

The Gospel Creates Community

Today's passage describes the first church that ever existed – the church in Jerusalem. In response to Peter's preaching (Acts 2:14-36) people repented, believed, and were baptized individually; but together they comprised a new community. The gospel literally created this community known for its devotion and its fruit. Though our church exists in a different time and place, this first church with their devotion and fruit is an example and a model for us of the type of community that the Spirit of God is still seeking to bring about.

Opening Discussion: What comes to your mind when you hear the word, "community"?

Read Acts 2:42-47

1. The church is birthed on the day of Pentecost when the Spirit of God is poured out on the 120 believers who are gathered in Jerusalem (2:1f). On that day Peter stands up and proclaims the message about Jesus and 3000 new believers are added to the church (2:41). How does Luke describe this first church?
2. Luke says that this community was "continually devoted" to the apostles' teaching, to fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to prayer (v. 42). What does it mean to be devoted?
3. In our day, what might it look like to be "continually devoted" to . . .
 - . . . the apostles' teaching (i.e., the Scriptures)?
 - . . . to fellowship?
 - . . . to breaking of bread (meals together)?
 - . . . to prayer?

4. As you think about these four areas of devotion, which is/are a strength for you personally? Which is/are a weakness?

5. What is the difference between individually being devoted to these things verses a whole community of believers being devoted to these things?

6. How would you describe the fruit of this community of believers?

7. Do you believe that God still wants to create a gospel community like the first church with this kind of fruit? Why or why not?

8. As you look at this example of community and fruitfulness of the first church, what implications does it have for how we might want to pray for our church?