

Small Group Material – Acts, Barnabas- Son of Encouragement

Church Together – Side by Side

Welcome (10 mins) Have you ever been given a nickname that exemplifies an aspect of your character? Do you know of someone whose nickname fits them perfectly? Share details.

Worship (10 mins) As you sing/listen be encouraged in your group's dynamics. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DygcMKkge8>

Word (30 mins) **Read Acts 4:32-37**

Name key attributes that identify the early church.

This was Barnabas' church – his training ground! Note how he contributed to it. How would release of finance bring justice to the believing community?

In chapters 5-11 we read of Christian persecution/ martyrdom/ believers scattering/ Saul's conversion/ the beginning of mission to gentiles, and then we arrive at the great metropolis, Antioch – the first international church and the springboard for worldwide Christian mission, the Queen of the East and the capital of the Roman imperial province of Syria." John Stott, The Message of Acts." Yes! Syria!

Read Acts 11:19-29

Exciting times in Antioch! Why would the Jerusalem church wish to send Barnabas to Antioch? (11:22) What did he find on arrival? (23)

Barnabas did not just give any encouragement. What specific encouragement did he give them?

What stands out for you about Barnabas' character? Amplify the description in verse 24 using your own words.

Why do you think Barnabas would head off to find Saul? (25,26)

"Christians!" (26) Luke has already referred to them as disciples, believers, followers of the way. What other names do we give to ourselves? How does your group think of itself?

In Acts 11:26, 12:25, 13:2, 13:7, 14:14, 15:12 we read of what happened to Barnabas and Saul. Thereafter it is Paul and Barnabas. (13:43,46,50, 14:1,3,20,23, 15:2,12,22, 25, 35) Do you think there is any significance about which of them is mentioned first?

In these references they are always named together – always **side by side!** Have an imaginary look at one day in their life together. How would it have been? What would they have done together? What would they have been to each other?

Encouragers? You have to be **side by side** - to come alongside? Those who promote the wellbeing of their brothers and sisters in concern, in fellowship, in prayer, in mission, in trial? **Side by side**. How can we encourage each other better? Small Groups are great! Even smaller groups can be also.

What is the outcome when Christians behave like Barnabas? (11:24)

Is this how the church grows?

Witness (20mins) Share together

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=07FBSrx5Oq4>

Then.....

Ask someone in advance...!

'This time tomorrow' Over the next few weeks, for the Witness section, we will suggest you ask one person from your group to share a bit about what their life is like day-by-day, what particular challenges they face and opportunities they have. *What is on their 'frontline'?*

Here are some questions which might help:

Presence: How and where do you sense God's presence?

Pressure: Where are you feeling pressured?

Purpose: What do you feel is your purpose?

Pray for that person, perhaps listening to see if God gives anyone a picture, Scripture, word of encouragement etc for them.