

GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

The Unstoppable Church Wk 20 - Revive Our Hearts
Acts 20:17–38
10.25.26 | Kyle Morris

About This Week's Message:

As Paul prepares to leave Asia Minor and make his way toward Jerusalem, he calls the elders of the church in Ephesus together for one final conversation. After spending nearly three years with these believers, Paul knows his time with them is coming to an end. His words are deeply personal, filled with love, urgency, and concern for the health of the church.

In Acts 20, we see a different side of Paul. The bold missionary who planted churches and proclaimed the gospel throughout the Roman world now speaks as a tenderhearted shepherd. He reminds the Ephesian elders how he lived among them with humility, tears, and perseverance, and charges them to pay careful attention to themselves and to the people God has entrusted to their care.

This passage reminds us that the church belongs to Jesus. It is not simply an organization to manage or a service to attend. It is a family of believers who are meant to be known, loved, cared for, and protected by the truth of God's Word. Paul calls church leaders to shepherd faithfully and challenges every believer to become fully connected to the body of Christ. A healthy church is built on relationships, humility, biblical truth, and a shared commitment to following Jesus together.

Goals of This Week's Discussion:

- Recognize that the church belongs to Jesus and that He has entrusted its care to faithful shepherds.
- Understand the importance of being genuinely connected, known, and cared for within a local church.
- Learn from Paul's example of leading and living with humility, vulnerability, and perseverance.
- Understand why knowing and following the whole counsel of God's Word is essential to spiritual health.
- Identify practical ways to support our spiritual leaders and participate more fully in the life of the church.

Connections with the 7-Marks of a Jesus Follower:

- **Live Free**: Practice healing rather than hiding by walking in humility, honesty, and authentic relationships with other believers.
- **Keep in Step**: Follow the Holy Spirit's leadership, even when obedience involves difficulty, sacrifice, or uncertainty.
- **Play Your Part**: Commit to the life of the local church, building relationships, serving others, and contributing to the health of the body of Christ.

Starter Questions:

- When you think about a healthy church, what characteristics come to mind?
- What is the difference between attending a church and genuinely belonging to a church family?
- Who has played an important role in caring for, encouraging, or shepherding you in your walk with Jesus?

Read Acts 20:17–21

17 Now from Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called the elders of the church to come to him. 18 And when they came to him, he said to them: “You yourselves know how I lived among you the whole time from the first day that I set foot in Asia, 19 serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and with trials that happened to me through the plots of the Jews; 20 how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you in public and from house to house, 21 testifying both to Jews and to Greeks of repentance toward God and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Discussion:

- What stands out to you about the way Paul describes his relationship with the Ephesian church?
- Why is it significant that Paul reminds them how he lived among them rather than simply what he taught them?
- What does Paul's example teach us about the importance of being genuinely connected to other believers?
- What might it look like for you to become more fully connected to the life of the church?

Read Acts 20:22–25

22 And now, behold, I am going to Jerusalem, constrained by[a] the Spirit, not knowing what will happen to me there, 23 except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that imprisonment and afflictions await me. 24 But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God. 25 And now, behold, I know that none of you among whom I have gone about proclaiming the kingdom will see my face again.

Discussion:

- What does Paul's attitude toward his future reveal about his relationship with Jesus?
- How can we recognize the difference between following the Holy Spirit and simply pursuing what feels safe or comfortable?
- What does it mean to finish the race God has given us rather than comparing our lives with someone else's?
- Where might God be asking you to trust Him with an uncertain outcome?

Read Acts 20:26–28

26 Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all, 27 for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God. 28 Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood.[

Discussion:

- Why do you think Paul begins by telling the elders to pay careful attention to themselves?
- What dangers can arise when someone focuses on leading others while neglecting their own spiritual health?
- How does knowing that the church belongs to Jesus change the way we understand spiritual leadership?
- Why is humility such an important characteristic of a pastor, elder, or anyone who leads others?

Read 1 Timothy 3:1–7

The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. 2 Therefore an overseer[a] must be above reproach, the husband of one wife,[b] sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, 3 not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. 4 He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, 5 for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church? 6 He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. 7 Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil.

Discussion:

- What stands out to you about the qualifications Paul gives for church leaders?
- How can humility and accountability help protect leaders from spiritual danger?
- Why is it important to remember that pastors and elders are human beings with limitations, struggles, and needs?
- How can we become more intentional about praying for our pastors, elders, and their families?

Read Acts 20:28 and Hebrews 13:17

28 Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God,[a] which he obtained with his own blood.

17 Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.

Discussion:

- What does the image of a shepherd and flock teach us about the relationship between church leaders and members?
- Why is it important that spiritual care involves knowing people personally?
- How can church members help make shepherding a relationship marked by trust, care, and mutual commitment?
- Why does membership matter when it comes to being known, loved, cared for, and shepherded?

Read Acts 20:29–32

[29] I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; [30] and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them. [31] Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish every one with tears. [32] And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

Discussion:

- Why was Paul so concerned about false teaching entering the church?
- What does it mean to teach and receive the whole counsel of God?
- Why are both encouragement and correction necessary for spiritual maturity?
- How can we hold firmly to biblical truth while maintaining hearts of humility, compassion, and love toward people who believe differently?

Read Acts 20:33–38

[33] I coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel. [34] You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my necessities and to those who were with me. [35] In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'" [36] And when he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all. [37] And there was much weeping on the part of all; they embraced Paul and kissed him, [38] being sorrowful most of all because of the word he had spoken, that they would not see his face again. And they accompanied him to the ship.

Discussion:

- How does Paul's example challenge our understanding of leadership and service?
- Why is generosity and care for the weak an important part of a healthy church?
- What kind of relationships would need to develop for our church to reflect this same depth of love and commitment?
- How might our willingness to invest in others today shape the spiritual health of the church for years to come?

Reflection:

- Are you primarily attending church, or are you genuinely connected to a church family?
- Who knows you well enough to encourage you, challenge you, pray for you, and walk alongside you through difficult seasons?
- Are there areas of your life where you are hiding struggles rather than allowing others to help you find healing?
- Are you growing in your understanding of the whole counsel of God's Word, including the passages that challenge you?
- How do you respond when Scripture confronts something you believe or a way you are living?
- How regularly do you pray for the pastors, elders, and spiritual leaders God has placed in your life?
- What is one practical step you could take toward becoming more connected, known, and engaged in the life of Revive Church?

Application:

- **Commit to being known**. Take an intentional step toward deeper connection within the church. Invest in relationships where you can know others and be known.
- **Practice Healing Not Hiding**. Identify a trusted believer with whom you can share honestly about an area of struggle, weakness, or spiritual growth.
- **Pray for your shepherds**. Spend time this week praying specifically for Revive's pastors, elders, and their families. Ask God to protect them, strengthen their faith, and give them wisdom as they care for His people.
- **Grow in the Word**. Spend time studying a passage of Scripture that challenges your thinking or assumptions. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you receive and respond to God's truth.
- **Play your part**. Consider how you can contribute to the spiritual health of the church through encouragement, service, generosity, prayer, and care for others.
- **Finish faithfully**. Identify an area where God is asking you to remain faithful, even when the future is uncertain or obedience is difficult.

Pray:

- Thank Jesus that the church belongs to Him and that He is our Good Shepherd.
- Ask God to help us become a church family marked by humility, authentic relationships, and genuine care for one another.
- Pray for our pastors and elders, that they would remain spiritually healthy, faithful to Scripture, and attentive to the people God has entrusted to them.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to protect our church from false teaching and give us wisdom to recognize and follow biblical truth.
- Pray that we would become people who embrace the whole counsel of God's Word, allowing it to shape our beliefs and transform our lives.
- Ask God to help us move beyond simply attending church toward being fully connected, known, and committed to one another.
- Pray that Revive Church would continue growing as a healthy, presence-centered family of believers, faithfully shepherded and united under the leadership of Jesus.