

Church Genome Project

Next Missional Steps for Church Planting Involvement

Seven Churches in Acts

Spiritual DNA Individual/Small Group Discussion Guides

(Seven Week Missional Revival Season)

Week 1

Spiritual DNA and Church Planting Involvement
The New Church @ Jerusalem

For Small Group Discussion

Focused DNA Principles Within This City:

Spiritual Preparation—commit to the Father’s work of spiritual preparation in your life and the life of your church.

Spiritual Authority—continuously receive and rely on the Holy Spirit, the Father’s promise of spiritual authority in your life and the life of your church.

Spiritual Understanding—follow God’s lead to the people and places he wants you and your church to engage.

1. What does the church at Jerusalem reveal to us about the role prayer plays in the starting of a new church?

See Acts 1:14; 2:42; 4:23-31 and 6:4

2. What missional actions did the launch team of the church at Jerusalem do when they were filled with the Holy Spirit?

See Acts 1:8; 2:4-11; and 2:41-47

3. How did the church at Jerusalem focus on people and places for the sake of the gospel?

See Acts 1:8; and 2:4-11

Consider Philip’s work in Samaria and Peter in Caesarea (Acts 8 and 10)

4. Do you believe that the planting of a church creates a stir in the community? Why?

See Acts 2:12-13; 5:12-16 and 6:7

5. Have you ever thought of Jesus as a church planter? How did he form a church while on earth during his three years of ministry?

See Matthew 16:13-19 and 28:18-20

Lessons on Church Planting

- Church planters depend on prayer support and God's timing.
- Church planters evangelize, make disciples and gather a team to launch.
- Church planters understand those people who they are called to reach.
- Church planters follow the lead of Jesus the Founder and Builder of the Church.

Missional Next Steps

As a small group adopt a church planter, his family and his church for prayer support (ask your pastor for a recommendation or go to www.prayforplanters.com to find a planter. Daily pray for them. Correspond with them for specific needs and requests.

As an individual make a commitment to learn how to have a gospel conversation through using the *3 Circles: Life Conversation Guide*. Download the app if you like but always be mindful, it's the Holy Spirit's power that makes the difference. <http://lifeonmissionbook.com/conversation-guide>

As a small group talk about a people group or unreached town within your region, state, nationally or globally. Assign someone from the group the task to give a 5 to 7-minute report after doing some research on who they are, how many are there and who may be endeavoring to reach them for Christ. www.peoplegroups.info Then, commit to pray and find tangible ways to missionally engage them. Find out if there is a church in their language, location or affinity groupings.

Week 2

Spiritual DNA and Church Planting Involvement
The New Church @ Antioch

For Small Group Discussion

Focused DNA Principles Within This City:

Spiritual Leadership—invest in identifying and nurturing missional leadership.

Spiritual Synergy—choose to work together as a synergistic team in your life and the life of your church.

Spiritual Giftedness—commit to sharing the resources God has given you in your life and the life of your church.

1. What does the fact that we do not know the names of the people responsible for starting the new church at Antioch teach us about church planting?

See Acts 11:19-21

2. How did Luke describe the leadership qualities of Barnabas and the influence of his work at Antioch? Are not these the same qualities needed to be a church planter?

See Acts 11:22-26

3. How did the church plant in Antioch demonstrate spiritual giftedness and sharing of their treasures with those in need? What spiritual gifts were present and active in the story?

See Acts 11:19-30 and 13:1-4

4. Where at Antioch do you see evidence of teamwork and spiritual synergy—working together for greater impact?

See Acts 11:25-26 and 13:1-4

5. How does a church's commitment to make disciples who make disciples lead to more missional leaders being sent? Why is the missional culture of a church important?

See John 20:21 and 2 Timothy 2:2

Lessons on Church Planting

- Church planters are willing to be unknown and humble leaders.
- Church planters are guided by the call of God, the Holy Spirit and character.
- Church planters function best as a team sharing leadership.
- Church planters utilize their spiritual gifts, time, talents and treasures.
- Church planters create a culture of sending missional leaders from within.

Missional Next Steps

Take a *Barnabas Field Trip* via a video call. As a small group plan next week to visit a church planter for a ten-minute call (the call could be pre-recorded). Plan to be like Barnabas looking for where you see the grace of God at work. Also, as he tells his story listen for specific ways the new church is expressing spiritual leadership, synergistic teams and giftedness (your pastor or denominational leader can help you connect with a planter).

As a small group or individual go to www.namb.net/pipeline and view the video introducing the Multiplication Pipeline tool designed for a church to discover, develop and deploy missional leaders from within. Learn more about how your church can be involved in raising up the next generation of Antioch style leaders.

As a small group reinforce the importance of each person being willing to be sent on mission with God. Provide each person with a blank piece of paper and a pen. First, ask them to write the words “Here am I, send me.” across the top. And then, in the same kind of Spirit as recorded in Acts 13...invite them to prayerfully sign their name at the bottom as an expression of a complete willingness to be sent by God. Have a season of prayer about God’s calling and how they might be involved with a nearby church plant or one on the horizon.

Week 3

Spiritual DNA and Church Planting Involvement
The New Church @ Philippi

For Small Group Discussion

Focused DNA Principles Within This City:

Spiritual Receptivity—commit to seek and engage persons of peace as you express the DNA of spiritual receptivity in your life and the life of your church.

Spiritual Synergy—choose to work together as a synergistic team in your life and the life of your church.

Spiritual Warfare—commit to fight the good fight of faith in your life and the life of your church.

1. What does the church at Philippi teach us about how God prepares people to be receptive to the gospel and the starting of a new church?

See Acts 16:9-10, 13-15, and 28-31

2. In what ways did Paul and his companions work together as a team at Philippi?

See Acts 16:9-31 (together, they made decisions, evangelized, endured hardships, and experienced miracles)

3. How did the new church at Philippi encounter spiritual warfare and opposition?

See Acts 16:16-24 and 35-40

4. Can you spot all ten of the spiritual DNA principles in the story of the new church at Philippi?

See Acts 16:6-31 and Appendix __ in *The Spiritual DNA of a Church on Mission*

5. Where and how did Jesus find persons of peace? Can you share some examples?

See Mark 5:1-20; Luke 19:1-10 and John 4:1-42

Lessons on Church Planting

- Church planters seek to discover points of interest and persons of peace.
- Church planters evangelize and make disciples.
- Church planters can expect demonic attacks and opposition.
- Church planters work together as a synergistic team.

Missional Next Steps

As a small group discuss the process of partnering with a planter within the framework actions of praying, participating and providing. Write the three words across the top of a white board or poster board, and then brainstorm about possible ways you could engage a planter and his plant on all three levels. Are there some things on the list you could act on right now?

As an individual make a commitment to look for receptivity in people you encounter during the normal course of a week. Perhaps, it might be at your local gas station, grocery store or coffee shop. Next week plan to report on what indicators you may have observed while interacting with them.

As a small group consider the points of spiritual warfare and opposition to the new church in Philippi. Who among you would be willing to share about the increased level of spiritual warfare that has been occurring since you began the *Church Genome Project: Next Missional Steps for Church Planting Involvement* study? Pray for one another and support each other in the struggle.

Week Four

Spiritual DNA and Church Planting Involvement The Church @ Thessalonica

For Small Group Discussion

Focused DNA Principles Within This City:

Spiritual Sowing—commit to intentionally evangelize by sharing the gospel and making disciples in your life and the life of your church.

Secondary Principles

Spiritual Receptivity—commit to seek and engage persons of peace as you express the DNA of spiritual receptivity in your life and the life of your church.

Spiritual Warfare—commit to fight the good fight of faith in your life and the life of your church.

1. What was Paul and the team's custom and strategy upon entering a new city like Thessalonica? How might that or a similar approach work in the twenty-first century? Can you name some possible responsive places?

See Acts 17:1-2

2. What place does the gospel and the Scriptures have in these initial encounters in the cities of Thessalonica and Berea? How did Paul and the team present the gospel?

See Acts 17:1-4 and Acts 17:10-15

3. Why do believe there was a riot in the city of Thessalonica? What were Paul and his team accused of doing in the city? What other evidence in Acts are there of riots and revivals going hand in hand?

See Acts 17:5-9; 18:5-8; and 19:21-41

1. Do you believe that the planting of a church creates a stir in the community? How did it affect Jason and his household? How about Paul and the team?

See Acts 17:5-9

2. The close sister church of Thessalonica was Berea, how did they receive the message and what did they do with it? How is that important for church planters and the people they are reaching for Christ?

See Acts 17:10-15

Lessons on Church Planting

- Church planters look for receptive places to sow the gospel.
- Church planters balance evangelism and the making of disciples.
- Church planters present the gospel through various approaches.
- Church planters expect spiritual warfare and opposition.
- Church planters turn to the Scriptures for faith and practice.

Missional Next Steps

As a small group make a list of possible responsive places that might serve as an incubator or a launching pad for a new church start. From your list, what are some of the indicators and common denominators? Encourage an individual or a group to go on a scouting mission to one of those places this week and report back their observations. Ask them to discern what the unique challenges to sharing the gospel might be in that setting.

As an individual this week read this quote from a planter, *“Planting a church in Boston is the hardest thing I’ve ever done. It’s cold. It’s expensive. And people don’t want us here. It’s like we’ve started a business that offers a product everyone needs but no one wants. The same is true for hard places all over the world. You won’t just be disliked and ignored; you’ll be hated and opposed. Church planters, therefore, must be prepared to withstand opposition from three directions: outside, inside, and above the church.”* Take time to thank God for and pray for church planters, their wives and families. Read further to find out about the three directions of opposition: <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/why-church-planting-so-hard/>

As a small group take some time to discuss Jason and his household (Acts 17:5-9) Focus on the personal price he paid for being involved with church planting. Think of others from the Book of Acts and mention them by name who sacrificed and gave up things for the kingdom of God. Discuss what things modern day church planters sacrifice and give up. Take a moment and write a handwritten note of encouragement to a planter. Be sure to specifically thank them for their sacrifices.

Week Five

**Spiritual DNA and Church Planting Involvement
The Church @ Athens**

For Small Group Discussion

Focused DNA Principles Within This City:

Spiritual Bridges—look to points of connection in your culture individually and within your church.

Secondary Principles

Spiritual Receptivity—commit to seek and engage persons of peace as you express the DNA of spiritual receptivity in your life and the life of your church.

Spiritual Understanding—follow God’s lead to the people and places he wants you and your church to engage.

1. There was a small group of new believers left behind in Athens after Paul’s work. Can we infer that a church was established there? How do we know what constitutes a new church?

See Acts 17:32-34

2. Upon entering Athens, what does the description of Paul’s heart reveal about him? How do you respond to the idols of your city?

See Acts 17:16

3. What were the places that Paul engaged the people of Athens? Where kind of places might a church planter find people to share the gospel with?

See Acts 17:17

4. Paul dealt with the Epicurean and Stoic philosophies of the day, what are the twenty-first century philosophies a church planter might encounter?

See Acts 17:5-9

5. There were several spiritual bridges that Paul leveraged for the gospel, can you identify them in the story? Choose one and think about how a church planter might use that one today.

See Acts 17:10-15

Lessons on Church Planting

- Church planters need to see the need of their city and let God stir their hearts.
- Church planters look for new places to engage lost people.
- Church planters are equipped to deal with philosophies counter to the gospel.
- Church planters leverage spiritual bridges already in the culture for the gospel.
- Church planters persevere although initial results may appear to be meager.

Missional Next Steps

As a small group become a student of your own mission field. Think about some of the people you have been trying to reach with the gospel. Then, ask yourself what might be their unknown idols that they worshiping as substitutes for the God who can be known in Christ. Once you've identified an idol, share with the group how you would give an answer from the life of Christ or a biblical example. Ask God to give you an opportunity to engage that person this week with the gospel.

As an individual read Acts 17:30-31 and write down the essential gospel elements that Paul mentioned in his presentation to the Athenians. Now think about the last time you shared the gospel, where those elements present during the conversation. Read Acts 17:32 what are the three responses to the gospel. As you share the gospel with someone this week ask God to help you include those elements and be prepared for any of the three responses.

As a small group use a whiteboard and make two columns, Bridges in Athens and Bridges for Church Planters Today. Make a list of the ones from Acts 17:16-34 and then make a possible list for a church planter today. Make plans to go to a nearby university/college or a mall for an hour or so and observe the people in their setting. Consider the idols that might become bridges to the gospel there.

Week Six

Spiritual DNA and Church Planting Involvement The Church @ Corinth

For Small Group Discussion

Focused DNA Principles Within This City:

Spiritual Giftedness—commit to sharing the resources God has given you in your life and the life of your church.

Secondary Principles

Spiritual Receptivity—commit to seek and engage persons of peace as you express the DNA of spiritual receptivity in your life and the life of your church.

Spiritual Synergy—choose to work together as a synergistic team in your life and the life of your church.

1. Can you observe how God brought partners to come alongside Paul for the new work in Corinth? Aquilla and Priscilla were a blessing as a couple to his ministry. How might you and your spouse be a blessing to a church planter?

See Acts 18:1-5

2. How did Paul respond to non-receptive people in Corinth? Who were the receptive people and what was the evidence of their new-found faith in Christ?

See Acts 18:5-8

3. What spiritual gifts do you observe being utilized by the team and people in Corinth? How about their use of time, talents and treasures for Christ? Why are these essential for the planting of a new church?

See Acts 18:1-11; 1 Corinthians and 2 Corinthians

4. Where did Paul find his encouragement in the mission? What things did Jesus say to him about the work?

See Acts 18:9

5. Did Paul and the church planting team have the long view in mind with the Corinthians? How do we know that?

See Acts 18:11; 1 Corinthians and 2 Corinthians

Lessons on Church Planting

- Church planters need people to come alongside to help them.
- Church planters look for receptive people to the gospel.
- Church planters utilize spiritual gifts, time, talents and treasures from the harvest.
- Church planters expect spiritual warfare and opposition.
- Church planters must turn to Jesus for strength and courage.

Missional Next Steps

As a small group do an inventory of your spiritual giftedness. Consider spiritual gifts, have you ever identified your gifts—look at the lists in Scripture and within the group pair up and share with one person what you believe one of your gifts are. After sharing those, repeat but this time have another person share what they believe to be one of your spiritual gifts.

As an individual this week evaluate your current employment status or vocation (homemaker). Have you ever considered becoming a tentmaker and use your vocation as a platform for missions and being involved with a church plant? Discuss this possibility with a trusted confidant and ask them to pray that God would show you where, when, and how.

As a small group talk about the red letter promises in the Book of Acts, be sure to have a red-letter Bible and scan through chapters one through twenty-eight. How many of them have to do with resources in the harvest and encouragement from Jesus? What do we learn about encouragement for planting a church and being on mission for our day and time? This week plan to share one of those red-letters with someone in your network of relationships and see where the conversation takes you.

(Acts chapters 1, 9, 10, 11, 18, 20, 22, 23 and 26)

Week Seven

**Spiritual DNA and Church Planting Involvement
The Church @ Ephesus**

For Small Group Discussion

Focused DNA Principles Within This City:

Spiritual Warfare—commit to fight the good fight of faith in your life and the life of your church.

Secondary Principles

Spiritual Leadership—invest in identifying and nurturing missional leadership.

Spiritual Sowing—commit to intentionally evangelize by sharing the gospel and making disciples in your life and the life of your church.

Spiritual Giftedness—commit to sharing the resources God has given you in your life and the life of your church.

1. Why do you believe church planters encounter spiritual warfare when entering a city like Ephesus? Do church planters today experience this same kind of warfare?

See Acts 19:1-41; 20:17-38

2. How important is combating false teachers, confusion and doctrinal errors in the spiritual battles while on mission? Describe how you've experienced the fog of war? How might church planters deal with this challenge?

See Acts 18:2-28; 19:1-10

3. Where do you see Paul and the team in Ephesus encountering the demonic while church planting? Why do you think the new believers had a holy bonfire to destroy the occultic objects? People involved in church planting need to put on the full armor of God—the battle is real and dangerous.

See Acts 19:11-20 and Ephesians 6:10-20

4. Where do you observe leadership discovery and development in Ephesus? Why is this important for a church plant being able to raise up the next generation of missional leaders?

See Acts 19:8-10; 20:17-38 and Ephesians 4:1-16

5. What evidence do you see of Paul and his team using the gifts of the Spirit at Ephesus? The church at Ephesus was rich in grace and generous to others. How should a church planter be generous with gifts, time, talents and treasures?

See Acts 20:35; Ephesians

Lessons on Church Planting

- Church planters need people to come alongside to help them.
- Church planters look for receptive people to the gospel.
- Church planters utilize spiritual gifts, time, talents and treasures from the harvest.
- Church planters expect spiritual warfare and opposition.
- Church planters must turn to Jesus for strength and courage.

Missional Next Steps

As a small group do an inventory of your spiritual giftedness. Consider spiritual gifts, have you ever identified your gifts—look at the lists in Scripture and within the group pair up and share with one person what you believe one of your gifts are. After sharing those, repeat but this time have another person share what they believe to be one of your spiritual gifts.

As an individual this week evaluate your current employment status or vocation (homemaker). Have you ever considered becoming a tentmaker and use your vocation as a platform for missions and being involved with a church plant? Discuss this possibility with a trusted confidant and ask them to pray that God would show you where, when, and how.

As a small group talk about the red letter promises in the Book of Acts, be sure to have a red-letter Bible and scan through chapters one through twenty-eight. How many of them have to do with resources in the harvest and encouragement from Jesus? What do we learn about encouragement for planting a church and being on mission for our day and time? This week plan to share one of those red-letters with someone in your network of relationships and see where the conversation takes you.