



Notes for Adult discussion groups at
On-Line@9 Worship Service
13 May 2007

OPEN TO GOD

Acts 16 v 7-15

They travelled through the region of Phrygia and Galatia because the Holy Spirit did not let them preach the message in the province of Asia. When they reached the border of Mysia, they tried to go into the province of Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them. So they travelled right on through Mysia and went to Troas. That night, Paul had a vision in which he saw a Macedonian standing and begging him, "Come over and help us!" As soon as Paul had this vision, we got ready to leave for Macedonia, because we decided that God had called us to preach the Good News to the people there.

We left by ship from Troas and sailed straight across to Samothrace, and the next day to Neapolis. From there we went inland to Philippi, a city of the first district of Macedonia; it is also a Roman colony. We spent several days there. On the Sabbath we went out of the city to the river-side, where we thought there would be a place where Jews gathered for prayer. We sat down and talked to the women who gathered there. One of those who heard us was Lydia from Thyatira, who was a dealer in purple cloth. She was a woman who worshipped God, and the Lord opened her mind to pay attention to what Paul was saying. After she and the people of her house had been baptised, she invited us, "Come and stay in my house if you have decided that I am a true believer in the Lord." And she persuaded us to go.

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Questions

1. What does the reading tell us about what was happening to Paul at this stage of his story?
2. What is Lydia's story at this point?
3. Paul didn't know, and Lydia didn't know, that they were going to be part of the same story. They were both open to God and the way that he was working in their lives. Paul helps her on her faith journey. How does Lydia respond? What does she do next?
4. Both Paul and Lydia are open to God - in their own lives, and in enabling others to be open to God too. Is it helpful to see our own lives as part of God's on-going story? How can we be sure that we are open to God's promptings?
5. We might fear that sharing our faith can be difficult and costly, but if, as with Paul and Lydia, God has been at work ahead of us it might also be surprisingly easy. Does this help us to be more confident about enabling others to hear God's story?

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