out how individuals have physical bodies made up of various members. The human body has arms, legs, feet, hands, and other parts. Each part has a specific purpose. They do not all perform the same tasks. Feet have a part in walking and running. Hands have a part in reaching and holding. Each individual has one body with many parts, and these members do not all have the same function. Each part is unique. Each part of the body contributes to the operation of the body. Each part is essential for the body to function properly.

Romans 12:5 Paul draws a parallel between the physical body and the spiritual body (the believers). The church is made up of individual Christians who form the body, the church. Each believer is not independent of other believers but is a part of the whole group. Because of the relationship of each believer to Christ, they are all bound to Him and to each other in a meaningful relationship. Members of the body are not free to isolate themselves from others. It is essential for them to interact with and contribute to the whole spiritual body in order for it to function properly.

Believers Are Commanded to Encourage Each Other and to Continue in Fellowship (Hebrews 10:24-25)

Hebrews 10:24 Believers are to spur, to stimulate or to incite each other toward generous expressions of love and good works. They are to constantly encourage each other to demonstrate Christ's love in the world in practical ways through action and not just talk.

Hebrews 10:25 The meeting of believers in Christ for fellowship, encouragement and worship is natural and necessary, but some Christians in New Testament times had already begun to neglect the practice of gathering together faithfully. This was a hazardous habit then and remains so today. One reason for this is that a day of accounting is coming. "The Day" the Scripture refers to is the return of Christ from heaven. It is a date unknown on earth. It will come as a surprise and will be a day of reckoning for every individual.

Teaching the Passage:

A personal commitment to God through Jesus Christ is the beginning of the Christian life. While it is an individual decision, a person's relationship with Christ cannot remain private. The very nature of a relationship with Jesus calls for involvement with other Christians.

- ✚ Christians need other Christians.
- ✚ Believers need to minister to one another.
- ✚ Individual believers have something to offer other believers.
- ✚ Believers need to encourage one another.

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)

Get Together with Fellow Believers

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).

Begin 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 9:10-19; Romans 12:4-5; Hebrews 10:24-25

Background Text

Acts 9:1-30; Romans 12:4-5; Hebrews 10:24-25

Main Idea

Giving to and receiving encouragement from fellow believers by joining in fellowship with them in the church is an essential part of the Christian life.

Questions to Explore

How important is the church in the Christian life?

Teaching Aim

To help the group recognize the importance to their Christian lives of joining in deepening fellowship with fellow believers.

Connect with Life:

Say: Some persons have been in a church group all of their lives. Others have their first encounters with church as youth or as adults, perhaps even as senior adults. Some find their place within a fellowship of believers, that is, a church, in unusual ways. One of our writers for today's worship time shares his first encounter with church as follows:

Read: When I was eleven years old, I delivered newspapers in our small town. Once I delivered a special Sunday edition to every house on my route. I rode my bicycle for 2½ hours before I made a deal with God. I promised if he would help me finish my route in time, I would go to church that morning. As often happens with promises, I began to regret mine when I noticed that I would have fifteen minutes to spare. No time to go home. No chance to change clothes. No time to tell my family where I was. But I went to church. My mother was mortified when she discovered all our neighbors saw me, with my unwashed face, in all my glory, after four hours of bicycle riding. God used that day to lead me, and eventually my entire family, to church. Eventually, my entire family was baptized into that church. I can look back now and still see God's hand at work in my life through that event.

Guide the Study:

1. Share these statements with the group: I can worship God alone. I can worship God while I am in the boat fishing. I don't need to go to church to worship God. My relationship is to the Lord and not to a church. Allow the group to discuss these statements.

Say: Last session we studied how a person becomes a Christian. John 3:16 told us that whosoever believes in God's son will have eternal life. Today we are going to see what the Bible says about a believer's relationship to other believers.

2. Briefly review Acts 9:1-8 in your own words.

3. Invite the group to discover the nature of the relationship between Saul and the disciples up until this point. (v. 2)

Read (or ask a volunteer to read) Acts 9:9 to find out about Saul's condition. (He was blind and did not eat or drink anything.)

4. Give a brief review of Acts 9:10-13 covering (or asking the group to comment on) these topics:

- ✓ Who Ananias was.
- ✓ God's instructions to Ananias.
- ✓ Ananias' initial objection to God's instructions.
- ✓ God's response to Ananias' fears.

5. Read what happened next in Acts 9:17-19.

Ask: What did Ananias do? (He went. He placed his hands on Saul. He told Saul that God had sent him so that he could receive sight and receive the Holy Spirit).

Ask: What happened to Saul? (He received sight, was baptized, ate, gained strength and spent time with the disciples.)

6. State: Ananias, as a believer, had a specific task. Let's look at Romans 12:4-5 to see how each believer also has a task.

Read (or ask a volunteer to read) the passage. Share some of the insights you gained about these verses from the "Teacher Preparation" comments.





7. Say: Hebrews 10:24-25 gives believers further instructions about relating to one another. Let's read the passage to discover what those instructions are.

Challenge the group to name the things believers are to do. (Motivate each other to love and do good deeds. Don't give up the practice of group worship. Encourage each other.)

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.

8. Say: What does the story of Ananias tell us about what a believer can do? It shows that a believer can follow God's instructions and accomplish a task in spite of his or her fears. This story demonstrates how a believer can minister to another believer. Both Ananias and Saul benefited from this experience. Our study today can help us understand that:

-  Christians need other Christians.
-  Believers need to minister to one another.
-  Individual believers have something to offer other believers.
-  Believers need to encourage one another.

Say: In the healthy human body each part and organ does what it is designed for. The lungs take in and expel air. The heart pumps blood to and from the heart. The eyes see. The ears process sound. Each part has its own function. When one part does not function properly, the whole body suffers. So it is with the body of Christ, the church. If all parts are functioning properly, it is a healthy body. If one part is not functioning properly, not only is that member hurting, but the whole body has to make adjustments to the non-functioning member and the body is limited.

We Need Each Other

Leader: Take a wooden pencil in your hand. Snap it in two. Take six wooden pencils in your hand. Try to break them all together. Ask the group what this object lesson shows about believers in a church family.

Say: A pencil by itself is easily broken. However, when that pencil is placed in a group with others, it becomes much more difficult to break. Each pencil adds strength to the total. So it is with the individual believer and other Christians. Each of us can make a contribution to the whole. It is a mutually beneficial relationship. The individual and the group are stronger because of that relationship.

Say: As a home-based church, our congregation is small. However, that just means that we are really a close family. Yet we are also a complete church. We help each other, encourage each other, and lift each other up when special needs come into our lives. Like a physical family, we are responsible for each other.

<p>Take a five minute break to separate the Bible Study and Worship Time. Children may need to use the washroom again before worship.</p>
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Youth!!! TakeTen

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 to apply the lesson to your own needs.

Get Together with Fellow Believers **Acts 9:10-19; Romans 12:4-5; Hebrews 10:24-25**

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.

Hold up each picture and ask how you would be able to identify each of these articles if you could not see it. Comment on the importance of our five senses. Ask youth to read Acts 9:10-19 and list the senses that are indicated in these verses. *(All except smell.)* Each of the senses provides us with information about our environment. Some we use more often than others. Some people have one or more senses that are acutely developed. If I were to lose my hearing I would feel the loss deeply – no music, poor communication, no audio telephone conversations. What sense would **you** miss the most?

Saul, who plays an important role in this passage, had greatly tormented and even killed Jesus' followers until he met the risen Savior in this dramatic encounter as he journeyed to Damascus. What happened at this meeting? *(A great light blinded Saul and he heard a voice from heaven challenging his prejudice against Jesus.)*

Why was Ananias reluctant to obey God's instructions in the vision? *(He was afraid because Saul had an evil and dangerous reputation.)*

Ananias overcame his fears and obeyed God. What was the result? *(Saul regained his sight. Ananias discovered God is faithful to his promises.)*

There were also long-term effects as a result of the encounter between Saul and Ananias. How did God use this incident in the lives of other people? *(Ananias set an example for other believers to accept Saul as a new convert. Saul became Paul, the great Apostle to the Gentiles, who shared the gospel in many foreign countries.)*

Both of these men had very important roles to play in the early church. Before God could use either of them, they had to give up their prejudices. Both men needed to

change and be willing to work together for the good of all. Any resentful feelings toward another Christian would hinder the work of the Holy Spirit in growing the church.

Read Romans 12:4-5. How do these verses add to the idea of co-operation among Christians? *(Just as our senses work together to help us function as individuals, each person involved in a fellowship of believers adds to the group and must set aside his or her prejudices and work for a common purpose – to lead others to know Jesus Christ.)*

Read Hebrews 10:24-25. The word “provoke” as we use it today means “to irritate” or “to antagonize”. However the root of the word is “to call forth”. In this sense, we ought to provide an atmosphere that encourages (calls forth) the best sort of behaviour and attitudes from other believers.

Who do you need to accept as a brother or sister in Christ? Pray that the Lord Jesus will help you to encourage that person even though you may find it difficult.

3

Copy this section for the Worship Time leader.

Worship Time (Suggested time: 30 minutes)

Get Together with Fellow Believers **Acts 9:10-19; Romans 12:4-5; Hebrews 10:24-25**

Beginning the Service:

Sing together:

“Come Into His Presence”

“Come, Let Us Worship and Bow Down”

Other worship related songs or hymns

Offering:

Have a child receive any offerings that the congregation may give today.

Ministry Moment:

Say: Today we will have a brief silent prayer time. I would like to ask that each person here pray silently for someone who has blessed you by his or her friendship and fellowship. In your prayer, determine to acknowledge that blessing this week by a phone call, e-mail, card or visit, if possible.

Ask the congregation to bow their heads. Tell them that you will end the prayer time after one minute. When the minute is over, simply pray out loud: “Father, thank you for hearing our prayers of thanksgiving, and thank you for the people who have blessed us along the way.”

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.

Truths about the Church

Text: Acts 9:10-17

Introduction: Imagination is wonderful. Can we use ours right now? Close your eyes and listen to me. I will say a word and see what our imaginations will show us. The word is "Church!" (Pause). What did you see? (Wait for several verbal responses from the group). A church can mean a huge building where people go to worship. It sometimes means a denomination made up of many churches. It can also mean a small group of believers meeting in a rented room or a home. The one thing they all have in common is that they are all believers in Jesus Christ. A church is a fellowship of believers that join together to worship God through Christ and do God's will together. The size of each fellowship is of no consequence. But each fellowship is important.

Our text today, Acts 9:10-17, reveals the importance of a local fellowship doing God's will. God brought Paul and Ananias together to change the world forever. According to verses 18-19, Paul was baptized and ministered to by such a fellowship of believers. God wants to lead each church, regardless of its size, to accomplish his will. Our text reveals several truths about the church that is true about our fellowship.

I. The church is the place for believers

Ananias was a leader in the small church in Damascus. He was well known among believers. God called him to minister in a new way. Heal an enemy? Nurture the very man who was coming to attack the believers? He was very uncomfortable with the assignment and wanted to refuse. Little did he know what great plans God had for his ministry.

Every church needs people who are committed to do whatever God asks them. God never calls anyone to do something he will not equip that person to do. Each member uses the gifts and talents God has given to do whatever God directs. What are your gifts? What does God want you to do? He has a place in this fellowship for you to serve.

God also leads new believers to a church. It is where they belong. Paul had been saved. He could never go back to his old life. He did not know what to do next. He was a baby in Christ. He needed a church to minister to him. The church helped Paul to learn about Jesus whom he had been persecuting. Now he would serve Jesus at great personal cost. He learned to love each church in the New Testament world. Every person our church ministers to can make a real difference in our world. God has made the church a place for both new and more experienced believers.

II. The church is a place for new beginnings

Paul started over. Ananias ministered in a new way. You can almost hear him telling people years later, "I was the one who witnessed and ministered to Paul first!" God gave both Paul and Ananias a new understanding of his will and a new purpose in

servicing Christ. Jesus leads us into the church so we can find a new beginning and learn to serve him by doing more than we may have imagined.

III. The church is a place for a new partnership

Paul and Ananias never thought they would be partners in anything, but they found a common cause in serving Christ together. In fact, Paul found many new partners in the church. He no longer partnered with those who hated Christ but with those who wanted to follow Him. We also partner together to do God's will. Look at the people sitting near you. They are your partners in serving Christ. Paul wrote, "For we are God's fellow workers (1 Corinthians 3:9a)."

IV. Finally, the church is a place for a new mission

Paul had been a man on a mission. He was going to persecute the church. When he met Jesus and was welcomed into the church, he received a new mission. He became a church planter. Do you have any idea how many people were led to Christ because of Paul? He brought many Jews and Gentiles together in the service of Christ. Christ leads us to join together in a new mission in our church.

Call to Commitment:

I am so glad that when we are born into this world, most of us immediately belong to a family. Sometimes we are adopted into a family. The family is where we are nurtured, trained, educated, and prepared for our adult lives.

When we are born again, we become part of a church family. That is where we are nurtured, trained, educated, and prepared for an eternity with God. Believers are part of the Family of God. We need to get together. How else can we learn to be all that God wants us to be?

Concluding the Service:

Ask all who would like (children, youth, and/or adults) to participate in "sentence prayers" of thanksgiving and petition for your church. That is, each person will mention just one thing he/she is grateful for or concerned about in a brief sentence or two. A person may pray more than once but only after allowing others to participate as well. As the leader, tell the group that you will begin and close the prayer time. You could begin by thanking God in one sentence for bringing the members of your group together as a church family. Conclude the prayer time by asking God for physical and spiritual safekeeping of everyone involved in the church throughout the week.

Sing together: ***"Bind Us Together, Lord"***.