

BE THE CHURCH: Gatherings & Meals

Pastor Danielle Burkholder

The church is not a building, it's the people.

Last week, we learned about what it means to start being the church through prayer. So here's a simple model prayer that Jesus taught, and we'll repeat it again.

Our Father who is in heaven,
may your name be treated as holy.

May your kingdom come,
may your will be done
on earth as *it is* in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread,
and forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.

And do not bring us into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one.

Remember, this is a corporate prayer, not a “me and Jesus only” prayer.

Acts 2

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 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Ac 2:42–47.

This is a picture of heaven arriving on earth. They were filled with the Holy Spirit, and they are immediately shaped into a community with new devotions and practices; they did not act in isolation or solitude.

What would that look like if we allowed the Holy Spirit to shape us into a community that made us look more like that?

The Lord added continually to those who were saved; in other words, people wanted to belong.

The Now and Not-Yet

Jesus said the “kingdom of God is at hand,” or the “Kingdom of God is here.” But if we look outside and read our news feed, there are many places where the kingdom of God

has not yet infiltrated.

And if we look at our own lives, it is evident that the Kingdom hasn't fully arrived in our lives. But there are glimpses of hope.

And so as we continue to live in the now and not yet, we will devote ourselves to the practices that the first church did well.

Two Practices

1. Devotion to gathering

- We can see in the text they met in the temple courts and house to house. It wasn't just a church on Sundays, but in the temple and in houses multiple times throughout the week.

2. Devoted to eating together

- Enjoying each other and enjoying food.

The truth is that food and meeting together is what advances the growth of culture. And Pastor Perry shared his story that before he was a Christian, it was the meals and relationships that helped him feel like he belonged before he ever believed.

A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

The New International Version (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Jn 13:34–35.

People won't know your love for one another unless you invite them into your home.

Eating together is a mark of unity, solidarity and deep friendship, a visible sign that social barriers which once plagued these people have broken down.



Can you imagine a church that raises the value of eating and gathering together and viewing that space as sacred? Could you imagine what that would do for our community, for your community? What would this do for communities that have been wrecked from Covid?

As Every Nation, we want to recover the practices that we have forgotten and that were stolen from us in times of crisis?



So over the cold, dark winter, let's open up our homes and invite people in for meals throughout the week! Lord, help us to say yes to you, and to share our lives with one another. 🍲 🍙 🥘 🥟 🍜 🍣