



# LIFE GROUP STUDY GUIDE

JANUARY–MARCH 2016

## WEEK 6

DIVINE APPOINTMENTS

*This study guide should be used the week following the sermon it supplements.*

**MAIN TEXT:** Acts 8:26-40

26 Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, “Go south to the road—the desert road—that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.” 27 So he started out, and on his way he met an Ethiopian eunuch, an important official in charge of all the treasury of Candace (which means “Queen of the Ethiopians”). This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship, 28 and on his way home was sitting in his chariot reading the Book of Isaiah the prophet. 29 The Spirit told Philip, “Go to that chariot and stay near it.”

30 Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. “Do you understand what you are reading?” Philip asked. 31 “How can I,” he said, “unless someone explains it to me?” So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.

32 This is the passage of Scripture the eunuch was reading:

*“He was led like a sheep to the slaughter,  
and as a lamb before its shearer is silent,  
so he did not open his mouth.”*

33 *In his humiliation he was deprived of justice.  
Who can speak of his descendants?  
For his life was taken from the earth.”*

34 The eunuch asked Philip, “Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?” 35 Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus.

36 As they travelled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, “Look, here is water. What can stand in the way of my being baptized?” [37 Philip said, “If you believe with all your heart, you may.” The eunuch answered, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.”] 38 And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip

### GETTING STARTED

Ask your group if anyone has recently had a “divine appointment” with someone. What happened and why was it more than a coincidence?

### DIGGING DEEPER

1. What do we already know about Philip (Acts 6:3-6 and Acts 8:4-8)? How might this encourage you about God’s plan for your life? *Hint:* Philip served God in many different ways and in different places. He began waiting tables and ended up witnessing to international leaders; the Christian life is full of surprises!

2. How did God guide Philip to the Ethiopian eunuch? How did Philip respond and take the initiative? How is this relevant to how we follow God today (Proverbs 3:5-6)? *Hint:* Philip received heavenly instruction about his destination, route and strategy on arrival. He obeyed God, but initiated conversation, answered questions and conducted baptism.

3. The Ethiopian eunuch was a high ranking foreign dignitary. Why might Philip have been nervous speaking to him? Is there anyone you are nervous about witnessing to? What biblical promises encourage us in these circumstances (see Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 1:8 and Luke 12:11-12)? *Hint:* God tells us what to do, goes with us and gives us the words to say.

4. How had God been working in the Ethiopian eunuch before he met Philip? How might this encourage us when we see little fruit in our outreach (see also John 4:35-38, 1 Corinthians 3:6-8 and Acts 7:57-60)? *Hint:* the Ethiopian had already heard of God, worshipped in Jerusalem, owned some Scripture (v. expensive parchment) and read it. We trust God and play whatever role we can in a person’s spiritual journey.

5. The Ethiopian eunuch was reading Isaiah which Philip used to begin telling him “*the good news of Jesus*”. Turn to Isaiah 53:7-8; how would you use this passage to explain the gospel to an unbeliever? *Hint:* It describes various events of Jesus’ life, death in the place of others and leaves room for us to explain His resurrection and salvation.

6. The Ethiopian eunuch was baptised shortly after his discussion with Philip. What does this tell us about the eunuch’s response, how baptism was performed and when

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baptized him. 39 When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him again, but went on his way rejoicing. 40 Philip, however, appeared at Azotus and traveled about, preaching the gospel in all the towns until he reached Caesarea.

*\*This verse is not in some of the earliest manuscripts, which is why most translations omit or footnote it (e.g. NIV & ESV). However, some believe the later manuscripts are more reliable so include it (e.g. KJV and NKJV). You will see that it does not affect the meaning of this passage.*

## COMING UP

Alpha Course | 11 Jan-14 Mar  
Beta Course | 11 Jan-22 Feb  
Belonging Course | 6-20 Mar  
Church Family Meeting | 13 Mar

someone should be baptised? *Hint:* the Ethiopian came to faith (only believers were baptised) was baptised by full immersion (he “came up out of the water”) and he left rejoicing. Baptism is for believers, not mature disciples!

7. What happened the eunuch and Philip at the end of the passage? *Hint:* Eunuch departed rejoicing. Philip could have been supernaturally transported (seems most obvious reading) or led by the Spirit of God to make a normal journey. However it happened, the key point is the Spirit led Philip to where God wanted him to be.

## NEXT STEPS

1. How can you better prepare yourself for a future divine appointment? Do you need to pray for more opportunities? Do you need to free up some time to give God room to move? Do you need to become better equipped in sharing the gospel with others?

2. How can your group help one another to be more effective witnesses? Do you have a friend who you think might “click” with another Christian friend? Could you organise an event where everyone could bring a friend, in order to model *Authentic Community* to outsiders?

3. Encourage any believers in your group who have not been baptised to look into this issue further and prayerfully consider getting baptised?

4. Commit to memorising the following verse this week:

*“Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus.” (Acts 8:35)*

## PRAYER

- Thank God that His plan for your life is always better than your own, and that every stage of it has a God-ordained purpose.
- Thank God that He has given us His word and Spirit to reveal His will and guide us into all truth.
- Ask God to give you a divine appointment this week and for the courage and wisdom to make the most of it.
- Pray for those who have recently been baptised, as well as any non-Christian friends and family who attended their baptism.
- Pray for the Pilot Lights team to be given divine appointments this Saturday and for Holy Spirit anointing to share the gospel.