

ENTER THE FAMILY

THE LESSON: ACTS 10-11

Baptized believers have a duty to cheer for one another. When we celebrate a new life in the Church, it reminds us of our own story: the gift of our salvation, the solemnity of our commitment, and the mutual responsibility we have to one another as family in Christ. Listen to what the Prayer Book liturgy has to say to the Christian witnesses at a baptism:

“Forasmuch as these persons have promised in your presence to renounce the devil and all his works, to believe in God, and to serve him: you must remember that it is your part and duty to put them in mind, what a solemn vow, promise, and profession they have now made before this Congregation, and especially before you their chosen Witnesses. And you are also to call upon them to use all diligence to be rightly instructed in God’s holy Word; that so they may grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, and live godly, righteously, and soberly in this present world” (BCP p. 540).

Though these words are specifically directed to the individuals committed to walk alongside the newly baptized throughout their lives, all believers should hear in them a call to care for our brothers and sisters in Christ. And remember, not only must we care *for* them, but also receive care *from* them, since now we belong to one another in the Lord.

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The early Church faced a serious challenge. Among those who had come to the faith were Jewish believers, who had worked hard to lead holy lives according to the Old Testament law, and who recognized Jesus as their promised Messiah. But there were also Gentile (non-Jewish) believers, who came from cultures and had practices that the Jewish believers found objectionable. How could these siblings in Christ live together harmoniously? This challenge was not solved overnight. Let’s take a look at one part of the story in the Book of Acts.

AT-HOME CHALLENGE

Each morning and evening, follow your own rule of prayer.

(IF YOU DON’T HAVE ONE, TRY SAYING THE MORNING AND EVENING PRAYERS FROM THE “FORMS OF PRAYER TO BE USED IN FAMILIES”, WHICH BEGINS ON PAGE 728 OF THE BCP. IF YOU DON’T HAVE A COPY, YOU CAN LOOK IT UP HERE: [HTTP://PRAYERBOOK.CA/RESOURCES/BCPONLINE/FAMILY-PRAYER.](http://PRAYERBOOK.CA/RESOURCES/BCPONLINE/FAMILY-PRAYER))

During this unit, we’re going to take some of the prayers that come from the liturgies of Baptism and Confirmation and pray them for one another as a reminder and a renewal of commissioning.

Spend some time reflecting on and praying with the words of this prayer:

O Lord, We ask that these persons who have been received into the Congregation of Christ’s flock, and signed with the sign of the Cross, hereafter shall not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified, and to fight under his banner against sin, the world, and the devil, and to continue Christ’s faithful soldiers and servants unto their life’s end. Amen.

(ADAPTED FROM THE MINISTRATION OF HOLY BAPTISM TO SUCH AS ARE OF RIPER YEARS, BCP PAGE 537)

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ACTS 10-11: **FROM STRANGERS TO FAMILY**

10 ³⁴So Peter opened his mouth and said: “Truly I understand that God shows no partiality, ³⁵but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him...

⁴⁴While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word. ⁴⁵And the believers from among the circumcised who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles. ⁴⁶For they were hearing them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter declared, ⁴⁷“Can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people, who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?” ⁴⁸And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to remain for some days.

11 ¹Now the apostles and the brothers who were throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. ²So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcision party criticized him, saying, ³“You went to uncircumcised men and ate with them.” ⁴But Peter began and explained it to them in order “... ¹⁵As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them just as on us at the beginning. ¹⁶And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, ‘John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’ ¹⁷If then God gave the same gift to them as he gave to us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God’s way?” ¹⁸When they heard these things they fell silent. And they glorified God, saying, “Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance that leads to life.”