



# DEVOTIONS FOR LIFE

Aldersgate Church ~ St. Louis Park, MN

**Week of May 15, 2022 (Acts 17:16-31)**

## Prayer for Groups & Personal Devotion:

Lord God, sometimes it seems to us that, when we try to pray, our words come out as babble and nonsense. We determine that in approaching you we must be eloquent and appropriate in our words. Others seem so much better than we do at finding the right words, and finding the perfect way to sum up the desires for the world that we followers store in our hearts. Others seem better able to debate and discuss when we gather in groups within our church community. Others speak more clearly, present arguments with energy and purpose in a way we find difficult. When it comes to participating in worship, and speaking at meetings, we are often hesitant for fear of getting things muddled. Yet Lord, you teach us that this, all of this, matters less than the convictions of our hearts and the integrity of our devotion...

## Devotions for Life A LifeGroup & Personal Resource

**The Story: Acts 17:16-31**

**Context:** We are now in the thick of Paul's missionary work throughout all the land. He's been to Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, Derby, Galatia, all over. In the back of most Bibles, you will find a map of his travels. In this week's story he heads to Athens, which is a major city in the 1st Century. Where Rome may be the political capitol of the region, Athens was the cultural and intellectual capitol. To go to Athens is to go to where the greatest thinkers, artists, philosophers are. It would be both invigorating to come with such a message as Paul is coming with, as well as a great challenge.



**Reading the Text:** As you read, pay attention to Paul's approach and how it may be similar or different than other ways you read about people (Paul included)

Today in our babbling, in the outpouring of prayer from the heart, we pray that we might be a people who are more confident in the value we offer, and more accepting that our prayers for the world are legitimate and are heard.

Today we pray for creation—the land, the water, the air. Let us find ways to look after it, for it belongs to you and is intended to be shared with all. Today we pray for all living things—that we do not take the brilliance of variety in the plant and animal kingdom for granted. And we pray for your people. Let there be justice... healing... comfort... opportunity... acceptance... and love for each of us, for all, and between us. Amen.

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### **Compassion & Justice:**

#### **May Community Outreach**

#### **Focus: Pajama Party!**

The outreach focus for May is

collecting

pajamas for

Perspectives.

Perspectives

provides pajamas for the children of families moving into their housing. ALL sizes needed, from babies to adolescents.



preaching the Gospel in the New Testament. Also, as usual, pay attention to detail: Where is he, what specific places does he go to, what kind of language does he use, etc.

#### **Questions for Discussion & Reflection:**

- What stands out to you the most in this passage? Something Paul says? Something his audience says?
- What does it mean to “argue”? What does a fruitful and constructive argument look like? When have you been in or witnessed a healthy argument? When have you been in or witnessed an unhealthy argument?
- What, if anything, seems different about the way the people here respond to Paul versus the way people do to Jesus’ teachings in the gospels?
- Have you ever had a sense of an “unknown god”? Is that something that resonates with you? How so?
- What does it mean to “search” for God? Have you ever searched for God and found God? Not found God? What were those experiences like?
- What does it mean to “live, move, and have our being” in God? How do we do this?
- Going back to the Sunday when we talked about Thomas, doubt, and belief, what do you believe?
- What does it mean for us to go to the “marketplace” as Paul did to connect with people (or as it says in this passage “argue”!)
- Going back to the beginning of this passage, why does Paul even do missionary work in Athens in the first place? How might this inform our own work to spread God’s love to people?

