

Introduction

In v12 the church is greatly 'comforted' at the end of the meeting - it's the same word that is used in v1 and v2 translated as 'encouraged' - What do you understand by 'encouragement'? What does it mean to encourage someone?



Read Acts 20:1-6

These verses give us details about his travels (and there is a repeated pattern through this section of the book of travel details followed by an event followed by travel and so on until 21:17 and his arrival in Jerusalem)

What do these verses tell us about Paul's ministry priorities?

What do they tell us about the expansion of the Gospel? (cf Acts 1:8)

How might they be helpful in grounding the story in actual history? Why is that important?

Acts 20:1-12



Acts 20:7-12

What is significant about the first half of v7 - almost said in passing? What does it tell us about the practice of the early church?

Paul could have gone to his Travelodge to get an early night ahead of travel coming up the next day, but what does he do instead? The length of the sermon might seem extreme to us - but what does it reveal about Paul's heart and priorities? And what does it reveal about the church too?

We've all nodded off in a service at some point in our Christian lives - what is striking and surprising about Eutycus's experience that night? Why does Luke add the story?

Application:

The Greek word translated as encourage and comfort in Acts 20 literally means to 'come alongside'.

Encouragement is a neglected art today - Here's a helpful definition of what biblical encouragement is *not* from Scotty Smith, Pastor and writer in the US:

Encouragement is not flattery or crafting words simply to make someone feel good about themselves... Encouragement is not telling someone only what they want to hear. Encouragement is not spinning difficult situations. Encouragement is not promising things God has not promised.

From this section of Acts - what can we learn about what encouragement is from how Paul goes about it? (Feel free to use Col 2:6-7 to help too)

Tim mentioned encouragement aims to give Gospel Confidence and Gospel Comfort in Jesus - which do you need more of?

How do Paul's priorities and passion match up to ours - especially when time is limited? Do we have the same hunger and openness to be encouraged as the church here?

Are we putting ourselves in a position where we can be encouraged by regularly hearing God's word spoken to us by fellow brothers and sisters? What does that look like in reality of our daily lives?

Are we actively speaking God's word to others to encourage them? Who would we get alongside?