



Home group notes for 10th September 2017

Acts 11: 19-30

At this point in Acts, the influence of the Gospel is expanding both geographically and culturally. 'Antioch the Beautiful', Syrian Antioch, now Antakya in S.E. Turkey, was a significant (estimated half a million pop) cosmopolitan city. The church planted there was the first truly international church of both Jews and Gentiles (v.18, v.20). It was founded by unnamed evangelists (v.20) and grew rapidly. Its youthful energy and outward-looking orientation has become inspirational for the church in every age.

1. Imagine visiting this new church along with Barnabas. From today's text what would you have noticed about the church as a visitor? What was the 'evidence of the grace of God' v.23? Notice the end of v.26.

2. Barnabas ('son of encouragement') was clearly the right person for the Jerusalem church to send (v.24). In what different ways does he encourage the church?

3. Who do you sense God is calling you to encourage just at the moment? How is that encouragement best communicated?

4. The church at Antioch becomes for Luke a model of an outward-orientated church. It just kept on growing (see repetition of 'great numbers' v. 21, 24, 26). In what different ways was this church outward focussed?

5. Why do you think it is that churches tend to revert to a default position of becoming an inward-looking comfortable and safe community when Christ has clearly called us to 'go'?

6. Read Mark 8:35. What does it mean to 'lose your life' and in what ways do we find life as we lose it?

7. The church at Antioch was a wonderful mixture of informality ('gossiping the gospel' v.20) and strategic leadership and careful teaching (v.25). What is the way a church can preserve both?

As a home group please begin to think and pray of ways your group can become more outward-focussed. The evangelism group and elders would like each home group (and organisation) to think this through. What would it look like for your group to become more 'missional'?