

How the Church Should Look

by Brian Brodersen



Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. “Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. So, continuing daily with one accord in the temple and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.”

Acts 2:43–47

On the day of Pentecost, Peter preached to a massive crowd in Jerusalem, and 3,000 souls were added to the church. These new believers were committed to four foundational practices that every church should emulate: continuing steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine, fellowship, the Lord’s Supper, and steadfast prayer. Thus, the early church was a learning, loving, worshiping, and praying church.

Breaking down the passage, we see that “fear came upon every soul.” Reverence for God led to a great concern for holiness and purity, and the Spirit moved powerfully in their midst. In the modern church, the fear of God has been replaced by a casual attitude toward sin, and the Spirit’s work is diminished.

Next, “Many wonders and signs were done by the apostles.” People were raised from the dead and healed of serious illnesses. God is the same yesterday, today, and forever, so we should be experiencing these things. Instead of dismissing the lack of power in Western culture by saying that signs and wonders died with the apostles or by pointing to fraudulent events like gold fillings “miraculously” appearing in people’s teeth, we have to ask ourselves if the multiplication of sin in our midst prevents us from witnessing a greater manifestation of the Spirit’s power.

“All who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need ... continuing daily with one accord.” People from all over the known

world were getting saved and staying in Jerusalem. I think the local believers pooled their resources to take care of them. I don’t believe communal living was the ongoing practice of the church because we don’t read about it beyond Acts 2. Even so, Christians should be generous and hospitable.

“They, continuing daily with one accord” (KJV): there was unity among the believers. They had one heart, one mind, and one focus, and they gathered together on a daily basis.

“They ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart.” This phrase can also be translated as “simplicity, sincerity, or purity of heart.” The early church was guileless. There was no infiltration of sin or ulterior motives. Those things can ruin a church. Satan originally tried to destroy the church from without. Now he sows destruction from within by joining it.

church is irrelevant or obnoxious, it’s usually not functioning as God intended.

A young couple that started a fellowship in Newcastle, England, has been ministering to young drug addicts. Some of these kids have enraged their families by getting saved. When a young girl was baptized in the couple’s bathtub, there was a public outcry, and the police threatened to arrest and deport them.

Eventually the police officer assigned to investigate the fellowship called an associate in the United States to inquire about Calvary Chapel. The man said, “Calvary Chapel is one of the best things that ever happened to America. Wherever they go, the crime rate goes down and people’s lives are changed.” A church should be seen as a blessing. That happens when we are the people God wants us to be.

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Finally, “the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.” A church that pleases God draws people in.

“Praising God.” If we lack joy, it’s because we are focused on our circumstances. But if we keep our eyes on the Lord, our circumstances won’t diminish our joy.

“Having favor with all of the people.” Common people loved Jesus and heard Him gladly. Likewise, they loved the apostles and were impressed by the church. When a church functions as God intended, it will have favor in a community and people will be intrigued by what’s happening there. If a

When we look at this model and ask, “Is this our church?” we have to realize that this passage is talking about individuals, not a building. Whether or not we are a learning, loving, worshiping, praying, reverent, powerful, giving, unified, pure, joyful, favored, and growing church will depend on us individually because we collectively make up the body of Christ in our community. If there’s something amiss, we must repent and pray, “Lord, I want to be the person You called me to be so Your church can be all You want it to be.” ☞