

Worship Material
Called to live
Material from Roots Bible Study
Sunday 11th May

Begin with an opening prayer

Creator God, thank you for giving us life.
We ask that you equip and inspire us today;
be our strength and our guide.
Help us see where we have gone wrong,
and the places and people that need the life
that only you can bring.
Amen.

Read Acts 9.36-43

Bible notes

Dorcas is identified as 'a disciple', one of only three individuals so described in Acts. The others are Ananias, whose ministry filled Paul with the Holy Spirit (9:17), and Timothy, Paul's missionary companion, whose mother was also 'a believer' (16:1). This emphasis on the inclusion of both women and men is characteristic of Luke–Acts, where we find paired stories, male and female (e.g. Simeon and Anna in Luke 2:25-38; the centurion with the sick servant and the widow with the dead son in Luke 7:1-17). So, in Acts, Peter heals paralysed Aeneas in Lydda (9:32-35) and is urged there to travel to Joppa where his prayerful ministry raises Dorcas. This pairing reinforces the connection between Jesus' miracles and those of his witness, Peter. Jesus (Luke 5:18-26) and Peter tell a paralysed man to arise. Jesus keeps the crowd outside and addresses Jairus' dead daughter, 'Child, get up!' (Luke 8:49-56); Peter, praying alone with the dead Dorcas, addresses her, 'Tabitha, get up'. ('Tabitha' is her Aramaic name, 'Dorcas' her Greek name.) Peter continues Jesus' ministry, as does Dorcas. She follows Jesus in bringing good news to the poor, recognising distress and responding with compassion and extending Jesus' ministry to fulfil the Scriptures (Luke 4:16-21). She supports widows in her community, whose grief and shock at her death is touchingly described. Perhaps she made garments for them or worked with them in a charitable enterprise that was their means of supporting themselves and being generous to others.

It seems that as Peter ministers to Dorcas, so she ministers to him. Inviting her to get up, he also takes her hand. As he helps her up, they seem to rise to new

life together. He stays in Joppa for some time, doubtless learning more about her faith lived out in good works as she learns more of his faith expressed in prayer and preaching. It is significant that Peter stays with Simon, a Jewish tanner whose work with animal carcasses would regularly have rendered him ritually unclean (Leviticus 11:39-40). This takes us towards Peter's recognition that the Holy Spirit could fall 'even on the Gentiles' (10:45).

Prayer

Dorcas, your faithful servant,
worked willingly for you and her friends.
We thank you that you called her to live.
Thank you for the friends who care for us.
May we seek opportunities to make our lives really count.
Thank you that you call us to live.

Amen.

Go with God 24/7

Encourage everyone to put their faith into action.

God of life and love,
help us to go from here
to live our lives to the full
and to offer ourselves
in service of those in need.
Shower us with your love and gifts
that we might use them
to be a blessing to others in our community.

Amen.