

Sunday 28th June 2026

Peter Escapes - Acts 12

Welcome

- Know any good knock knock jokes?
- What do you do to help you to sleep, particularly when you're finding it difficult?

In this Bible reading Peter is sleeping in a situation that is very far from ideal.

Word

Read Acts 12: 1-5

(This was Herod Agrippa I, the grandson of Herod the Great, who ruled in the days of Jesus' birth (Matthew 2:1-16). Herod Agrippa I was also the nephew of Herod Antipas, who had a role in the trial of Jesus (Luke 23:7-12)).

1. What seemed to motivate Herod's actions (take a close look at verse 3)?
2. What does verse 4 suggest about how Herod viewed the Jewish faith?
3. Have you ever done something to please someone else? IS this ever the right thing to do?
4. What was the church's response to Peter's imprisonment?

Prayer was important to the early Christians. They believed God heard them in their need and that they were dependent on God. It demonstrates trust and dependence.

Read Acts 12: 6-10

5. Peter was sleeping, Herod made sure 4 soldiers guarded him day and night. What does this tell us about the difference between Peter's and Herod's state of mind at this time?
6. Would you find it easy to sleep in this situation?
7. Have you ever heard about Christians being imprisoned or held hostage (sometimes for years) – do you know how they coped?
8. If you were Peter, what would have gone through your mind as you were woken up by an angel and led out of the prison?

Read Acts 12: 11-17

9. If you have a problem or need, is your immediate response to pray?
10. Do you think God responds to the united prayer of a group in a different way from the prayer of an individual?
11. Does it make a difference how long we spend in prayer?
12. Does this passage challenge us to pray more as a church? How can we do this? Is God calling you to do something about this – maybe organise a regular prayer meeting etc.?
13. We don't know exactly what the group were praying for regarding Peter – it could have been for his release, but it could also have been for him to have the strength to cope with prison life or for Peter to be a witness to his guards. God answered their prayers by releasing Peter – was this what they expected?
14. Do we sometimes pray for something, but don't really believe it will happen?
15. Does God sometimes answer our prayers differently to what we expect? Do you have experience of this?
16. Are our expectations of God working miraculously in response to prayer less than those of the first church? Should they be?

17. Peter was left standing outside the locked door! Have you ever ignored something that could make a big difference like an unopened package?
18. Have you ever been like those who told Rhoda, 'You're out of your mind' (v15) or found it hard to accept God's answer to prayer?
19. How do you feel when God's answers your prayer in a different way to what you wanted?
20. God answered their prayers by enabling Peter to escape. But James was killed. How do you think they felt about this, how would you have felt?
21. What would you say to someone who was finding it hard to accept that God seems to answer some prayers but not others?

This is puzzling and it can be confusing, frustrating and even upsetting, but we need to remember God is in control and he has a plan. God sees the big picture that we don't see and we need to trust him to do what's best.

Read Acts 12: 18-19

22. What happens in the prison the following morning?
23. What would you have thought and felt if you had been one of the guards?
24. Have you ever been accused of something that is not your fault? How did it make you feel? What did you do?
25. The earnest prayer of the church significantly affected the outcome of events in this chapter. Has your motivation to pray been influenced by this? If so in what way – what will you do differently?
26. Are there any tips regarding prayer you can share with the rest of your group?

Optional Extra

Read Acts 12: 20-24

27. Why was Herod struck down?

28. Contrast Herod's end with what happened with the Word of God (v19-24)?

Worship and Witness

- Continue to pray for that person on your frontline that you identified a few weeks ago. Have you had any opportunities to talk to them or show them God's love?
- If Jesus was sitting in the seat next to you just now, what would you say to him? (This is really what prayer is!)
- List the problems or needs that need praying for and pray as a group. Commit to continuing to pray for them for the rest of this week.