

WHY WORSHIP?

PRESENT CONNECTIONS | LEADER'S GUIDE

1

Lydia's Conversion in Philippi | Acts 16:11-15

Take a new look at a familiar account! Read the whole Biblical account of Lydia's conversion in Philippi. Reread each verse as you take a closer look at each one. Verse highlights are provided below. Suggested guiding thoughts are provided to curb thoughts toward desired goal answers. Support thorough discussion and make use of suggested further discussion topics as desired.

- **Acts 16:13** | How does a church serve as a lighthouse? What can you do if you find yourself in a location without a church?
 - **Verse Highlights** | Paul and Silas expected to find a place of prayer on the Sabbath.
 - **Guiding Thoughts** | It was Paul's regular practice to begin his teaching in the synagogue. The synagogue served as a place to start, something to look for for travellers visiting the area who desired to meet with fellow believers and praise God.
 - **Goal** | A church serves as a lighthouse by being a visible place for people to start when looking for a place to worship. Church doors allow people to come in and join us for worship.
 - **Guiding Thoughts** | There were few Jews in the Roman colony of Philippi and, thus, there was no synagogue. Rivers were a customary place of prayer, especially when there was no synagogue. Though the building

may have been lacking, believers still met together- no church, no problem!

- **Goal** | Research sister churches in the area, personal devotion, observe church service, virtual church service etc.
- **Acts 16:13** | What does the gathering of the group of women tell you about the value they saw in meeting together? How do you value meeting together for worship?
 - **Verse Highlights** | There was a group of women who had gathered together.
 - **Guiding Thoughts** | This group of people set time aside in their week to meet together and to pray. The lack of a synagogue and the description of one of these women being a worshipper of God leads one to infer this was a regular and in depth meeting. This group could have worshipped in their homes, but chose to meet together to worship.
 - **Goal** | The women viewed meeting together as important and worthwhile.
 - **Guiding Thoughts** | Attendance alone is not a perfect indicator of your value. Attitudes lend insight into your value system as well. Your level of focus also speaks to how you value worship.
 - **Goal** | Personal answers will vary.

- **Further Discussion** | How do you value youth group? Irregular worship services (i.e. Advent, Lent, Midweek celebrations)? Prayer life? Personal devotion? Family devotion? Social church gatherings?
- **Acts 16:14** | What aspects of your worship services denote you as a worshipper of God?
 - **Verse Highlights** | Lydia was known as a worshipper of God.
 - **Guiding Thoughts** | This gathering of women was clearly worshipping. There is so secrecy about the purpose, but rather clarity in their intentions: worshipping the one true God. Be it in the hymns sung, the discussions had and/or the message preached, God was clearly being worshipped. Our church service ought to denote us as worshippers of God. Meeting together and abiding by our teachings together as a congregation is a way to share our faith and encourage others in our faith as well.
 - **Goal** | The words of our prayers, hymns, Biblical lessons, creeds and confessions of faith all worship the one true God. Church decor, crosses, banners, pastoral attire and so on, bear symbols of our faith in the one true God.
- **Acts 16:14** | How do you respond to God's Word?
 - **Verse Highlights** | The Lord worked through Paul's message, opening Lydia's heart to respond.

- **Guiding Thoughts** | Where God's Word is, there the Holy Spirit is at work. God's Word alone holds the power to change hearts. The story of his justice and his grace causes a varied array of responses.
- **Goal** | We respond with our deeds- through the power of the Holy Spirit, we live out sanctified lives, showing others love as we have been shown love by God. We respond through creeds- our faith is strengthened through as we hear the powerful Word of God. We respond with seeds- sharing the Word of God with others that the seed may be planted and nurtured by God's grace.
- **Acts 16:15** | How does God bless you as a witness to Baptism?
 - **Verse Highlights** | Lydia and her family were baptized.
 - **Guiding Thoughts** | At church, we have the opportunity to witness baptism of our church family. At every baptism, we witness a loving act of God as he claims that person as his own dear child. What an incredible blessing to witness such an event, which holds tremendous value for the baptized child of God and those witnessing.
 - **Goal** | Witnessing a baptism reminds you of your own baptism. Baptism supports you as you recall the blessings and promises of a loving Father that are yours through baptism. Baptism encourages you as you see

the church of God grow. Baptism reminds you that every day is a fight against the sinful nature which needs to be drowned daily. Baptism gives you and your church family connections and a cause for celebration over another saved soul.

- **Acts 16:15** | What needs can you fill for your church? What needs can your church fill for you?
 - **Verse Highlights** | Lydia invited Paul and Silas into her home.
 - **Guiding Thoughts** | This group of believers enjoyed social time together as well. God provides connections and relationships through the family of believers beyond the walls of the church. God blesses his people socially as well as spiritually through his Church.
 - **Goal** | Answers will vary. Support individualized and specific answers and discussion.
 - **Further Discussion** | Strategize plans to implement various ideas discussed.