

Read: Acts 16:11-15

How Can You Help?

Acts 16:14-15

The Lord opened [Lydia's] heart to respond to Paul's message. When she and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home. "If you consider me a believer in the Lord," she said, "come and stay at my house." And she persuaded us.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Not many people knew about all the things that Miss Davis did at church. Setting up for communion, making the coffee for Bible study, cleaning up after special events—she did lots of little stuff behind the scenes that most people didn't know about. That was fine with her; Miss Davis didn't help out in order to be thanked or recognized. She just saw things that needed to be done and took care of doing them. She looked for ways she could help.

In today's reading, we meet someone similar: Lydia. She listened to the preaching and teaching of the apostle Paul. The Holy Spirit opened Lydia's heart. She believed in Jesus as her Savior. She was baptized, along with everybody in her house. Afterwards, she invited Paul and his friends to come and stay at her house. She saw a way that she could help Paul by providing for his needs while he was staying in her hometown of Philippi. Why? Because Lydia was so thankful for the good news of salvation.

The Holy Spirit has also brought us to faith—he has changed our lives—and now we respond in the same way as Lydia. We look for ways to help our pastors and teachers, to do the little things that make it easier for them to preach and teach. Why? Because Jesus showed great love for us, and we want to reflect that love by serving those called by God to be our spiritual leaders.

Sometimes it can be hard to find ways to serve, especially when there are so many other people who are older or who seem better at helping than you are. Sometimes you might feel discouraged or unappreciated. Sometimes there might be so much work to do and so little reward for doing it. Is it really worth trying to help, especially if nobody notices?

Yes! Even if nobody realizes how you help, God still sees it. He treasures the little ways that you help your pastors and teachers. He views your good works as a beautiful response, as a way of saying thank you for being brought to faith and made a member of God's family. One day, he will say "Well done, good and faithful servant" (Matthew 25:21) and invite you to share in his happiness. That makes all your helping worthwhile!

The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.

Questions for the Younger Children

- What did Lydia do after she came to faith?
- How did Lydia help Paul and his friends?

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- Think of two ways you can help your pastor(s) and teachers.
- What should you do if no one notices or appreciates your help?

Questions for Middle School and Above

- Read Ephesians 2:10. What does Paul mean when he says God prepared good works in advance for us to do?
- If you don't look for ways to help, if you don't do good works, does that mean you're not really a Christian? Explain.

Closing Prayer:

Lord Jesus, help us always to look for ways to help our pastors and teachers. Even if no one sees how we help, remind us that you see and appreciate all we do for those around us. Amen.

Hymn: CW 385:1,4-5 – Chief of Sinners Though I Be

Chief of sinners though I be,
Jesus shed his blood for me,
Died that I might live on high,
Lives that I might never die.
As the branch is to the vine,
I am his and he is mine!

Chief of sinners though I be,
Christ is all in all to me.
All my wants to him are known;
All my sorrows are his own.
Safe with him in earthly strife,
I await the heav'nly life.

Strengthen me, O gracious Lord,
By your Spirit and your word.
When my wayward heart would stray,
Keep me in the narrow way;
Grace in time of need supply
While I live and when I die.