

# ACTS

THE MOVEMENT BEGINS

## Acts 2:42-47 | "God's Model For the Church"

### I. THE BASIC ACTIVITIES OF THE EARLY CHURCH. (v. 42)

#### A. (v. 42)

#### 1. "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers."

a. "they" = 3,120 believers (1:15; 2:41)

1) There were about 3,000 new believers (v. 41).

2) **Q** = What did the Early Church do with these 3,000 new believers?... Read on!

b. "continued steadfastly" - Gr. *proskartereó* - "devoted; endured; staying in a fixed direction; to continue to do something with intense effort; to give constant attention to"

1) **KEY:** These 4 Basic Activities of the Early Church were what they were *devoted* to, and they *gave intense effort* to stay fixed in that direction!

#### B. They CONTINUED STEADFASTLY IN:

#### 1. THE APOSTLES DOCTRINE.

a. They gave themselves continually to "the teaching of the Apostles."

1) "the Apostles"

a) The Twelve Apostles, and later the Apostle Paul, were given DIRECT REVELATION by Jesus Christ.

i. Cf. Ephesians 2:20; 3:3-5

2) "doctrine" - Gr. "teaching; instruction"

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a) **Q** = What did the Apostle's *teach*? How did they *instruct* the people?...

**i. Teaching the Old Testament Scriptures.**

- a. Cf. **Luke 24:44-45** - *"And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures,"*
- b. **NOTE:** The only Bible the Apostles had at that time was the Jewish Bible, the Old Testament!

**ii. Teaching those things the Holy Spirit was revealing to them and teaching them.**

- a. Cf. **John 14:26** - Jesus told His disciples during the Last Supper, *"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."*
- b. Cf. **John 15:27** - He went on to tell them, *"But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning."*
- c. Cf. **John 16:12-14** - Also, He said, *"I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now."*

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*Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you."*

**b. The top priority of the Early Church was KNOWING and TEACHING the Word of God.**

- 1) Cf. Acts 4:4; 5:18-25, 42; 6:2-7; 8:4-8, 14, 25, 35; 9:20; 10:44; 11:19-26; 12:24; 13:5, 12, 44, 49; 14:3, 21, 25; 15:35; 16:32; 17:2-3, 11; 18:11; 19:10, 20; 20:7, 20, 27-28, 32; 28:23-27, 30-31
- 2) Cf. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 - The Apostle Paul wrote, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for **doctrine**, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."
  - a) **KEY:** The Early Church was very interested in DOCTRINE.
    - i. They wanted to know what the Bible says about God, about Jesus Christ, and about the power of the Holy Spirit.
      - a. NOT what the Bible says about...
        - i. How to have a successful marriage.
        - ii. How to raise godly kids.
        - iii. How prosper financially.
      - b. The preaching today is so often man-centered rather than Christ-centered.

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- i. People seem to be more interested in themselves than they are in Jesus Christ!
    - b) Tragically, I've heard pastors say, "We're not interested in doctrine, we just want to get down with the people and minister to them." What?!!!
      - i. **Q** = How can you minister to people without the Word of God? What can you give people besides the Word of God?!
      - ii. In counseling people, we never want to play God in their life. Just give them the Bible and pray for them! If we stick to the Bible, we're safe!
    - c) It is so sad how few churches place a great priority on teaching the Word of God.
      - i. In many churches, you can learn more about psychology than you can the Word of God.
        - a. They throw in a scripture reference now and then to give it an appearance of being Biblical.
        - b. They will make a passing reference to God's help, or to Jesus Christ, because after all they still call it a church.
      - ii. Many churches will tell stories and bring entertainment, but that is why we have so many immature, sick sheep.
- 3) Our church here, Calvary Chapel Escondido, is a Teaching ministry. ("Simply Teaching the Bible Simply")
  - a) Everything we do is centered around the *Teaching* of God's Word.
    - i. In our Gatherings = Teaching
    - ii. In our Children's Ministry = Teaching

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- iii. In our Discipleship = Teaching
- b) We desire to teach *the Bible*, not teach *about* the Bible.
  - i. Cf. **John 21:15-17** - Jesus told Peter, "*Feed My sheep!*"
  - ii. Cf. **1 Peter 5:2** - Peter told the Church, "*Feed the flock of God which is among you,...*"
  - iii. Cf. **Acts 20:27-28** - The Apostle Paul told the Ephesian elders, "*For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.*"

### **4) Some Lessons I learned from Pastor Chuck Smith:**

- a) Feed the Sheep, don't Beat the Sheep.
  - i. The Word of God will show more of what God has done for you than what you can do for God.
    - a. Beating the sheep will not help them grow. It will only discourage them and keep them in a sick, unhealthy state.
  - ii. Healthy sheep will naturally reproduce.
    - a. Sick sheep will not reproduce no matter how much you beat them.
    - b. As a believer matures and grows, Christ will naturally become their life, and their witness will just overflow. In other words, evangelism will be the result of Christian maturity.

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- b) Feed the Flock of God, don't Fleece the Flock of God.
  - i. Too many charlatans are begging for money like God is broke.
  - ii. Too many "ministers" come before God's people to take rather than to give.
  
- 5) **KEY:** My greatest desire is that this church is the best fed and best loved in this whole area.
  - a) The reason we feed you the Word of God is so that you become healthy sheep and mature believers!
  
- c. As Christians, we are to *continually* be:
  - 1) A LEARNING People.
    - a) Cf. [John 8:31-32](#); [Colossians 3:16-17](#)
    - b) Learning = Listening!
      - i. Cf. [Revelation 2-3](#) - When Jesus addressed the churches, He kept saying, "*He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.*"
      - ii. **NOTE:** There is a responsibility on the hearer to listen to the voice of the Spirit.
      - iii. **KEY:** As we hear the Word of God being taught, we should be LISTENING for God to speak to us!
        - a. Cf. [Isaiah 55:10-11](#); [Jeremiah 23:28-29](#); [1 Thessalonians 2:13](#); [Hebrews 4:12](#)
        - b. I think a great way to learn the Word of God is to listen to Bible studies.

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- i. On our church app, we have all of our Bible teachings, as well as previous Bible teaching through the Bible.
  - ii. TWFT app ([pastorchuck.org](http://pastorchuck.org)) is a great place to hear Pastor Chuck Smith's teaching library.
- c) **Q** = Do you have a hunger to learn the Word of God? Are you seeking to learn the Word of God?...
- 2) A READING People.
- a) Cf. Acts 17:11; 2 Timothy 2:15
  - b) **Q** = Do you read the Word of God?...
  - c) **Q** = Where do we find the Apostle's teaching today?... In the pages of the New Testament!

## 2. FELLOWSHIP.

- a. The word fellowship is a very difficult word to directly translate into English. We don't have an equivalent word.
  - 1) In the New Testament, there are various ways the word is translated that give us an idea of what this word means.
    - a) Cf. Acts 2:44 - "And all that believed were together, and had all things **common**;"
    - b) Cf. Romans 12:13 - "**Distributing** to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality."
    - c) Cf. Romans 15:26-27 - "For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain **contribution** for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem. It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things."

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- d) Cf. **1 Corinthians 1:9** - "God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the **fellowship** of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord."
- e) Cf. **2 Corinthians 8:4** - "Praying us with much intreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the **fellowship** of the ministering to the saints."
- f) Cf. **2 Corinthians 9:13** "Whiles by the experiment of this ministration they glorify God for your professed subjection unto the gospel of Christ, and for your liberal **distribution** unto them, and unto all men;"
- g) Cf. **2 Corinthians 13:14** - "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the **communion** of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen."
- h) Cf. **Galatians 2:9** - "And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of **fellowship**; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision."
- i) Cf. **Galatians 6:6** - "Let him that is taught in the word **communicate** unto him that teacheth in all good things."
- j) Cf. **Philippians 1:5** - "For your **fellowship** in the gospel from the first day until now;"
  - i. **NOTE:** Paul wrote his letter to the church at Philippi to thank them for their *koinonia* in the gospel. They *partnered* with him financially and in prayer as he was on the mission field.
- k) Cf. **Philippians 4:15** - "Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church **communicated** with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only."



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- l) Cf. **Philemon 6** - "That the **communication** of thy faith may become effectual by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus."
  - m) Cf. **Hebrews 13:16** - "But to do good and to **communicate** forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased."
    - i. According to this verse, *koinonia* is sacrificial and pleases God.
  - n) Cf. **1 John 1:3, 6-7** - "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. ... If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin"
- 2) "fellowship" - Gr. *koinonia* - "fellowship, association, community, communion, communication, joint participation, (spiritual) intimacy, collection, contribution"
- a) **NOTE:** Fellowship is not just hanging out with Christians. We don't have an event and call it fellowship.
  - b) **KEY:** Fellowship is a sacrificial, common sharing together in the life of the Lord.
- 3) **KEY:** The Early Church was committed to being a *community* where people constantly loved each other and served each other in practical ways!
- a) This is evidenced by the many "One Another" statements in the N.T.!
- b. **KEY:** The Early Church was dedicated to *koinonia* with one another in the LOCAL CHURCH, but they also were dedicated to

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*koinonia* in WORLD MISSIONS! (2 Cor. 8:4; 9:13; Phil. 1:5; 4:15)

- 1) We have *Koinonia* with our missionaries as we join together to reach the world for Jesus Christ!

### 3. THE BREAKING OF BREAD.

a. "in breaking of bread" - Gr. "the breaking of the bread"

- 1) **NOTE:** The definite article ("the") means that it was a specific bread, which is a reference to Communion, the Lord's Table.
- 2) **KEY:** The Early Church was *dedicated* to sharing in Communion and having meals together.
  - a) They had common meals together (Luke 24:25; Acts 2:46; 16:34).
    - i. In that culture, to share a meal together was an act of *koinonia*. Sharing the common bread was a symbol of sharing commonality and a common life together.
      - a. It was okay to double-dip!!!
  - b) They had what they called "Love Feasts" or "Agape Feasts." (Acts 20:7-11; 27:35; Jude 12)
    - i. It was at the end of these Feasts (potlucks?), that they would share in Communion together at the Lord's Table.
  - c) **NOTE:** At the Communion Table, we have a demonstration of the oneness that we all share together in Jesus Christ.
    - i. Cf. 1 Corinthians 10:16-17 - Paul, in writing to the church in Corinth concerning the breaking of bread, said, "*The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body*"

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*of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread."*

- d) **KEY:** In Communion, we are eating the same bread, and that same bread is being assimilated into my body, and into your body, and we are demonstrating that mystical reality that we are all united as One Body, enjoying *koinonia* together. Also, as we are drinking from the same bottle of juice that was poured into separate cups, we are expressing that we are all sharing together in the cleansing of the blood of Jesus.

#### 4. **PRAYERS.**

- a. This is the 4th of the functions of the early church, but it is not 4th in priority! It was top priority with the Apostles along with the study of the Word. (cf. 6:4)
- 1) This is an element that, sadly, you find missing in modern churches.
- a) In the church today, we find a great emphasis on Christian service.
- i. There are constant appeals for people to show up to demonstrations and political rallies.
- ii. There are boycotts and picketing demonstrations.
- iii. There are petitions to make our voice heard.
- b) Many church planters today give a tremendous amount of effort in their strategies that rely on marketing and entrepreneurial skills, rather than spending that same energy in prayer.
- i. They make cool looking brochures to get people to "partner" with them. Almost like a church planters resumé.

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- ii. They give their 4-stage "Launch" strategies with goals of funds and how you can partner with them.
- 2) I wonder how much greater an impact the church would have if we would call the people to pray, and devote the time that would have been spent in these things in prayer.
  - a) You can certainly do more than pray, after you have prayed, but you cannot do more than pray until you have prayed.
    - i. **Illust.** - 20 years ago, we had a leadership meeting for the college group, and we were all strategizing about how to get new people and have them stay, until my friend Darryl said, "Why don't we just pray," and he got the most dirty looks! But he was so right!!
    - b) Jesus said, "*No man can enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he will first bind the strong man; and then he will spoil his house.*" (Mark 3:27)
      - i. **KEY:** Prayer is binding the strong man of the house, and service is taking the spoils.
    - c) We are in a spiritual battle, thus "*the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds*" of the enemy. (2 Cor. 10:4)
    - d) Paul closes the section in Ephesians on the subject of spiritual warfare by equipping us for the battle by declaring, "*Praying with all prayer and supplications in the Spirit.*" (Eph 6:18-20)
  - b. They were involved in CORPORATE Prayer – lit. "*the prayers*" = specific times of prayer.
    - 1) Prayer meetings in their HOMES (1:14; 4:23; 12:12).
    - 2) Prayer meetings in the TEMPLE (3:1).

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- 3) Prayer meetings in the CHURCH GATHERING (1:24; 6:6; 8:15; 13:1-4; 14:23; 20:36; 21:5)
  - c. They were involved in INDIVIDUAL Prayer.
    - 1) Cf. Acts 6:4; 9:11, 40; 10:9, 30-31; 11:5; 12:5, 12; 16:13, 16, 25; 22:17; 28:8)
- C. Notice what's NOT mentioned with these Basic Activities of the Early Church:**
1. **NO Committees.**
  2. **NO Launch strategies.**
  3. **NO Marketing campaigns.**
  4. **NO Fundraising.**
  5. **NO Church-growth strategies.**

## II. THE FRUIT OF THOSE FOUR ACTIVITIES: (v. 43-46a)

### THE FEAR OF GOD (v. 43a)

#### A. (v. 43a)

##### 1. "And fear came upon every soul:..."

a. "fear" - Gr. *phobos* - "terror; reverence; dread; awe"

- 1) I think that one thing that is lacking in the church today is a true *fear* of God in the hearts of many believers.
  - a) People often speak in a chummy way of God.
  - b) Their language often becomes irreverent and crude.
- 2) **NOTE:** If there is no fear of God in the Church, then we are doing those 4 activities of the church wrong!

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### THE SUPERNATURAL WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT (v. 43b)

#### **B. (v. 43b)**

##### **1. "...and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles."**

- a. When this kind of environment is established, the Spirit of God can work.
  - 1) When there is a love and sharing.
  - 2) Where there is a healthy fear of God, and a hatred for evil and arrogance.
  - 3) These things allow the Holy Spirit to work in a powerful way!

### CHRISTIAN UNITY (v. 44-46a)

#### **C. The SITUATION:**

1. At this time in Jerusalem, there were many pilgrims who came for the feast of Pentecost from all over the world (v. 9-11), and now they have become new disciples (v. 41) that probably wanted to stick around and grow in their new faith and learn the apostles doctrine. However, that would cause financial pressures.
2. Also, there were those that lost their jobs and income by certain Jews because of their public declaration of faith in Jesus Christ.

#### **D. Their SOLUTION:**

##### **1. They formed a Christian community.**

- a. The people started selling their goods and giving the money to the apostles. (2:44-45; 4:34-37; 5:1-4)
  - 1) The church was in unity.
  - 2) They were motivated by love in sharing their belongings.
    - a) Cf. James 2:14-17; 1 John 3:16-18

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- b. This was done voluntarily, not legislated (4:32-35; 5:4), and it was not required to become a part of the church.
- c. The apostles would then have it distributed to those with needs (2:45; 6:1-4).

### E. The **RESULT**:

#### 1. **Though their hearts were right, it BROUGHT HARDSHIP to the Jerusalem Church** ("Calvary Chapel Jerusalem" 🙄).

- a. The first problems in the church had to do with this system.
  - 1) It opened the door for hypocrisy. (5:1-4)
  - 2) Division over the distribution of the welfare. (6:1-4)
- b. The church ended up in financial disaster (Acts 11:27-30; Romans 15:25-26; 1 Cor 16:1-3; 2 Cor 8:9; 9:2)

#### 2. **I believe that their hearts were right and pure, but I question the wisdom of how they tried to solve the issues.**

- a. This is only found in the church at Jerusalem.
- b. There is nothing to indicate that this was lead by God, and was not mandatory (5:4).
- c. It could be that they just had "impulse selling"!
  - 1) Some people struggle with "impulse buying", and maybe they struggled with "impulse selling."
  - 2) It could be that they expected Jesus to come back soon to set up His kingdom, thus started just giving away their stuff to help others.
  - 3) Or, they were just so excited about what was going on and started reacting out of emotion without thinking it through.

#### 3. ***"And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house,..."***

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III. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE BELIEVERS. (v. 46b-47a)

GLADNESS AND SINGLNESS OF HEART (v. 46b)

A. (v. 46b)

1. "...did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart,"

PRAISING GOD AND HAVING FAVOUR WITH ALL THE PEOPLE (v. 47a)

B. (v. 47a)

1. "Praising God, and having favour with all the people..."

IV. THE FINAL CONSEQUENCE. (v. 47b)

THE LORD ADDED TO THE CHURCH DAILY (v. 47b)

A. (v. 47b)

1. "...And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."

a. Q = WHO added to the Church?... THE LORD!!!

1) Cf. **Matthew 16:18** - Jesus said, "I will build My Church"!

a) It is *His* Church, and *He* will build it! He will add to the Church daily such as should be saved.

2) Cf. **Zechariah 4:6** - "Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts."

b. **KEY:** When the Church becomes what the Lord wants the Church to be, He will then do for the Church what He really wants to do!