

SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE



**PRINCE
OF PEACE**
Called to Connect



Radical Inclusivity

July 20-24, 2019

The power of the Gospel breaks down every wall that we erect to keep people out of God's mission. The movement of Jesus in the world is about radical inclusivity. The Holy Spirit is the source of community, and helps build up community, and therefore breaks down the divisions that would otherwise separate people.

SCRIPTURE TEXT: ACTS 11:1-18

Read the scripture text together as a group.

BACKGROUND INFO

The early church was a Jewish Church. Jesus was a Jew, his disciples were Jews, and Jesus' ministry had been spent amongst the Jewish people. And although Jesus' commission to his disciples in Matthew 28:19 was to "go and make disciples of all nations," up to this point the followers of Jesus were mostly Jewish.

But now the church was beginning to see Gentiles, non Jews, coming to faith in Christ, and this posed some significant theological and practical problems. For example, the Jewish Christians continued to observe the Old Testament food laws and circumcision, and one question that arose was "should Gentile Christians observe these same laws or not?" If not, how were Jewish believers to maintain their own obedience to food laws when fellowship in Christ involved eating with unclean Gentiles? And how would close association with Gentile believers affect the relationship of Jewish believers with other Jews who did not share their faith in Christ? What we see is potential divisions emerging between Jewish and Gentile Christians.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What ways do you experience division in the church today?
- Have you experienced exclusion from a group or family or community? What was that like for you?
- Have you ever excluded someone? What was that like for you?
- What is it like for you to experience that "longing, wondering" that comes from the Holy Spirit leading you in a new direction?

APPLICATION: This week, lean into inclusivity. How can you share the love of Christ by including those around you?