

GROWING — Empowered to Grow II

Pastor Perry Burkholder

Acts 2:42 - 47

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were **together** and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet **together** in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate **together** with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

The New International Version. (2011). (Ac 2:42-47). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.



The description of church in Acts wasn't just a description of something back then, but something that you can have right now!

The first time Pastor Perry ever heard this preached was about building community. "If you will make it your aim to do what the early church did, you'll experience what they experienced."

If you all catch the fire of the Holy Spirit, YOU all can make this Acts community happen in your day. YOU all can do this because YOU all are the church.

The church is not a building. YOU are the church.

Lost & Confused

Pastor Perry shared about how lost and confused he was growing up in the south. Despite there being a church on every corner, he never heard about the gospel.

It wasn't until he was invited to learn the Bible by people on his soccer team. His life was changed as a result of people on his team doing things together, learning about each other and asking each other the hard questions.

Pastor Perry read the Bible but it didn't come to life until he grew in community. It was those common practices in community that he was able to be filled with the Spirit and come to life.

Happiness & Spiritual Growth Grow Together

Happiness & joy and spiritual growth grow together as we grow together with others in community.

In Greek, that word 'together' means "gathered ones."

Your gladness and your joy are tied up with your togetherness. When you're isolated and alone, you can be stalked and chased down by anxiety and depression that will cause you to believe lies about your self worth.

Pandemic Reflections

This pandemic has exposed so many problems that were there before the pandemic. This culture of radical individualism in the West was torn asunder by this pandemic, and we have lost out.



It is now the time to call everyone back together.

People have wandered off into isolation and depression. Some have given up on church entirely.

It's been a mess of a year. Right now, we're in recovery mode and we haven't recovered yet fully.



And it's okay to say that we need healing.

Don't Give Up On Meeting Together

It's easy to forget how valuable you are and how important your voice is, and how important your role is when you listen to others.

Hebrews 10:24 - 25

And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching

The New International Version. (2011). (Heb 10:24–25). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

So let us not give up meeting together in large and small gatherings so that we may experience what the early church experienced.

We are better together.

Our leadership team is leaning into this so we can find our footing, remind ourselves of who we are and build each other up in love together.

What we ask of you is this: read through this text and pray,
"God would you give me a heart for this kind of community, and to overcome fears and anxieties I have about meeting with people again? Give me practical steps to do this this week."

And reach out to those you haven't seen and meet with them. Invite them back into community.