



ACTS OF THE
Holy Spirit

SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR CONNECT GROUPS

14 & 15 JAN 2023

“THE SPIRIT WHO JUDGES SIN”

ACTS 5.1-11

Suggestions for Making the Most of your Group Time

1. Begin by reviewing the video of the sermon, preferably before you meet together (see <https://www.brmc.org.sg/services/sermons/>).
2. Read the Scripture passage together, before entering into discussion.
3. Spend time on both question components, namely:
 - a. Comprehension (*Who? What? When? Why? How?*);
 - b. Application / Transformation (*So what? What action should I take? Perspective should I adopt? Value should I uphold? Emotion should I embrace? Habit should I develop? Desire should I nurture? etc*)
4. Discuss as few or as many questions as best fits your group’s current context and present stage in life.
5. Before ending your group session, allocate some time (15-20 min) to pray with and for one another.

Discussion Questions

1. From your review of the sermon and your reading of the Scripture passage, recap the key points of this sermon.

Authentic Community: positive and negative examples from Acts

In the first two sermons of this series, we heard of the Holy Spirit's active role in shaping and driving the early church. The Spirit commissioned and empowered the apostles as witnesses of the good news of Jesus Christ (Acts 1:1-11). The Spirit also brought forth an authentic community of Christians united in belief and having "all things in common" (*koinonia* described in Acts 2:42-46). Luke's description of how early believers "would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need" (Acts 2:42b) is a topic returned to in Acts 4:32-37 and 5:1-11 (this week's sermon).

While the opening chapters of Acts highlights the unity of God's people, Acts 4.32-5.11 illustrate contrasting responses within the church. Barnabas was evidently a believer who did not claim private ownership of his possessions (Acts 4.36-37). In contrast, the deception and pretence of Ananias and Sapphira in presenting part of the proceeds of their property as the whole, in the same manner as Barnabas, reflected greed and pride in their hearts veiled as generosity and humility.

This episode reveals that God was working dramatically in the church's early days in judgment as well as in blessing. Luke did not idealize his portrait of the early church but painted an accurate picture, "warts and all." - Constable's Notes (Acts), Dr. Thomas L. Constable

2. The sermon spoke about the seriousness and destructiveness of pretension and of keeping up appearances. The Scripture text also described both the role of Satan's temptation and human complicity and responsibility for sin.

a) To what extent do you agree that pretence and inauthenticity is indeed a critically serious issue? Where do you see the role of the devil and the role of human culpability?

b) In what ways are you yourself tempted to pretence and posturing – and how is the Holy Spirit working to transform you in this area?

c) What is one practical step your CG can take, to lovingly help one another be alert to the evil seed of pretension and false appearances, so as to move closer toward authentic community?

3. The sermon highlighted that deceit and deception was present even in the earliest church community, as recorded in the Bible

a) On a scale of 1 to 10, how surprised are you by this?

b) To what extent does this realisation (re-)colour your view of what authentic church community is really like? How do we hold the tension between aspirations toward a blameless and holy community on the one hand, and the reality that we are all redeemed broken sinners on the other hand?

c) How can your CG be an authentic community that encourages each other towards a life of repentance, even through the calling-out of sin, yet without molly-coddling or gossiping about people? How can your CG be a place where pretences are neither wanted nor needed, and where there can be genuine confession of sin and mutual accountability of words and actions?

Prayer Items

4. Pray for one another, that we would be empowered by God to live out the specific areas of application and transformation raised during the discussion time. Pray also for any needs that were mentioned.