


**OPENING UP: Acts 20 records the story of Eutychus falling asleep during Paul's sermon.** This passage isn't about encouraging enough rest for church so you can come alert and refreshed. As we observe Paul and the Troas Christians talking long into the night about Jesus and being encouraged we see the priority that gathering with Christians should have in our lives. What are some ways that Christians can prioritize and be more intentionally engaged in Sunday gatherings?

**1 Scan through Acts 20 and 21 and make note of all the emotional language that is in the two chapters.** What can we learn from these verses about the types of relationships Paul had with other Christians?


 *Paul experiences these kinds of deep emotional connections after long stays in places (3 years in Ephesus) and after short stays (Seven days in Tyre). What does it take for those kinds of relationships to form? See also 1 Thessalonians 2:7-12, Philippians 1:7-8, 27-30, Romans 12:9-15.*


 *What are some of the things that most often keep you from the kinds of relationships Paul models in Acts 20-21?*

 *What steps can you take to grow in emotional connection with your brothers and sisters at Gospel Grace?*

**2 Two unique names show up in the list of men who accompanying Paul on his third missionary journey—Aristarchus and Secundus from Thessalonica (Acts 20:4).** Look at both of those names. What stands out to you about them?


 *What subtle distinctions or divisions can show up among people based on status?*


 *What does it say about the gospel that a ministry team could have a man from the ruling aristocratic class and a man who was a slave serving side by side? See Galatians 3:28, Philemon 1:15-16, James 2:1-5*

 *How can we intentionally address division over status to better reflect the unity we have in Christ? What would it look like practically to grow in demonstrating gospel-driven unity?*


3 **As Paul gathers with the church in Acts 20:7-12, we see how essential gathering in worship and fellowship is in the life of the Christian.** Why do you think the Troas believers stayed so late into the night? Use specific words from the text in your answer.


 What are some of the ways that our culture views relationships as unnecessary or unimportant?


 Read Hebrews 10:24-25. How have you seen the urgency and value of Christian fellowship and relationships? How have they helped you stay faithful?

 How have you seen the lack of Christian relationships lead to drift? How have your relationships (or lack thereof) played a role in seasons of spiritual dryness or distance?


4 **In sharing his model and methods for ministry, Paul emphasized the priority of the Word.** Prioritizing the Word isn't just a responsibility of pastors. It is the responsibility of the entire congregation.

 What are some of the more subtle (and even not so subtle) distractions that threaten to steal your focus from keeping God's word as central to your life?

 How can you gauge the priority that the Word has in your life? What can you do this week to prioritize your own engagement with the Word?

 In His book, *Word-centered Church* Jonathan Leeman envisions a church where the word is preached and taught in the church, and then resonates and reverberates in the hearts of the people, and finally echoes into conversations and situations throughout the week. What does that look like practically, and how can you be more a part of that reverberating Word ministry?

5 **The Ephesian church was planted in AD 53-54.** Just forty years later, John copied the letter to the church in Ephesus recorded in Revelation 2:1-7. Think about what Paul called the elders to in Acts 20 and what happened to the church afterward.

 What lessons can we learn from the final mention of this church in the book of Revelation? What are the factors that can lead someone to leave their first love?

 What are 3 things in your own life that are distracting you from the primacy of your first love for God?

 If what happened in the church at Ephesus was happening in your life or in someone close to you, what should you do about it?