

# Acts 1:12-26

## May 4, 2025



### CONVERSATION STARTERS

What are some highs or lows you experienced this past week?

What Scripture has been shaping you recently?

Where have you seen God moving in your life this week?

What did you hear in today's sermon OR read in today's passage that you would like to discuss?

What did you learn about yourself in today's sermon/passage?

What did you learn about God in today's sermon/passage?

What convicted you as you listened to today's sermon OR read in today's passage?

### MAIN POINT

Following Jesus's ascension into heaven, His followers returned to Jerusalem. Acts records they were "continually united in prayer" (v.14) and with prayerful consideration, they replaced the betrayer Judas among the apostles.

### INTRODUCTION

*As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.*

**What does it mean for a group of people to be united?**

**Why is unity in the church important?**

**How and why does prayer impact unity in the church?**

Last week, we began our study of the book of Acts by discussing the events that took place between Jesus's resurrection and His ascension forty days later. During this time, Jesus commanded His followers to remain in Jerusalem to wait for the promised arrival of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4).



In today's passage, we will get an update on the growing body of believers and learn how they handled an important leadership matter.

## **UNDERSTANDING**

*Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.*

 ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ ACTS 1:12-14.

**What can we learn from the first church's obedience to Jesus in this passage?**

**What does it mean to be "united in prayer" (v.14)?**

The disciples returned to Jerusalem as Jesus commanded (v.4). Luke's Gospel also records this event, saying that "after worshiping him, they returned to Jerusalem with great joy" (Luke 24:52) and they "were continually in the temple praising God" (Luke 24:53).

Luke's record of those present at this time: the remaining eleven disciples, minus Judas, Jesus's betrayer; Mary and other unnamed women, whom the Gospels say traveled with Jesus during His ministry though they were not among the apostles; and Jesus's brothers, whose faith in Jesus came after His resurrection (John 7:5).

In verse 14, Luke recorded that the group was "continually united in prayer." What an important posture for this group of believers. The Greek phrase used to communicate the unity of the group is *homothymadon*, meaning "with one mind," which is found six times in the book of Acts. To go and make disciples of all the nations as Christ commanded (Matthew 28:18-20), unity and prayer were both essential. Continuous unity in prayer strengthened them for the challenging days and mission ahead.

Prayer was also an important hallmark of Jesus's earthly ministry (Luke 5:16), and when facing the hardest moment of life on earth, the crucifixion, Jesus devoted Himself to prayer in Gethsemane (Matthew 26:36-46). The early church was similarly united in prayer before the difficult mission ahead of them. This is an important model for all believers.

 ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ ACTS 1:15-20.

**What details are we given about the growing body of believers in this passage?**

**How did Peter and the others show belief in and obedience to Scripture in this passage?**



In Peter's speech, he noted that Judas's betrayal was a fulfillment of Scripture and a necessary step for the Lord to achieve His will. Our sovereign Lord can work in and through even the direst of situations. The workings of the enemy in this world cannot thwart His plan.

Peter noted that Judas shared in their ministry, betrayed Jesus, acquired a field with the payment he received, and finally died (Matthew 27:3-10). These words set up the action the church took next.

 **ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ ACTS 1:21-26.**

**What steps did the believers take in response to the Scripture?**

**What qualifications did Peter give for filling Judas's role?**

**How did the believers pray for this decision to be made (what, specifically did they pray for)? What can we learn from this prayer? How did they show they were trusting God's guidance and control?**

Since Judas was no longer with them, Peter suggested he be replaced for the ministry that awaited them. Peter suggested that this replacement be someone who had been with them from the very beginning of Jesus's ministry. Jesus had many disciples besides the chosen twelve apostles we are most familiar with, and Peter sought to pick Judas' replacement from these.

Joseph (Barsabbas, also called Justus) and Matthias were proposed and voted on, with Matthias eventually being chosen. Notice how they moved forward with making this decision: They prayed for the Lord to guide them, and they acted, fully trusting that He would. They knew the decision was the Lord's and not theirs. This example is still important for us today when making big decisions. We should also allow the Lord's will to guide our decisions and be patient and faithful in prayer as He guides us.

## **APPLICATION**

*Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.*

**What role do prayer and unity play in Jesus's command to go and make disciples?**

**How can we, as a modern body of believers, seek to be "united in prayer" (v.14)?**

**How can we better adopt a posture of faithful and united prayer before making decisions like we studied in our passage today?**



## **PRAYER**

*Close your time together by sharing prayer requests, praying for each other, and the group.*

Thank God for this example of how to conduct our lives and what a healthy body of believers should look like. Ask for His help for your group to be unified in prayer like we see in the early church. Pray that the Lord will continue to give you understanding as you study the book of Acts.

## **LOOKING AHEAD**

*Encourage your group to look ahead as we continue the series on Acts next week.*

**May 11, 2025 --- Acts 2:1-13**

## **COMMENTARY**

### **Acts 1:12-26**

**1:12–13.** Lk 6:14–16 provides the same list of disciples. The lists in Mark and Matthew are similar, except for differences in the names of two disciples between Luke-Acts and Mark and Matthew. Several disciples had alternative names (Simon/Peter, Matthew/Levi; cp. v.23), possibly accounting for differences between the lists. Simon the Zealot of Luke-Acts is probably Simon the Cananaean, and Judas the son of James in Luke-Acts may be Thaddaeus.

**1:14.** The women may have included the wives of the apostles. Jesus had six half-brothers according to Mk 6:3. Jesus appeared to James (1 Co 15:7) and the others may have seen him as well.

**1:15–17.** Peter began to assume his role as leader and spokesman for the apostles. The Scripture Peter referred to was Ps 69:25, quoted in v. 20.

**1:18–19.** The differences between the two NT accounts of Judas's death (here and Mt 27:3–8) should not be overemphasized. Both agree that he died a shameful death and that a field was named after his traitorous deed. Mt 27:5 says Judas hanged himself, while the present passage says he fell headfirst and burst open. Possibly after he hanged himself, Judas's body decayed and fell from the rope, bursting open.

**1:20.** See v. 16.



**1:21–23.** The person selected to take Judas’s place had to have accompanied the disciples throughout the course of Jesus’s ministry (from his baptism to his ascension), thus assuring that he could speak about things he had seen personally.

**1:24–26.** The disciples prayed for God to make clear to them which person he had chosen as a successor for Judas. The casting of lots was an acceptable method for making decisions in the era before the Holy Spirit was given. The sovereign Lord superintended the event, ensuring that the lot fell in such a way as to identify his chosen man.

