

A Church with Purpose

Lesson 4- Examples from the New Testament Church

INTRODUCTION

Throughout the New Testament, and especially in the book of Acts, we see example after example of what God called the church both to do and to be fulfilled in the first century congregations.

Read John 13:15, 1 Corinthians 1:11, and Philippians 3:17. Jesus and Paul both emphasized the importance of following godly examples. In the same way, we should follow the godly example of the early church if we wish to fulfill our purpose as the body of Christ.

BIBLE STUDY

I. The first, greatest example we can learn from the first century church is obedience. Read Acts 1:4-8 and 2:1-4. What did Jesus tell the believers to do and what was the result of their obedience?

Read Acts 2:37-41. What was the result of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the church? What does this speak about our primary responsibility to God and the world?

In one day, three thousand people were saved by the power of the Holy Spirit. This is the importance of being in touch with God and a part of the church body. God does great things when we join together to serve and seek him.

II. We can learn even more as we examine our responsibility to be a community where Christ is honored. Read Acts 2:42-47 to find out about the first church community.

Verse 42. To what four things did they devote themselves and how can we apply their example to the modern day church?

Verse 43. Why is it important for the church and its members to operate in the power of the Holy Spirit? _____

Verse 44-45. The first church demonstrated the love of Christ by meeting each other's needs. How can we apply this truth to the church today? _____

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Verse 46-47. What importance was placed on the fellowship of the saints? How did this loving community affect their outreach to the world?

III. As we read about the New Testament church, we also see that they surrounded themselves with prayer. They did not rely on their own power or strength- they sought the empowerment and direction of the Spirit of God.

Read Acts 4:23-31. What was the church's response when they faced persecution?

Verse 29-31. What did they ask God for, what happened to them, and how did they respond to what God did? What does this tell us we should do?

We must be a church that prays and seeks the empowerment of the Spirit so that we can touch a lost world with the word of God and the love of Christ.

IV. One final lesson we can learn is the spirit of giving that existed in the New Testament church. People gave from what they had to bless the church and each other.

Read Acts 4:32-35. What did people do to fund the first century church? How was the money spent? Who was it entrusted to?

Read 2 Corinthians 9:6-8. What did Paul write to the Corinthians about the gift they were going to send to the church in Jerusalem? What does this speak about how and why we should give? _____

In the first century church, we see an example of generosity, prayer, evangelism, fellowship, and obedience that sets a standard we must strive to meet as Christ's church.

CONCLUSION

Read Mark 16:15-18. God has called the church to do many things as we follow in Christ's footsteps. But ultimately, it breaks down to reaching the world with the gospel of Christ. We must be faithful to serve God and fulfill his desire for Christ's body to reach the world.