

Belmont Exeter House Group Notes w/c 5th July 2026

Acting it out – Sharing the Story, Living the Life. Acts 6:8 – 8:3

Background

This teaching series will direct out attention to Jesus' call to be his disciples, together on mission. The church is the outworking of the events of the life, death and resurrection of Christ. One of the key themes of the book of Acts is how the people God are to 'live under the rule of Jesus, between covenant fulfilment and cosmic renewal. The gift of the Spirit makes us living examples of the former (covenant fulfilment) and signposts to the latter (cosmic renewal). Welcome to the Missionary church' (The Challenge of Acts, Tom Wright).

In our earlier series through Mark, 'Who is this man?' we've seen the answer that Jesus is the Messiah, God's anointed king. He becomes king through his death and resurrection, turning the world upside. In Acts. Luke describes what happens next. How we are to act this out? Jesus sends out his people to be messengers and signposts, so that others may come into this kingdom and enjoy restoration and reconciliation.

Through these studies we will focus on how the people of God, as a spirit filled community in Christ, are to live out this vocation.

This study follows the sermon on 5th July 2026. If you weren't able to be at the service, you can watch on YouTube (<https://youtube.com/belmontexeter>) or listen on the Belmont website (<http://belmontexeter.church/talks>)

The discussion outline below is a guide only. Please take time to pray and prepare the discussion for your group. Some resources you may find helpful to supplement these notes are:

Tom Wright, *Acts for Everyone*

Tom Wright, *The Challenge of Acts*

John Stott, *The Message of Acts* (BST)

<https://bibleproject.com/guides/book-of-acts/>

Start with a short time of reflective worship, play a song, read a Psalm.

BIG IDEA: The gospel is the fulfilment of God's plan to bring a people into being who will live under His rule and be his witnesses in and to this world. Or as the Bible Project puts it...'The Bible is single unified story that points to Jesus'.

WAY IN: What good news have you heard or shared in the past few weeks? Could be personal, professional, national or international news. What makes it good news?
i.e. *Any good news not simply Bible 'Good News'!*

Aim of this question is to help people think about how we talk about good news, and even whether we do so at all. You might like to follow up with exploring why and how we share good news

READ: Acts 6:8 – 7:3

DIG IN

These questions are intended to get us to look at the bible text. Don't stop with a simple answer but dig a bit deeper into what does that mean, why are we being told this? How does this fit into the bigger picture.

Also, try opening the discussion to see what other questions people have and together work out a bible-based response.

What do we know about Stephen? What was he like, what did he do? (6v5, 8, 9, 11, 8v60)

What was the main point of the disagreement between Stephen and the elders / teachers of the Law?

In this long speech from Stephen, it may be helpful to break it into episodes.

- What does each episode represent?
- How does God interact with his people, and how do they respond?

What is Stephen saying about God's work and about Jesus?

Stephen refers only once to Jesus ("the coming of the Righteous One") and then in his last words he sees 'The Son of Man' v56 which seems to incense them further. Why is this? (take a look at Daniel 7:13&14 and other references by Jesus in the gospels to calling himself the 'Son of Man')

LIVE IT

These questions are aimed at working out what this means for us.

When we speak about our Christian faith, what is the main thing we talk about? What is the good news we share? How do our lives form an expression of the story of God that is fulfilled in the Lord Jesus Christ?

PRAY IT IN

And this is an encouragement to turn these ideas into prayer for each, asking the Lord to do immeasurably more than we can imagine.

Pray for a friend who isn't a follower of Jesus. Pray for opportunity to speak about the good news, and why it is good news or great joy for all people. Pray for opportunity to share how the gospel is / has been good news in your life. Pray for follow up conversations from JoyFest activities. Pray for courage and confidence to share good news.