



## SHEROES & CHAMPIONS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

### Women of Hospitality

Mary (Mother of Mark) and Lydia – The Book of Acts

Women's Discipleship Group - Terri McFaddin

Series #2 Lesson #3

#### **Scripture Focus:**

Acts 12:12 – *So, when he (Peter) considered this, he came to the house of Mary, the mother of John Mark, where many were gathered together praying.*

Acts 16:14-15 – *Now a certain woman named Lydia heard us... And when she and her household were baptized, she begged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay." So she persuaded us.*

**Key Words: Hospitality (Greek) –Philoxenia:** Love of strangers.  
To receive and care for guests.

**OPENING STATEMENT:** There are two main women in the book of Acts that turned their homes into houses of worship. They demonstrated great courage by opening their homes for worship in spite of the decrees that had gone out to persecute anyone who gathered in the name of Jesus. *Acts 8:3 As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering every house and dragging off men and women, committing them to prison.*

**MARY (the mother of John Mark)** This Mary was not the mother of Jesus. She was the sister of Barnabas and the mother of John Mark who wrote the Book of Mark. The Bible tells us in Acts 12:12 that when Peter was miraculously freed from prison and was looking for a safe place to hide, he went straight to Mary's house. Apparently, her house was known as a place of safety and comfort where people in need could freely come and find help. On the night of Peter's escape, people were gathered at Mary's house praying for his release. Mary was a she-ro and a champion of the faith.

At a time when Christians were being persecuted and imprisoned, Mary defied the authorities by sheltering the saints and openly having worship services in her home. The Lord rewarded her by raising up her son John Mark to be a leader in the church.

**LYDIA (A wealthy businesswoman)** This great woman of hospitality was the first Christian convert in Asia Minor. When Lydia met Paul she accepted Christ and was baptized along with her household. This independent woman insisted that Paul and Silas stay at her home and use her spacious house as they saw fit. While staying at Lydia's house, Paul and Silas had an encounter with a demonic woman and were beaten and imprisoned (Acts 16:15-24). When they were released, they returned to Lydia's house where I am certain that she nursed them back to health. Some women might have been concerned that being involved with two religious fanatics like Paul and Silas might have hurt their business or damaged their reputation. But Lydia was a champion and a she-ro. She ignored the threats and like her counterpart, Mary (Mark's mother), she opened her home and heart to show love and hospitality to God's people.

**OBSERVATIONS:**

Read the following scriptures and determine what happened to those who were caught gathering in homes for the purpose of worshipping Jesus: Acts 8:1-3; Acts 9:1-2, Acts 12:1-4; Acts 14:19-20.

**INTERPRETATION:**

In Acts 12:12, Peter went to Mary's house for help. But in Acts 12:17, it appears that Peter changed his mind and decided not to stay. Why do you think he departed?

**PERSONALIZATION:**

What type of persecution are you now seeing against the church?

Have you ever been persecuted for your faith? If so, please explain.

**APPLICATION:**

Come up with a plan that will allow you to stand up for your faith. It may be a letter to your elected official about anti-Christian legislation, or it may be some ungodly practice at your school or workplace.