

Church Touchdowns - Devotional

Day 1 – A Church That Makes Heaven Cheer

Reading: Acts 2:43–47

Devotional:

The early church was a “touchdown” machine for the kingdom of God. Luke describes a community marked by awe, unity, generosity, joy, and growth. Notice that the “wonders and signs” weren’t just spectacular miracles! The way they handled money, possessions, relationships, and worship was itself a sign that Jesus was alive and reigning. This was a deep awareness that God was really among them. When God’s presence is real to us, it shapes how we worship, how we give, and how we treat one another. The early church didn’t see their resources as their own, but as tools for God’s purposes. Their generosity was not forced; it was joyful and voluntary, a natural overflow of belonging to Christ. They met regularly in larger gatherings and smaller gatherings. Life with Jesus and with each other happened in the everyday, not just on “game day”. Their community was both beautiful and disruptive to the surrounding culture. People couldn’t ignore them.

Application:

Reflection: Where do you currently see “awe” of God in your life? How do you view your money, time, and home? Are they personal property or tools for God’s kingdom? Are you living in a “day by day” faith or just a “Sunday-only” faith?

Action: Build in one daily awe-moment this week: a brief time where you slow down, read a few verses, and verbally praise God for who He is, not just what you want Him to do. Find ways to utilize your time and resources for the Kingdom this week and make a way to build them into your routine.

Prayer: “Lord Jesus, make me part of a church that looks like Acts 2. Restore a holy awe in my heart. Loosen my grip on my possessions and tighten my grip on Your people. Show me how to share my life, my home, and my resources with others for Your glory. Add to Your church as we live this out. Amen.”

Day 2 – Winning Plays: Mercy, Forgiveness, and Reconciliation

Reading: Matthew 5:43–45; Romans 12:17–21

Devotional:

The early church forgave in ways that shock us. They weren't just forgiving rude comments or hurt feelings; they were forgiving arrest, torture, public execution, even family members being thrown to wild beasts. And still, the church loved, blessed, and forgave their persecutors. This wasn't weakness; it was spiritual strength. They took Jesus' command literally: "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you." Their forgiveness was a powerful sign that they belonged to another kingdom and were coached by another King. Forgiveness doesn't mean pretending evil isn't evil. Romans 12 reminds us: "Never take your own revenge... Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, says the Lord." When the church chooses forgiveness over retaliation, it scores a "touchdown" in heaven's eyes. It shows the world what the cross really means: that Jesus absorbed the worst we could offer, and answered with grace.

Application:

Reflection: Who are your "enemies" right now? Not just people who disagree with you, but those who have hurt or wronged you. Where is unforgiveness or bitterness quietly poisoning your heart, your family, your small group, or your church involvement? How does the cross of Christ challenge your current posture toward those who have sinned against you?

Action: Name one person you need to forgive. Before God, say their name and verbally release your claim to revenge or payback. Do one concrete act of blessing toward someone who has hurt you: send a kind message, pray specifically for their good, or stop speaking negatively about them.

Prayer: "Father, You forgave me when I was Your enemy. Through Jesus, You reconciled me to Yourself at great cost. By the power of the Holy Spirit, break the grip of bitterness in my heart. Help me to forgive as I've been forgiven and to overcome evil with good. Make my life a picture of Your mercy. Amen."

Day 3 – A Different Kind of Community

Reading:

Galatians 3:27–28; James 2:1–4; John 13:34–35

Devotional:

In the Roman world, social class, ethnicity, and gender defined your value. The church disrupted this entire system. Slaves and masters, rich and poor, Jews and Gentiles, men and women gathered as one family and called each other "brother" and "sister." This was not sentimental; it was scandalous. The gospel didn't erase differences—it redefined identity. In Christ, the primary label is not race, class, or status, but "in Him." That's why favoritism is such a serious sin in Scripture. It denies the gospel, suggesting some are more worthy of dignity and love than others.

Application:

Reflection: Who, in your mind or behavior, feels like "less than" in your church or community? Are there "cliques" you naturally run to while ignoring others? Does your love for fellow believers make Jesus believable to outsiders (John 13:35)?

Action: Intentionally move toward someone different from you this week at church. Learn their name and some of their story. Break your own clique pattern: in your small group, at an event, or on Sunday, sit or stand with someone new and get to know them. Invite someone outside your normal circle to coffee or a meal. Ask God if there is any favoritism or partiality in your heart. If He reveals specific attitudes or actions, confess them and, where appropriate, apologize to those you've overlooked or dismissed.

Prayer: "Lord Jesus, You welcomed me when I was an outsider. You tore down the wall between us and made us one. Expose any favoritism, prejudice, or pride in my heart. Teach me to love every brother and sister as You do, and to reflect the unity and diversity of Your kingdom. Use our love for one another to draw people to You. Amen."

Day 4 – Pro-Life from Womb to Tomb

Reading:

Psalm 139:13–16; Proverbs 24:11–12; James 1:27

Devotional:

In the Roman world, unwanted babies were left to die on trash heaps or outside the city. The church responded with "baby runs"—listening for the cries of abandoned infants at night, rescuing them, bringing them home, and raising them as their own. They didn't just say they were pro-life; they lived it, at great personal cost. God's Word is clear: human life is sacred from conception to death because every person bears the image of God. Psalm 139 shows that God is intimately involved with us in the womb. James insists that real religion cares for the most vulnerable—those with no voice and no protection. When the church honors life from womb to tomb, heaven rejoices. Every act of sacrificial love toward the vulnerable is another "touchdown" for the kingdom.

Application

Reflection: How do you truly view unborn life: as "tissue," an "option," or as a person knit together by God? Beyond the abortion debate, how do you treat the weak, the elderly, the disabled, the poor, and the lonely? Does your concern for life show up in practical care, or only in opinions and arguments?

Action: Choose one vulnerable person or group to intentionally serve: visit someone elderly or homebound, offer help to a single parent, encourage a foster/adoptive family, or mentor a vulnerable youth.

Prayer: "Creator God, You formed every life and stamped each person with Your image. Forgive me where I have been indifferent to the vulnerable. Give me Your heart for the unborn, the orphan, the widow, the poor, and the forgotten. Show me my part in defending, protecting, and honoring life from womb to tomb. Use me to rescue those staggering toward harm. Amen."

Day 5 – Off the Bench

Reading:

1 Corinthians 6:18–20; 1 Thessalonians 4:3–5; 1 John 1:8–9

Devotional:

What does it look like for believers to be “on the bench”? It happens when we are sidelined by sin, distraction, or compromise. Sexual sin featured prominently in the Roman world, and it does in ours. Yet the biblical call is clear: God’s will is our sanctification—our being set apart for Him, especially in our bodies. You don’t have to stay on the bench. 1 John 1:9 is God’s promise that confession leads to cleansing. Repentance is not just feeling bad; it is agreeing with God about sin, turning from it, and trusting His power to change you. Whatever has benched you—sexual sin, unforgiveness, favoritism, apathy, distraction—Christ’s goal is not to shame you but to restore you. The Coach wants you back in the game, running His plays, for His glory.

Application:

Reflection: What is currently keeping you “on the bench”—a specific sin, a habit, bitterness, fear, or distraction? Do you believe that God can truly cleanse and restore you, or are you resigned to staying stuck?

Action: Get specific with God: write down (privately) any known sins. Then, one by one, confess them honestly to God and destroy the paper. Take one concrete step that demonstrates repentance. Tell at least one mature believer you trust what step you’re taking. Ask them to pray for you and help keep you accountable as you “get back in the game.”

Prayer: “Lord, I don’t want to live on the bench. I confess that I have sinned against You in my body, mind, and actions. Thank You for the promise that if I confess, You are faithful to forgive and cleanse me. I surrender my body to You as a temple of the Holy Spirit. Show me the next steps of obedience, and empower me to walk in holiness. Put me where You want me on Your team, and use my life for Your glory. Amen.”