

Acts 2:42-47

We want to pattern ourselves after that first church. The reason we keep coming back to this is because we, as individuals need to see it, understand it, and emulate it...and the temptation for some of you will be to hit the pause button.

1. NO! Nothing here hinges on me.
2. The Word is still the word, the church is still the church, and the head of the church is still Christ
3. The Kingdom keeps advancing because the King is still on the throne.

We don't need to pause. We need to press harder into these 7 characteristics we have found in the early church. What is our target? The Acts 2 church...

1. Scripture Saturated
2. Unified Fellowship
3. Prayer
4. Miracles
5. Ministry
6. Worship
7. Outreach

This may sound like a lot to keep straight...but we really just need to know where to aim.

1. We need to hit target...and to do so, we need to aim at the bullseye: Missions, Disciple Making, and Evangelism
2. Jesus made this abundantly clear
 - a. Matt 28:19-20 *Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.*
 - b. Mark 16:15 *And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature"*
 - c. Luke 24:46-47 *Then He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."*
 - d. John 20:21 *Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you"*
 - e. Acts 1:8 *but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.*
 - f. Acts 8:1 *And on that day a great persecution began against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.*

Get this right. Make this your priority and all 7 characteristics will naturally happen. Let's consider them again.

I. Maturing in the Word v42a

They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching

This focus did not change, for several decades later, we find Paul instructing church leaders to do this exact thing

1. 1 Tim 4:13-16 *Until I come, give attention to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation and teaching. 14 Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you, which was bestowed on you through prophetic utterance with the laying on of hands by the presbytery. 15 Take pains with these things; be absorbed in them, so that your progress will be evident to all. 16 Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things, for as you do this you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you..*

2. Read, Exhort, Teach

3. Devote yourself to the Scriptures in every way possible

Aim at Outreach! Nothing will drive you to the word like Missions, Disciple Making, and Evangelism .

II. Meaningful Fellowship v42b, 46

They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread...

The Scriptures were not all that they devoted themselves to.

1. They devoted themselves to fellowship...to each other

2. They likely had been rejected by friends and family and they were in great need of support from their new-found family.... Jesus gave a warning and a promise

a. Luke 12:51-53 *Do you suppose that I came to grant peace on earth? I tell you, no, but rather division; 52 for from now on five members in one household will be divided, three against two and two against three. 53 They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law."*

b. Mark 10:29-31 *Jesus said, "Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or farms, for My sake and for the gospel's sake, 30 but that he will receive a hundred times as much now in the present age, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and farms, along with persecutions; and in the age to come, eternal life. 31 But many who are first will be last, and the last, first."*

3. The words "one another" are used 151 times in the Bible...there is a reason for that!

4. Let us never take for granted the fellowship of the believers!

Meaningful Fellowship is fueled by...and fuels...missions.

1. Missions, Evangelism and disciple making are the primary reasons we fellowship!

2. *Galatians 2:9* recognizing the grace that had been given to me, James and Cephas and John, who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, so that we might go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.

III. Making Supplication v42c

They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

1. The Acts 2 church was devoting themselves to prayer and the focus was still there decades later.

2. *1 Tim 2:1-8* First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, 2 for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. 3 This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior; 4 who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. 5 For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, 6 who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony given at the proper time..... 7 For this I was appointed a preacher and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying) as a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth. 8 Therefore I want the men in every place to pray, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and dissension.

3. Let prayer permeate EVERY part of the church, which means we, as individuals need to be people of prayer.

Aim at Outreach! Nothing will motivate prayer like Missions, Disciple Making, and Evangelism .

IV. Miracles Performed v43

43 Everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles.

1. Be the Miracle!

- a. Sometimes we see a need and our first thought is, let's contact the church and see what they will do about it...let's have a program
- b. We must come to understand that we, as individuals, ARE the church.
- c. We as individuals, when we see a need, can, and should take responsibility: contact your d-group, your SS class, your circle of friends and get a plan together...and if we need to come alongside to help you succeed, we would love that!

2. Be the miracle!

Aim at Outreach! Miracles happen out there when we are making our target Missions, Disciple Making, and Evangelism.

V. Ministry to the Body v44-46

44 And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common; 45 and they began selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need. 46 Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart,

Care for the brethren is critical in the Scriptures

1. There are roughly 100 “one another” verses in the New Testament
2. The early church very practically loved one another as we see in Acts 2
3. Acts 4:32-35 *And the congregation of those who believed were of one heart and soul; and not one of them claimed that anything belonging to him was his own, but all things were common property to them. 33 And with great power the apostles were giving testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and abundant grace was upon them all. 34 For there was not a needy person among them, for all who were owners of land or houses would sell them and bring the proceeds of the sales 35 and lay them at the apostles' feet, and they would be distributed to each as any had need.*

You can't do this watching online at home!

1. You'll be aware of one another's needs as you link arms and hearts to go!
2. Aim at Outreach! Missions, Disciple Making, and Evangelism and you will grow in your love and care for one another...and as we do it will be a testimony to a lost and watching world

John 13:34-35 *A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. 35 By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.*

VI. Magnifying God v47

47 praising God and having favor with all the people.

Catechism questions are: Who made you? God. What else did God make? All things. Why did God make you and all things? For His own glory!

1. This is fundamental Christianity 101
2. God made us, and saved us, for His own glory...and He get's praise when His glory is declared to those who do not know Him, and they become worshippers too!
3. Psalm 96:3 *Tell of His glory among the nations, His wonderful deeds among all the peoples.*
4. Isaiah 12:4 *And in that day you will say, "Give thanks to the LORD, call on His name. Make known His deeds among the peoples; Make them remember that His name is exalted."*

Worship is the goal and the fuel of missions: Missions exists because worship doesn't. Missions is our way of saying: the joy of knowing Christ is not a private, or tribal, or national or ethnic privilege. It is for all. And that's why we go. Because we have tasted the joy of worshiping Jesus, and we want all the families of the earth included. John Piper

Not just corporate worship, but daily glorifying God through our words, actions, spending habits, and ultimately as we make worshippers for Him through evangelism, discipling, and missions: bullseye!

VII. Missions, Disciple Making, and Evangelism

v47b

And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.

1. Here is our bullseye: Missions Disciple making, and evangelism.
2. If we hit this, aim at this, we will hit everything else.

So, let's be faithful to Go and Send (pray and give)

1. That is what the early church did
2. Acts 13:1-3 *Now there were at Antioch, in the church that was there, prophets and teachers: Barnabas, and Simeon who was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. 2 While they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." 3 Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.*

Conclusion:

Let us not hit the pause button. Let us press forward with the work that Christ has called us all to. Let us be faithful to fulfill the roles that Christ has given us in the kingdom. Let's all hit on all 8 cylinders and there is not telling what we can do.

1. Genesis 11:1-6
2. If we all speak the same language...with the same goals...and give ourselves to our particular roles...with God, nothing will be impossible.