

# God Surprises

## Questions for Reflection and Discussion

Prepared by Abi Trevathan

### Reading

#### Acts 16:4-15 (MSG)

As they traveled from town to town, they presented the simple guidelines the Jerusalem apostles and leaders had come up with. That turned out to be most helpful. Day after day the congregations became stronger in faith and larger in size.

They went to Phrygia, and then on through the region of Galatia. Their plan was to turn west into Asia province, but the Holy Spirit blocked that route. So they went to Mysia and tried to go north to Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus wouldn't let them go there either. Proceeding on through Mysia, they went down to the seaport Troas.

That night Paul had a dream: A Macedonian stood on the far shore and called across the sea, "Come over to Macedonia and help us!" The dream gave Paul his map. We went to work at once getting things ready to cross over to Macedonia. All the pieces had come together. We knew now for sure that God had called us to preach the good news to the Europeans.

Putting out from the harbor at Troas, we made a straight run for Samothrace. The next day we tied up at New City and walked from there to Philippi, the main city in that part of Macedonia and, even more importantly, a Roman colony. We lingered there several days.

On the Sabbath, we left the city and went down along the river where we had heard there was to be a prayer meeting. We took our place with the women who had gathered there and talked with them. One woman, Lydia, was from Thyatira and a dealer in expensive textiles, known to be a God-fearing woman. As she listened with intensity to what was being said, the Master gave her a trusting heart—and she believed!

After she was baptized, along with everyone in her household, she said in a surge of hospitality, "If you're confident that I'm in this with you and believe in the Master truly, come home with me and be my guests." We hesitated, but she wouldn't take no for an answer.

### Questions

1. Can you think of a moment this week that was a surprise for you? Write it down on a piece of paper.

2. What do you think about the idea of God taking responsibility for the mission of the church? Is that a relief for you?
3. What are some of the ways you could practice cultivating a posture of awareness to what God is up to in the world this week?

## Prayer

***If you've written your surprise down, have it ready!***

We give you thanks, God, because you are good.  
Your love goes on forever.

We give you thanks for our stories.  
We thank you for...

*(Take turns reading out your surprises here)*

We give you thanks for all these things and for the way you are awake and active in our lives and our world. Help us this week to notice what you are up to.

We give you thanks, God, because you are good.  
Your love goes on forever.