

# LESSON 6

## **A NIGHT SURPRISE**

### **ACTS 11:1—12:25**



**1** What is the most dramatic answer to prayer you have heard about?

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**2** If you were being interviewed for a book about prayer, what personal example of answered prayer would you give?

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Read Acts 11:1—12:25 and the following notes:

☐ 12:1   ☐ 12:2   ☐ 12:2–11   ☐ 12:5   ☐ 12:13–15

**3** Why did Herod Agrippa persecute the church (12:1–3)?

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**4** How did the believers react to Herod's actions (12:5)?

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**5** Why do you suppose the people in the prayer meeting didn't believe that God had answered their prayers (12:6–16)?

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**6** How do you think this experience affected their future prayer meetings?

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**7** What does this story teach us about our prayers and God's answers?

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As the church continued to grow, beyond Jerusalem and even beyond the Jewish people, so did persecution. The religious leaders stoned Stephen and pursued others. The Roman government then joined the opposition, with Herod Agrippa executing James and imprisoning Peter. The believers responded by gathering to pray. Then, with a dramatic rescue, God freed Peter from prison. But when Peter went to the home of Mary and knocked at the door, those assembled there continued praying. God had answered their prayers, but they didn't believe that it was Peter at the door. God tells us to pray about everything (Philippians 4:6), expecting him to answer (James 1:6), but often we are surprised when he does. When you pray, do you expect God to act, or are you surprised when he does?

**8** When and where does your church pray together?

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**9** Describe an answer to prayer that your church has experienced.

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**10** What would you like God to do for your church?

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**11** What would you like God to do for someone you love?

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**12** What would you like God to do for you?

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**13** Write a list of ten prayer requests to God. Include your church, others, and yourself. Also, write a specific time when you will pray regularly for each of these requests.



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**14** Pray throughout this week, expecting God to answer your prayers.

**A** When Peter defended his preaching to the Gentiles, why did he say he objected to eating the animals that appeared in his vision (11:8)? How did the voice answer his objections (11:9)? What commands in Scripture do you find difficult to obey?

**MORE**  
for studying  
other themes  
in this section

**B** What convinced the Jerusalem church that God had given the Gentiles the privilege of receiving eternal life (11:15–18)? What evidence of the Holy Spirit's power have you seen in others?

**C** How did the believers in Antioch react to the news of the impending famine coming upon the Roman Empire (11:27–30)? How has your church responded to the needs of other Christians in other communities? What could you and your church do to help other believers in need?

**D** How did Herod Agrippa die, and why (12:20–23)? What is his death intended to teach us?