

## Acts of Jesus – part 9

--Two weeks ago we began to look at the practices of the truly orthodox, fundamental, reformed, Spirit filled church here in the book of Acts.

--I told you that the overriding character trait of the first church was the practice of community.

--It would be difficult for us to overstate this practice and principal of community

--I showed you several reasons why and I'm going to add a few more:

1. God Himself is community.

2. God created community in the old and new creations.

3. Jesus stated that the most convincing proof of the truth of gospel is the perceptible oneness of His followers: "that they may be made perfect in one, that the world might know that You have sent Me."

4. The 10 commandments are, more or less, 10 rules on community: the first 4 deal with man's community with God and the last 6 deal with man's community with man.

5. The Lord's prayer is a community prayer: "OUR Father..."

6. Heaven is going to be extreme community: **John 14:2** "Rooms" in one house!

7. What is the bare minimum number that Jesus requires for His special presence?

"Where \_\_\_ or more are gathered...."

### **1. Difficult to overstate the importance practice of community for the N.T. church; therefore, it is alarming to see the trends towards less and less community within the modern church.**

--We bring the world's mindset into our churches.

--Our idea of church has degenerated to the point where we view it in some ways as a spiritual store:

When we need food---we go to the grocery store.

When we need entertainment---we go to the movies.

When we need exercise---we go to a health club.

When we need spirituality---we go to church.

--We see ourselves as consumers looking for a product which is a far cry from the oneness and community Jesus intended.

--We also suffer from a pervading mindset that is present among more and more believers here in America, namely, "**All I need is God.**"

--It sounds like good theology until you read the fine print written in the mentality that goes with it: "**I don't need anyone else.**"

--The result is come-and-go church attendance and this noncommittal philosophy that is on the increase among us.

--"All I need is God" – Adam may have felt that way but God said that his being alone was not good. It was not good for Adam and it is not good for us.

**We need others. We need to know and be known. We need community.**

### **2. Pay careful attention to the way the early church operated: Acts 2:42-end.**

--Scripture is quite clear: church was never intended to be a spoke on the wheel of the activity in our lives, church was intended to be the hub—the very center of one's life.

--Look carefully at the four things the early church did here in V. 42: what we are doing here now covers essentially the first one.

--I'm not an apostle but I am preaching to you from the book that the apostles wrote.

--To be underneath the preaching and teaching of this kind is absolutely essential part of the practice of a N.T. church.

--Any church or believer that is missing this is not having church!!

But this is only one of four practices of this truly right church: again the tendency is to think that if we are attending worship that we are having church--**this simply isn't true.**

--Community doesn't happen here or at least not fully and without community we can't call it church.

--This is church: Eph. 4:16 - At what point in our services do we have a place for each part of the Body to do its work? We don't. We can't-- there isn't time!

--Church is not a spectator's sport instead the picture is of a Body in which every part is doing the part it was gifted to do.

--If the majority of your body parts were spectators, what would we call you? **A**

**Quadriplegic!**

### **3. We have to be together more than this. We have to be involved in each other's lives.**

--Notice in addition to what we call "church" they were much more involved and together:

--**V. 42** -- "steadfastly" applies to all four components here.

1. Fellowship = koinonia – **VV. 44-46a** "daily" they were together and involved in each other's lives.

2. Breaking of Bread = code term for what we call the "Lord's supper"

--This is the place where I find probably the most stark contrast between the church in Acts and the modern church.

--Notice where they had the Lord's supper: "house to house" not to say that they didn't have it in a congregational setting.

--Notice how often they had it: "daily"

--Notice in what context they had it: as a part of a full meal (there are no exceptions to this in the N.T. – 100% of the examples we have show the early church participating in a full meal while also celebrating the Lord's supper.)

### **4. Let's draw some important conclusions from this:**

1. Every believer must be involved in the fellowship more than just on Sunday morning worship

--I don't just mean "you need to be working in the church"

--I mean that every believer must be involved with other believers in a smaller setting

--This allows them to know you and you to know them

--This allows the Body to do its work as each gift gets an opportunity to minister and be ministered to.

--"If you aren't connecting small, you aren't connecting at all" -- get involved in some small group = home group, S.S. class, start your own, have people over and get involved in each other's lives.

2. We need to broaden our idea of the Lord's supper – it is the exercise that states who we are more than anything else.

--We call it Communion = "we are in community with God and with each other"

--Is it possible that we need to encourage this exercise in some smaller group settings?

--This may bother some, but let me ask you: what biblically is wrong with a group of believers of any size lifting up the cup and the bread and declaring their communion with Jesus and with each other?