

The Church is Born: “Becoming a Church God Uses”

Growth Group Discussion Guide

Acts 2:42-47

Intro questions

- What was one of the most fulfilling experiences of your life? What made it special?
- Pastor Josh claimed on Sunday that if you are a follower of Jesus, the most fulfilling experience you can have is **helping people find the life they long for in Jesus**. Based on your experience, would you agree or disagree? What is so special about it?
- Take a moment to pray, asking for God’s Spirit to lead your discussion.

1. Review Acts 1:8.

- This verse, you will recall, is the mission that Jesus gave his followers and promised would be successful. Today’s passage serves as a first “progress report” for how the mission is being carried out in the early church.

2. Read Acts 2:42-47, then answer the following questions.

- This passage gives us our earliest look at the church’s essential practices. Why does such an early glimpse carry significant value for us today?
- What especially jumps out to you about the life of the early church, in this description?
 - What comes to mind when you think of “being a witness?”
- In v. 47b, we notice the outcome of the church’s life together. Who was owning the process of saving people? Why does this observation matter?
- This week’s sermon claimed that in this passage we see the following: **Jesus saves people through the shared life of the church**. The passage at hand shows us four essential practices that make up this shared life of the church. Discuss these, using the following prompts.

3. They “devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching,” and we must devote ourselves to **getting to know Jesus through the study of Scripture**.

- Pastor Josh claimed that “the apostles’ teaching” equates to the New Testament in our Bibles, as well as the Old Testament, when read through the lenses of what it shows us about Jesus. How do you feel about this claim?
- Josh also stated, “*We simply cannot be the kind of community God uses to save people if we’re not getting to know Jesus through the study of Scripture.*” This is a bold assertion. Do you agree or disagree? Why?
- Do an honest self-assessment (leaders—invite everyone to share honestly): is your own study of Scripture best described as “devoted,” or something else?
 - When you study Scripture, are you seeking to know Jesus through it?
 - What forms of studying the Bible have best helped you get to know Jesus—personal reading? Bible plans? This growth group? Sermons? Other Bible Studies? Let’s share such that we can help one another.

4. They “devoted themselves to fellowship”—*koinonia*, or sharing—and we must be devoted to **sharing life with one another**.
 - What examples of this sharing do you see in today’s passage?
 - Pastor Josh suggested that this practice includes sharing life, sharing meaningful spiritual experiences, sharing food, and sharing possessions. It means Committing to a shared life together.
 - How do you feel about being committed to a shared life together with your church family? Do you have any reservations, or does anything hold you back?
 - Which of the above practices has been most meaningful to you?
 - Are there any ways that this growth group can come together to help one another experience this shared life in a more intentional way?
 - How might this practice make us more likely to see people come to know Jesus through us?

5. They “devoted themselves to the breaking of bread”—taking the Lord’s Supper together—and we must be devoted to **the practice of the Lord’s Supper**.
 - Being as honest as possible, how do you feel about taking Communion? Is it simply a ritual you go through, or a deeply meaningful experience, or something else?
 - How can Communion serve as a regular discipline that both humbles us and lifts us up?
 - How does the practice of Communion make us a more winsome community to outsiders?
 - Do you see other practical value in taking Communion regularly (aside from the fact that we do it in obedience to Jesus)?
 - What practical steps do you think the Holy Spirit is prompting you to take in response to this study and discussion?

6. “They devoted themselves to prayer”—**meeting together to praise God, call on God, and worship him corporately**, and we must do the same.
 - What examples of this practice do you see in the passage?
 - How do you feel that our group is doing with this practice? Our church at large?
 - How can this practice make us more effective at introducing people to Jesus?
 - What practical steps do you think the Holy Spirit is prompting you to take in response to this study and discussion?

7. **Concluding Application**
 - Do you sense God prompting you to take action in any one of these areas?
 - Is there one particular area where our group could focus on growing, in the interest of being the kind of community through whom God draws people to Jesus?

8. **Prayer**
 - Spend some time praying about the things you have discussed, and especially for opportunities to point people to Jesus through our shared life.
 - Take time to share and pray for other needs in your group members’ lives.