

# GROWING — Empowered to Gather Together

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## 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.

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If we want to see a picture of the gathered church, this passage exemplifies this.

They were growing in the word, praise and worship, communing together, and people were seeing miracles and getting saved on a daily basis. Those new believers were immediately adopted together into the family.

The most striking thing is that they were happy and filled with joy. Why?

Because they received the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and the vision of mission.

But while great things are happening, the story of Acts doesn't stop here.

Persecution heats up in chapter 8 and all of the disciples were scattered.



Why is gathering and growing not the end of the story?

# Gathering & Growing For The Purpose of Going

## Acts 8:1 - 8

On that day a great persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. Godly men buried Stephen and mourned deeply for him. But Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off both men and women and put them in prison.

**Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went.** Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Messiah there. When the crowds heard Philip and saw the signs he performed, they all paid close attention to what he said. For with shrieks, impure spirits came out of many, and many who were paralyzed or lame were healed. So there was great joy in that city.

The New International Version. (2011). (Ac 8:1–8). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

The Lord's way of advancing his kingdom is gathering his people and growing them, and spreading them out. The Acts 1:8 commission included all of Jerusalem, but its scope included the whole world.

But the disciples were so caught up with everything happening in Jerusalem that they did not go beyond Jerusalem to spread the gospel. While the persecution was not of the Lord, He used the negative event of persecution to spread the church.

## To Scatter

In Greek, the root beneath the word "scatter" can be used in association with scattering seed. All who were scattered were sown in Judea & Samaria, just as

Jesus had instructed them.

Scattering was God's instrument to plant everyday Christians into the world.

We believe the Lord hasn't stopped planting and sowing Christians everywhere they go.

Jovy & Arvin didn't plan on living in Seattle. But the Lord changed their plans and planted them here. It wasn't easy for them to accommodate to the plan of being in a different country, but the Lord gave them grace to be the people of the Kingdom in Seattle.

All the members of ENCS are scattered throughout the Puget Sound. We are the people of the Kingdom who are instructed to spread the Gospel wherever we are.

## **Beyond Judea & Samaria**

Where we live matters to God; it's not an accident. The Lord got the Kingdom People out of Jerusalem, and out of Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

While we may picture these people running away and praying for deliverance from persecution, they instead spread the Gospel wherever they went. These ordinary Christians preached the Gospel everywhere they went.

## **Ordinary Christians**

These ordinary Christians were the ones preaching the word, not the Apostles. Those apostles stayed in Jerusalem.



Luke shows us that the spread of the gospel was not initiated by preachers or teachers, but the ordinary Christians who ate together and shared everything together in Acts 2.

These ordinary Christians didn't have any seminary degree or Bible college degree. They just gathered together regularly, and when they were imprisoned or killed, were scattered abroad only to spread the Gospel more.

The church is the gathered, growing body of Christ when it participates in his mission of preaching the word.

If we are to preach what they did, we need to identify what it was that they preached.

## Evangelion

They used their voices to make Jesus known, honored, and revered as King. It is necessary to live out the Gospel with our actions and speak the Gospel with our mouths.

The Kingdom of Heaven will continue advancing through the gathered Kingdom people.

### Revelation 7:9 - 10

After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands.

And they cried out in a loud voice:

*"Salvation belongs to our God,  
who sits on the throne,  
and to the Lamb."*

The New International Version. (2011). (Re 7:9–10). Grand Rapids, MI:  
Zondervan.

## Kingdom People

You "ordinary Christians" are more than ordinary Christians. You are Kingdom people, serving a new King of the World, advancing his kingdom throughout the world.

What is stopping you from preaching the Gospel where you are planted?

Many of us work in places where their policies intend to prevent us from spreading the Gospel. So what does it look like for Kingdom People to advance the Kingdom in places where this is enforced?

- Build relationships with people, and gather together. The Holy Spirit had to provide opportunities and quell fears for the Kingdom people in Acts to spread the word.
- Being obedient in these work places doesn't mean being openly rebellious, but to develop loving relationships with people and preach the gospel into people's lives.
- This looks different from place to place, but we must trust the Spirit to provide open doors and courage in every situation.
- Sometimes we are only able to plant seeds. We won't always see if the seed grows or not, but The Spirit calls us to be faithful to plant those seeds.

The power of the Gospel is salvation to everyone who believes. The Lord is still in the business of saving people, and he wants you to be a part of his mission.

## How To Scatter the Word

1. Pray First — You won't be moved without the power of the Holy Spirit
2. Preach the word as the Spirit enables you. Not everyone will respond right away. Some will ridicule you. Thankfully, that's the worst most people will do.
  1. Identify who God is putting on your heart:
    - Your unbelieving spouse?
    - Mom?
    - Dad?
    - Neighbor?
    - Coworker?
3. Start a conversation with questions
  - What is the thing you lean on when life gets hard?
  - Do you have a spiritual background? What was it like?
  - Has anyone ever shared with you who Jesus is?
4. Share your story about how Jesus has answered those questions for you.
5. Repeat indefinitely until your friends decide to pledge their allegiance to Jesus.

## Alpha

Hawk has an opportunity for you to get involved with Alpha.

Alpha is an open space for people from different faiths to come together and dialogue about their spiritual backgrounds in a Christian context. A 20 - 30 minute video accompanies every session, which presents a bit of the Gospel and engages those with questions about Christianity.



Fill out [this form](#) if you're interested. This is for Alpha this coming Autumn at the Building @ 17th Ave. and potentially other locations. (In case link doesn't work: [bit.ly/encs-alpha](https://bit.ly/encs-alpha)).