

Neighbors & Nations: Made to Worship

Made to Belong
Acts 2:37-47

We are Made to Worship → “Made to Praise” - “Made to Follow”

Made to Belong

Main Idea: For God’s Glory and Their Good, We Invite Our Neighbors and the Nations into Gospel Centered Community

“Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, ‘Brothers, what shall we do?’ And Peter said to them, ‘Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.’ And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, ‘Save yourselves from this crooked generation.’ So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.” Acts 2:37–47

Three stages of gospel-centered community from Acts 2:37-47

1. Step In: Invitation to the Community (v37-41)

“Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, ‘Brothers, what shall we do?’” Acts 2:37

Step in and receive the invitation to be saved that’s offered to you freely!

“And Peter said to them, ‘Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’” Acts 2:38

Who is this invitation for?

“For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.’ And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, ‘Save yourselves from this crooked generation.’ So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.” Acts 2:39-41

It’s for You. It’s for those closest to you. It’s for those far from God.

It’s for your neighbors and it’s for the nations!

“For ‘everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.’ How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!’” Romans 10:13-15

The Gospel is an Exclusive Invitation:

“Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.’” John 14:6

There is only one way!

The Most Inclusive Invitation ever given:

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.” John 3:16

The gospel is for everyone!

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2. Enjoy: Blessing of the Community (v42-45)

“And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need.” Acts 2:42-45

a) The Blessing of Learning Together (Teaching)

b) The Blessing of Life Together (Fellowship)

“Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another.” Romans 12:15–16

c) The Blessing of Unity (Breaking of Bread)

“The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.” 1 Corinthians 10:16–17

“For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.” 1 Corinthians 12:12–13

d) The Blessing of Prayer (The Prayers)

“Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.”

James 5:16

e) The Blessing of Care (All Things in Common)

“Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.” Galatians 6:2

“So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.” Matthew 7:12

Do we look like that kind of community?

“Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God.” 1 John 4:7

“It is grace, nothing but grace, that we are allowed to live in community with Christian brothers and sisters.” Dietrich Bonhoeffer

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3. Share: Testimony about the Community (v46–47)

“And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.” Acts 2:46–47

When Christ is at the center, this kind of community makes people want to belong.

“If one or other of them have bondmen and bondwomen or children, through love towards them they persuade them to become Christians, and when they have done so, they call them brethren without distinction. They do not worship strange gods, and they go their way in all modesty and cheerfulness. Falsehood is not found among

them; and they love one another, and from widows they do not turn away their esteem; and they deliver the orphan from him who treats him harshly. And he, who has, gives to him who has not, without boasting. And when they see a stranger, they take him in to their homes and rejoice over him as a very brother; for they do not call them brethren after the flesh, but brethren after the spirit and in God. And whenever one of their poor passes from the world, each one of them according to his ability gives heed to him and carefully sees to his burial. And if they hear that one of their number is imprisoned or afflicted on account of the name of their Messiah, all of them anxiously minister to his necessity, and if it is possible to redeem him they set him free. And if there is among them any that is poor and needy, and if they have no spare food, they fast two or three days in order to supply to the needy their lack of food.” The Apology of Aristides

“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” John 13:34-35

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Invitation: It begins with stepping in and accepting the invitation.

Repent – turn from sin and self – and place your faith in Jesus.

Sources and Further Reading Opportunities:

- *The Bible Exposition Commentary* – Warren Wiersbe (1996)
- *The New American Commentary: Acts* – John B. Polhill (1992)
- *Exalting Jesus in Acts* – Tony Merida (2017)
- *ESV Study Bible* – Crossway (2008)
- *CSB Study Bible* – Trevin Wax, Ed. (2017)
- *Let the Nations Be Glad* – John Piper (1993)
- *Addresses on the Book of Acts* – H.A. Ironside (1943)
- *Acts: The Church Afire* - R.K. Hughes (1996)
- *Commentary Critical & Explanatory on the Whole Bible* - Jamieson, Fausset, & Brown (1997)