



SENDTHEFIRE.CA

**theme:** The waiting game (Acts 1:12-26)

**materials:** Bibles, news story, paper, pens, possibly plastic cups

## welcome

Put everyone's names on pieces of paper and put the names in a hat. Take out two of the names. These are the two competitors for the contest. You could do a wide variety of contests here, but the main point is that it be a competition of being still and waiting out the other person. So it could be a staring contest, or it could be a standing on one leg contest, or it could be a balancing an increasing number of cups on the head contest.

*Bring in a news item about your neighbourhood, city, country or world that you can discuss with the cell. Where do you see God in this story? Ask other members of cell to bring in stories to discuss in subsequent weeks.*

## worship

Where have you seen God this week? Where have you experienced divine community this week? Read **Psalm 69**. What is causing you concern this week? What situations are you perhaps impatient for the Lord to take action concerning? Pray for one another.

## word

Read **Acts 1:12-26**

Why did the disciples return to Jerusalem?

Do you ever feel impatient for the Lord to act?

What do you do when you feel like you are waiting on the Lord to do something?

What did the disciples do as they were waiting for the promised Holy Spirit?

Why is it important to have unity in prayer?

Why is it important for prayer to be persistent and constant?

Why did the disciples choose a new apostle?

How did they choose him, and why that way?

What can this tell us about how to make godly decisions today?

## witness

Arrange another time this week for your cell group to gather and pray, specifically for the power and wisdom from the Lord to engage in witness. Who does the Lord want you to reach out to, and how? Ask that you could be effective witnesses in your part of the world, and then go out with the power of God to do so. Consider also joining in with 24-7 Prayer across the world: [http://www1.salvationarmy.org/ihq/www\\_ihq\\_csld.nsf/vw-dynamic-index/0676BAFAB9B15C948025766D006F1F42?Opendocument](http://www1.salvationarmy.org/ihq/www_ihq_csld.nsf/vw-dynamic-index/0676BAFAB9B15C948025766D006F1F42?Opendocument)



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## action points

Remind your cell that the giving of tithes and offerings helps maintain the ministry of the cell / Church / Corps, and that it also goes towards ministries like sponsoring children overseas.

Continue reading through the entire books of Luke and Acts with one other person. If the other person is a fellow believer, read them through in a public place, like a café (not yelling it out or anything, just reading it to one another). Make a regular time to come in and read together, and more likely than not someone will eventually ask you what you are reading and why.

If the other person is not a fellow-believer, perhaps choose a less public place to read, but again set regular times, daily if possible, to get together and read the Gospel. You don't have to read it all at once. Read two to three chapters at a time, and then meet another day to read some more.

## leader's guide

There is a gap of ten days between the time Jesus leaves the disciples and the time of Pentecost. During that time, what did the followers of Jesus do? This passage addresses that question, and the answer is very instructive.

The first thing we note is that the disciples obeyed Jesus' command, reinforced by the angel, to return to Jerusalem and wait. They showed in the last passage that they were eager for something to happen, for the fulfillment of the Kingdom of God, but that this eagerness actually betrayed impatience and a misunderstanding of what God was doing. So instead of commanding them to immediate action, Jesus required that they go to Jerusalem and cool their heels for awhile. This they did, displaying a trust and faith in their risen Lord.

Once in Jerusalem they all went to an upstairs room. Luke gives us the names of the eleven remaining disciples, and mentions that the women, who have been so important in this narrative, were there as well. In verse 15 Luke informs us that there were about 120 of them gathered there. This is a significant number as a minimum of 120 Jewish men were required in order to form a community with its own council. Luke is telling his readers that there were enough followers of Jesus here to represent a new community.

These followers spent their ten days waiting. They knew that Jesus had promised them something, a gift from his Father that would enable them to be his witnesses to the ends of the earth. They didn't know exactly what that would be, they couldn't make the gift come any faster, and they couldn't be active in witnessing until they had received it. So they did the only thing they could do, which was to pray. Luke tells us that this prayer was united, and was constant. They shared the hope together that this gift was coming, and that they would be clothed with glory from on high. So they were united in purpose together around the promises of Jesus. They were not just praying their own prayers, following their own agendas, praying as individuals. They were praying as a new community, centered around the person and promises of Jesus. And they prayed constantly, believing that it was only this connection to the Lord that would allow them to be his witnesses.

The other thing they did was to choose a new apostle, one to fill out the Eleven to the Twelve again. Judas, we are told, went and hanged himself in a field, in fulfillment of scripture. So, also in fulfillment of Scripture, another had to take his place. This person had to be an apostle in the true sense of the word. They had to have witnessed the resurrection of Jesus, had to have been with the group during the time Jesus was conducting his ministry on earth, and had to be chosen by the Lord himself. Thus they used a method of choosing from the Old Testament, that of picking lots. This indicates that while they had sifted the candidates to two, it was still the Lord doing the final choosing. The entire process therefore involved fulfilling Scripture, using reason (choosing the two possible candidates based on sound principles), praying, and trusting Jesus.



The only difference for our decision-making now is that we have been given the Holy Spirit of God for discernment, so we no longer need to choose lots. But the apostles had not yet received the Holy Spirit. It was exactly this promised gift that they were waiting and praying for in Jerusalem.