**Community Group Discussion Guide
Acts 13:1-5**

**Sermon Overview:** The sermon emphasis will be on the character of God and the mission that He initiates. The Lord’s focus is to take the gospel to the nations, and we must be obedient through laying down our comforts to go where He calls.

**Context:** Leading up to Acts 13, the early church faced heavy persecution, but also tremendous growth. God was doing a great work through his people (i.e. Christians) and continued to bless them despite the hardships they faced. Likewise, the Gospel began to spread among the nations as Christians actively shared and lived out their faith. In the Church of Antioch, some of these Christians *“were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen, a close friend of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul”* (13:1), and God used them as leaders. Over time, through both prayer and fasting, the church sensed the Lord’s leading to *“set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them”* (13:2). In turn, the church *“fasted, prayed, laid hands on them, and sent them off”* (13:3). Two of the best leaders from the church of Antioch departed and went down to Seleucia and Cyprus, declaring the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This journey, in turn, began Saul’s (later recognized as the Apostle Paul’s), first missionary journey. The gospel advanced through multiplication.

**Key Points:**

* God forms leaders and equips his people in the local church (v.1)
* When we humbly seek God’s will, He will answer and direct (v.2)
* The local church is essential to the Great Commission (v.3)
* Under the leadership of the Spirit, the church sent their best to advance the gospel (v.4-5)

**Discussion/Application Questions:**

1. Read 1 Timothy 3:1-7. The Church of Antioch (and other early churches) had recognized prophets and teachers in their congregations. What about these leaders do you believe stood out or qualified them for these roles? Share with the group how you can pursue and grow in similar Christlike attributes?
2. Notice in Acts 13:2 that the leaders of the church “were worshipping the Lord and fasting.” Why do you believe they worshiped wholeheartedly when facing trials and tribulations? How can we emulate this practice in our lives when facing adversity?
3. Christians in Antioch praised God and shared their faith in love, despite backlash. Discuss with your group why we often hide our faith or consciously choose not to share with others. What are some ways we can overcome these fears and live boldly to share the gospel on mission?
4. Multiplication requires us to give up our best to advance the gospel. What to you struggle to give up? What does your group struggle to give up?
5. God’s leading is often in stark contrast to our desire for comfortability, stability, and controllability. What can you do as an individual and a member of this church to pursue Christlikeness and fight these fleshly desires?
6. How can we better hold our leaders, friends, and comforts with a loose grip for the sake of advancing the gospel?
7. The church at Antioch sent out two of their best leaders as missionaries. What does this decision say about the importance they placed on the Great Commission and how we ought to view sending missionaries from our church?
8. What could God be asking you to give up/lay down so that the gospel might advance? How will you respond?
9. How should the example of the church in Antioch’s prayer and fasting challenge us in how we make decisions and our approach to mission?
10. Saul and Barnabas did not necessarily seek the missionary life out of desire, but rather obeyed when they heard God say to go. What lessons can we take from how they and the early church handled God’s leading?
11. The early church heard God’s direction because they asked and were listening. Similarly, are we asking and listening for God’s leading in our lives? Share how you know you are or are not.
12. How can we better prepare our hearts/lives to say YES when God leads?
13. In review of this passage, what is the Lord calling you to do with your life, or where is He calling you to go?
14. Do you recognize the beauty and blessing that comes in serving the Lord and being sent out by the church? Why do we often take this for granted?
15. Discuss a time you left comfort for obedience that lead to great blessing to see God move.
16. How could your community group encourage one another towards obedience to God’s call? How could your group support one another in accomplishing the Great Commission?
17. How do we develop trust in God’s presence and power with us as we obey his commission?

**Prayer Guide**:

* Pray for yourself: that ***you*** would be receptive to the Lord’s leading in your life and open to whatever path he places in front of you.
* Pray for our pastors, leaders and missionaries: that ***they*** would seek the Lord’s direction, hear God’s voice, and lead our church well.
* Pray for our church: that ***we*** would recognize the blessing and weightiness of our role as a body of believers to be faithful, loving, and obedient.