

## SUNDAY BIBLE STUDY NOTES • October 2, 2017

*Pastor Les Smith*

### **SERIES: Preparing the Church to Leave the Building**

### **SERMON: Community Life in a New Testament Church**

**Text: Acts 2:41-47**

#### **CENTRAL MESSAGE:**

The local church has to foster a strong sense of community within the church before it can have a significant impact on the greater community outside of the church. The central focus in this lesson is to determine what community life looks like in a New Testament church so we can imitate that behavior.

#### ***General Observations***

Peter preached a powerful, Spirit-enabled message on the Day of Pentecost and as a result of his preaching, about three thousand souls were added to the new church. What happened to those three thousand people? How were they able to be assimilated into such a small church with no paid staff, no buildings, and no income stream? They did with small groups and a strong sense of community.

**Observation #1: Community life in the church has to be built upon a commitment to the teaching of God's word. (Acts 2:42)**

According to Acts 2:42, the church was continually devoting itself to the Apostle's teaching. The Word of God is the foundation and starting point for every aspect of the Christian life. We can be certain that the major content of what was taught was the gospel of Jesus Christ. We know this because verse 41 and verse 47 inform us that people were continually being added to the church.

**Observation #2: Community life in the church has to be built upon a commitment to fellowship with other believers. (Acts 2:42)**

In the text, we are informed that the new church was devoting itself to the Apostle’s teaching and also to fellowship. Based on the construct of the verse, the breaking of bread and prayer are part of fellowship in the new church. The early church devoted itself to fellowship by praying together and celebrating the Lord’s Table. When believers come to the Table together and when they pray together, they create a whole new level of intimacy in the body of Christ.

**Observation #3: Community life in the church has to be built upon a commitment to unity and mutual responsibility. (Acts 2:43-45)**

A sense of awe filled the church and the surrounding community because they were witnessing the power of God at work. Their sense of awe was also accompanied by a sense of compassion. The church was experiencing organic connection where every person was important to the body of Christ. There was such intimacy and openness that the believers knew each other’s needs and were willing to sacrifice to meet those needs. They did not see their possessions as their own and were willing to surrender their independent rights to their property to meet the needs of others in the body. They were not under obligation to sell their goods. They did so of their own free will, preferring to be a blessing to others than to claim a blessing for themselves. We as believers today are not under an obligation to sell our possessions, but Christ expects us to surrender our claim to our possessions so that we can be a blessing to others. We have to come to the place where we realize that we are not owners...we are stewards.

**Observation #4: Community life in the church has to be built upon a commitment to worship with other believers. (Acts 2:46a)**

We were designed by God to worship and to serve Him in the context of community. In Genesis, God Himself says that it is not good for a man to be alone. All through Scripture, we see God’s people gathering together to worship Him. The book of Hebrews warns us to “forsake not the assembling of ourselves together”. One of the centerpieces of life in the first century church was the coming together for worship and praise. The Christian life was never meant to be solitary. All of the biblical metaphors for a church indicate a plurality, never a singularity: we are a body, a flock, a building, and a

# AMITY BIBLE CHURCH

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*“Knowing God and Making Him Known”*

holy nation. There are no “lone wolves” in biblical Christianity, especially when it comes to public worship.

**Observation #5: Community life in the church has to be built upon organic relationships that are birthed and nurtured in the context of small groups. (Acts 2:46-47a)**

*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, praising God and having favor with all the people.** (Acts 2:46-47a)*

At the outset of this study, we asked what happened to the three thousand people who were added to the church after Peter preached on the Day of Pentecost. This passage gives us our answer. They were assimilated into small groups. They met in homes, they ate meals together, they celebrated the Lord’s Supper together, and they built authentic and lasting relationships. They not only cared for each other, but they reached out to the greater community, and because of this, they were seen as a positive influence in the community.

**Observation #6: Community life in the church has to be built upon a church-wide commitment to evangelizing the lost. (Acts 2:47b)**

*“And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.” (Acts 2:47b)*