



Growth Group Questions
September 21, 2025
“We All Have Different Calls”

CONTEXT

In Acts 16 we read about Paul’s second missionary journey where he retraced his steps through Derbe, Lystra, and Iconium. While doing this he met Timothy. Paul eventually would come to see Timothy as a spiritual son and trusted partner, who partnered with him in writing letters and strengthening churches. Together they encouraged the believers and helped the churches remain focused on Jesus.

In Acts 16:6 we read about a roadblock placed by the Holy Spirit as Paul seeks to go into the province of Asia. In verse 7 he is stopped by Jesus as he tries to head north. Finally, in verse 10 he gets some direction from God about heading over to Macedonia (modern day Greece). The gospel had never been proclaimed in Europe and so this marks a new opportunity for Gentiles to hear about the good news of Jesus Christ.

Once they arrived in Philippi, they looked for a place of worship but there was no place to be found. The region of Philippi had a strong Roman influence and therefore did not have a synagogue. Paul and his team found a place outside of the city by a river where they encountered women praying and worshipping God.

The woman highlighted in this passage is Lydia, who was a woman of great wealth (seen in her trade and hospitality) and a “worshipper of God” which is a technical term for a Gentile who studied and lived out the Hebrew scriptures. She knew a lot about the Old Testament, but Paul realized she did not know anything about Jesus.

When Paul began to teach, Lydia's heart was opened to the message. In that moment she not only believed, but also began to embody the church. She showed the community what hospitality looks like, not only with her home, but also her faith. She freely shared what was hers as we see in Acts 16:40.

SCRIPTURE

Acts 16:1-15

¹Paul came to Derbe and then to Lystra, where a disciple named Timothy lived, whose mother was Jewish and a believer but whose father was a Greek. ²The believers at Lystra and Iconium spoke well of him. ³Paul wanted to take him along on the journey, so he circumcised him because of the Jews who lived in that area, for they all knew that his father was a Greek. ⁴As they traveled from town to town, they delivered the decisions reached by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem for the people to obey. ⁵So the churches were strengthened in the faith and grew daily in numbers.

⁶Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia. ⁷When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to. ⁸So they passed by Mysia and went down to Troas. ⁹During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." ¹⁰After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

¹¹From Troas we put out to sea and sailed straight for Samothrace, and the next day we went on to Neapolis. ¹²From there we traveled to Philippi, a Roman colony and the leading city of that district^[a] of Macedonia. And we stayed there several days. ¹³On the Sabbath we went outside the city gate to the river, where we expected to find a place of prayer. We sat down and began to speak to the women who had gathered there. ¹⁴One of those listening was a woman from the city of Thyatira named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth. She was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message. ¹⁵When she and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home. "If you consider me a believer in the Lord," she said, "come and stay at my house." And she persuaded us.

Acts 16:29-34

²⁹The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. ³⁰He then brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" ³¹They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household." ³²Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. ³³At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his household were baptized. ³⁴The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God—he and his whole household.

1 Peter 4:9

⁹Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling.

Acts 16:40

⁴⁰ After Paul and Silas came out of the prison, they went to Lydia's house, where they met with the brothers and sisters and encouraged them. Then they left.

Philippians 4:15-19

¹⁵ Moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only; ¹⁶ for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid more than once when I was in need. ¹⁷ Not that I desire your gifts; what I desire is that more be credited to your account. ¹⁸ I have received full payment and have more than enough. I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God. ¹⁹ And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.

QUESTIONS

1. Pastor Paul began his sermon by saying that we all have different calls from God, but that we are all called to hospitality. What does that mean and why would God call all of us to hospitality?
2. What can we learn from the conversion and subsequent hospitality of Lydia?
3. In Acts 16:29-34, how did the jailer's perspective change after the earthquake and the release of the prisoners' chains?
4. What does the jailer's immediate action of washing the wounds of Paul and Sila demonstrate?
5. What other Bible stories illustrate the type of hospitality that God calls us to show to others?
6. How does hospitality reflect God's character?
7. The Greek word for hospitality in 1 Peter 4:9 literally means "love of strangers." What does it mean to reach out to the strangers among us and to show them God's love in a practical way?
8. Why are we often reluctant to reach out and be hospitable to strangers?
9. It is also important that we show hospitality to other believers. What do you see as the benefit of hospitality and fellowship with other Christians?

PASTOR PAUL'S SERMON QUESTIONS

1. When was a time you felt welcomed by someone?
2. How can you make someone else feel welcome today, tomorrow, this week?