

Acts 2:42-47

We want to pattern ourselves after that first church. The reason we keep coming back to this is because we, as individuals need to see it, understand it, and emulate it.

1. This is not a church program...something that we just put on the wall and corporately say is good.
2. This is a culture that must be developed...not from the top down so to speak, but from individuals realigning their words and lives to develop an Acts 2 culture right here.
3. If that is going to happen, we as individuals must embrace at least 7 characteristics of this early church.

I. Maturing in the Word v42a

They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching

1. The early church was devoted to the teaching of the disciples...what would become the NT
2. This focus did not change, for several decades later, we find Paul instructing church leaders to do this exact thing

1 Tim 4:13-16 *Until I come, give attention to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation and teaching. 14 Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you, which was bestowed on you through prophetic utterance with the laying on of hands by the presbytery. 15 Take pains with these things; be absorbed in them, so that your progress will be evident to all. 16 Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things, for as you do this you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you..*

1. Read, Exhort, Teach
2. Devote yourself to that...in every context.
 - a. Immerse yourself in this
 - b. Progress in this
 - c. Persist in this for the sake of souls
3. I cannot over-state this: Scripture.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 *All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; 17 so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.*

II. Meaningful Fellowship v42b, 46

They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread...

The Scriptures were not all that they devoted themselves to.

1. They devoted themselves to fellowship...to each other
2. They likely had been rejected by friends and family and they were in great need of support from their new-found family...

a. Luke 12:51-53 *Do you suppose that I came to grant peace on earth? I tell you, no, but rather division; 52 for from now on five members in one household will be divided, three against two and two against three. 53 They will be divided, father against son and son against father; mother against daughter and daughter against mother; mother-in-law against daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law."*

- b. They likely had been rejected by friends and family and they were in great need of support from their new-found family....and they found it.

c. Mark 10:29-31 *Jesus said, "Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or farms, for My sake and for the gospel's sake, 30 but that he will receive a hundred times as much now in the present age, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and farms, along with persecutions; and in the age to come, eternal life. 31 But many who are first will be last, and the last, first."*

3. The words "one another" are used 151 times in the Bible...there is reason for that!
4. Let us never take for granted the fellowship of the believers!

III. Making Supplication v42c

They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

1. The Acts 2 church was devoting themselves to prayer and the focus was still there decades later.

2. 1 Tim 2:1-8 *First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, 2 for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. 3 This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, 4 who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. 5 For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, 6 who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony given at the proper time.....*

7 For this I was appointed a preacher and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying) as a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth. 8 Therefore I want the men in every place to pray, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and dissension.

3. Let prayer permeate EVERY part of the church, which means we, as individuals need to be people of prayer.

IV. Miracles Performed v43

43 Everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles.

1. Be the Miracle! Matthew 25...

V. Ministry to the Body v44-46

44 And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common; 45 and they began selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need. 46 Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart,

Acts 4:32-35

And the congregation of those who believed were of one heart and soul; and not one of them claimed that anything belonging to him was his own, but all things were common property to them. 33 And with great power the apostles were giving testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and abundant grace was upon them all. 34 For there was not a needy person among them, for all who were owners of land or houses would sell them and bring the proceeds of the sales 35 and lay them at the apostles' feet, and they would be distributed to each as any had need.

VI. Magnifying God v47

47 praising God and having favor with all the people.

Romans 12:1-2 *Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.*

1. Do not be conformed to the world (the age)

a. 1 John 2:15-17 *Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. 17 The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.*

2. Be transformed

a. Ephesians 4:22-24 *that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, 23 and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, 24 and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.*

VII. Evangelism, Disciple Making, and Missions v47b

And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.

1. They were doing a very fruitful work of evangelism and disciple making
2. But they were not perfect!
 - a. Acts 1:8 had to become Acts 8:1 for them to leave their comfort zones
 - b. Then comes Acts 13 and the missions element is finally included.
3. Evangelism, Disciple Making, and Missions.

Conclusion:

As we reiterate these seven characteristics over and over, you might feel overwhelmed? Don't be!

1. Here is our bullseye: Missions Disciple making, and evangelism.
2. If we hit this, aim at this, we will hit everything else.
3. If we aim at becoming a launching pad TOGETHER, the other 6 elements will take care of themselves.
 - a. The Word
 - b. Fellowship
 - c. Prayer
 - d. Miracles
 - e. Ministry
 - f. Magnify His Name among the peoples!

- Introduce the 3 bullseye books