

SMALL GROUP RESOURCE

Lessons on Disruption from the Early Church

By Sam Bloore

READ Acts 2:42-47



THE CHESS ANALOGY

Have a couple of people who heard the sermon explain the Chess analogy. Including at least these points:

- In chess, the Queen is the most powerful piece.
- Players will often take their Queen off the board in order to develop their skill with the other pieces.
- When the Queen is re-introduced, their game improves significantly.
- In many ways, Sunday services are our Queen – we get to do a lot together: sung worship / Scripture and Teaching / Communion / Prayer and Ministry / Connection and Friendship / etc.
- While we have been able to meet back together in recent months, there has been significant disruption – and even with restrictions easing, there will continue to be.
- Perhaps God is inviting us to develop some of our other pieces, so that when our “Queen” is re-introduced, we likewise notice some wider improvements.

The Sunday services, and the other corporate events that we would usually be enjoying in an unrestricted way are important....but they are not our only chess pieces. We have some other really valuable pieces on the board...and it might just be that God is inviting us to work on some other aspects of our lives of faith – both individually and with others...so that when the queen is reintroduced, and we can meet together in more unrestricted ways, we find that our game has improved right across the board. i.e. that our personal and corporate lives of faith have become deeper, richer and stronger...

RETURNING TO OUR PASSAGE WE READ

They devoted themselves to the apostles teaching...

- Sunday sermons are a great way to access that...but there are other great ways of accessing good teaching – teaching that will both inform and form you in significant ways – stretching and growing your faith.
- Online content and sermons / Lectures, courses, podcasts / Commentary series or other great books that you could work your way through with a friend.
- One thing to note – there’s also a lot of rubbish out there...so ask around!

They also devoted themselves to fellowship...

- They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts.
- Before communion was a wafer dipped in wine...it was a full meal...



Fractio panis – “Breaking of Bread”
in the catacombs, 2nd-century A.D.

- The reason we celebrate communion is that we are remembering that through his death and resurrection, Jesus provides a way for ALL OF LIFE to be given back to us as gracious gift. ALL meals and all fellowship becomes a gift and an occasion to praise God and give thanks...
- Perhaps, during this time, we could be adding in some more of this intimate level of fellowship: Strengthening some friendships? /Having people over for a meal? / Perhaps gathering some friends to do a book club of our own?

They dedicated themselves to prayer

- Matt spoke on prayer last week, so someone might like to review what they remember.
- A question that we might to ask ourselves: Could it be that this time of disrupted connection is an opportunity for us to come aside and spend some time alone with the Lord in prayer?

(More than 25 years ago, Henri Nouwen wrote a journal article in which he suggested that many of us are looking to our communities to answer some questions that God wants to address with us in solitude... But we could easily miss this opportunity – this window – by just sitting back and waiting for things to return to “normal.”)

They gave to anyone who had need...

- The standard here is pretty radical, and Tom Wright admits that there are no easy ways to replicate what was going on here, but that we cannot escape the challenge to respond with our own forms of radical generosity in response to need.
- Is there someone in your world who is in need of your time; your money; your attention; your encouragement; your generosity?

The Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved..

- God may be waiting to put someone on your heart who needs to meet him. Nathan McLellan spoke here a couple of weeks ago and one of the themes that came through was evangelism.
- Evangelism sounds pretty daunting, but most of us could manage to rekindle a friendship if that's what we felt God was nudging us to do... And perhaps for you, that's the chess piece that needs to be developed in this season – reconnecting with someone that you have lost contact with

REFLECT

Study. Meals. Prayer. A small group. Solitude. Encouragement. Friendship. Generosity.
What chess pieces might God be highlighting for you in this season?