

For Best Results...P.U.S.H.

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Acts 12:1-25

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SETTING THE SCENE

- » If time, money, resources, and fear were not standing in your way, what one fun thing would you most like to do before you die? With the same criteria, what one thing would you most like to accomplish in your life? What do you think God wants you to do or accomplish? What's actually standing in your way?
- » When really tough times come your way how do you typically respond (be honest!)? How *should* you respond and/or react? Why do you think there is a difference between what you do and what you should do?
- » Have you ever wanted something so badly that you just *had* to have it...no matter what? Share with the group.

THE STUDY

- » Share your overall thoughts and impressions from the sermon this morning. What things stand out to you? What did you learn? Where did God most challenge you? What questions do you still have about the passage or the sermon?
- » Why do you think King Herod imprisoned and persecuted members of the church? What was his agenda? Why do you think he then focused on Peter specifically?
- » What do you think is the difference between “praying” and “earnestly praying” as the church was doing in **ACTS 12:5**? The word “earnestly in this verse means “intensely, fervently, and continually”. How does that affect how you think about your own prayer life? Do you feel like you pray earnestly? If not, how do you think you pray? Do you want that to change?
- » Read **ACTS 12:1-25** as a group. What are the general themes and ideas that Luke is sharing in these verses? Why do you think he includes these stories? What are we as a church supposed to learn from them? What are you (Individually) supposed to learn and apply in your own life?
- » Ray taught this morning that **A PRAYING CHURCH WILL...**
 1. **PERSIST** (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)

What does it mean to “pray continually”? How do we do that with our busy lives?

When was the last time you were so passionate about something that you prayed about it to the “breaking point”? Why do you think we don't have these occasions very often today?
 2. **UNITE** (Colossians 4:2-4)

How often have you told someone that you'd pray for them and then didn't do it? Why do you think we have fallen into that pattern in church circles? How do we get out of it?

Why is it so important for us to pray together and be united in our prayers? What difference does it make to pray together versus praying individually?
 3. **STAY FOCUSED** (Philippians 4:5-7)

Do you feel focused in your prayer life or disorganized (or somewhere in between)? Why do you think this is? How do you change it?

Do you ever feel that there are just so many needs around you that it all seems so overwhelming? How does that affect your prayer life? What one thing are you especially praying about right now (if anything)?
 4. **HEAR GOD'S VOICE** (Romans 10:17)

Share a time when you clearly heard God's voice speak to you and direct you. What was the end result?

How do we as a church learn to hear God's voice as a collective community? Have you ever seen that modeled?
- » P.U.S.H. = Pray Until Something Happens. How do you think we can “P.U.S.H.” better as a church? How can your group apply this lesson specifically?

APPLICATION

- » What one “pressing” thing did you write down (as prompted by Ray) during the sermon? Who did you write down who might be able to pray with you about that one pressing thing in your life? Take some time as a group to share your prayer needs (those “pressing things”) and then break into groups of three or four and pray together—earnestly— about those needs.
- » What one thing would you like the group to help you pray about this upcoming week? Write it down here and share it with the group:

Now, get at least two other people to commit to praying for your request and commit to praying with at least two other people for their needs.

- » How do you think we as a church can be more of a “praying body”? Brainstorm some practical ways we can be more fervent, focused “pray-ers”. How can your group do better? How can you do better?
- » What do you think is *Pinecrest’s* #1 need right now (as a whole)? Spend some time praying about that one thing together as group and make it a focus of your prayers during the week.
- » Share any unanswered questions or comments you have as a result of the group discussion or sermon...

PREPARING FOR NEXT WEEK

- » Next week we jump back to **ACTS 11:19-30**. Read this passage and discuss the key lessons in the story. Why do you think Luke included these events in his narrative? The Gospel is being preached to Gentiles without the full consent of the church. How did the church respond to this? What was Barnabas’ role?
- » What one thing stands out to you personally in this passage? What do you want to learn more about?
- » Spend some time reading through this story during the week. As you read it through several times, what patterns start to emerge? What surprises you? What is God trying to teach you through this passage?
- » Write down any questions you have about this verse and be prepared to discuss them next week (after the sermon).

CARING COMMUNITY

- » **SHARE** with the group how God has been speaking in your life or challenging you this past week (this may be as a result of the sermon or something in your personal journey). Is there anything from this week’s LifeGroup discussion you need to work on?
- » Are there any **NEEDS** you have coming up in your life that the group can help you with (this may include spiritual needs, life needs, pretty much anything...)
- » **PRAY** for one another. Share your requests and praises with one another. Write them down here. If you commit to praying, please be sure you do it...