

THE INNER LIFE OF THE CHURCH

STUDIES IN ACTS (Chapters 1 – 3)

Study verses: Acts 2:41-47

In these verses we have a pattern for the whole dispensation of what the church should be like.

If we ask the question, What should our local church be like?...

We find the answer in these verses.

What are the marks or characteristics of a true church?

1. This church was _____ by Christ

This means it was not the work of man but God's work. He made this church. He constituted it and put it together. In Matthew 16:18 we have The Lord's promise that He would do this!

MATT. 16:18 (NLT) Now I say to you that you are Peter (which means 'rock') and upon this rock I will build My church, and all the powers of hell will not conquer it.

(The Greek word for "church" is *ekklesia* and means "legislative assembly" or "selected ones." This is not a religious term at all, but a political and governmental term that is used many times in classical Greek for a group of people who have been summoned and gathered together to govern the affairs of a city. For Jesus to use this term means He is giving the keys of governmental authority in His kingdom to the church)

Now if you look at **ACTS 2:41 (NKJ)** Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added *to them*.

VS. 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And The Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.

You see, it was The Lord who built this infant church in Jerusalem by adding to it those who were saved.

JN. 16:7 (KJ) Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, The Comforter (AMP: Comforter, Advocate, Intercessor—Counselor, Strengtheners, Standby) will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you.

8 And when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin (**Strong's Greek 1651: (a) I reprove, rebuke, discipline, (b) expose, show to be guilty**), and of righteousness, and of judgment:

9 Of sin, because they believe not on Me;

10 Of righteousness, because I go to My Father, and ye see Me no more;

11 Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.

How is a church formed?

1. _____
2. _____
3. The _____,
4. The miracle of _____ takes place,
5. Those who are born again are _____.

So, The Lord's church is constituted by Him of believers, those who have received His Word (ACTS 2: 41), those who have been added to the church by Him (verse 47).

2. This church was _____ to Christ

The people in this passage of scripture had heard The Gospel as Peter had preached it; they had been convicted of their sin and had repented and received The Word - all this is described in Acts 2:37-41.

We are told that those who accepted The Word "were _____". What a great baptismal service that must have been because about 3,000 were baptized! What a glorious testimony this was to the power and grace of God!

Here we have God's _____, His picture of the early church, and we are told that when 3,000 were converted these 3,000 were baptized. Why was this? They were baptized in obedience to The Lord's command

MATT. 28:19 (NLT) Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in The Name of The Father and The Son and The Holy Spirit.

3. This church was gloriously _____

The key word in verse 44 is the word 'together'. They were different in age, background and temperament but now, having trusted Christ and been added to the church, "all the believers were together", which means that they were not only together in the sense that they were in each other's presence, but they were "all one in _____"

GAL.3:28 (KJ) There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

What is this 'togetherness'?

1. **They _____ together; ACTS 2:42 (NLT)** All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including The Lord's Supper), and to prayer.
They were babies in God's family, and together they "devoted themselves" to Him, growing in grace (2 Peter 3:18).
2. **They _____ together** (verse 42) – "devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching". They had no New Testament so depended on the teaching. The greatest need is for God's people to be biblically indoctrinated.
3. **They spent _____ together** (verse 42) - "devoted themselves...to fellowship..." - look up Malachi 3:16. Fellowship is our common inheritance in Christ.
4. **They _____ together** (verse 42) - there is reference here to the breaking of bread which was at the very heart of their united worship. At His Table we look back to Calvary, up to the Throne and on to His coming.
5. **They _____ together** (verse 42) - "they devoted themselves...to prayer". How we have drifted away from this early pattern!
6. **They _____ together** (VS.44 And all the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had.) we read here of the grace of generosity that was apparent among these early Christians. Is it a pattern for today?
7. **They _____ together.**
What exciting reading **verses 46 and 47 make!** **NLT:** They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity[a]— **47** all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day The Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved.

Has your love for The Lord and His people, for His house and His Word, grown stale? Have you lost the thrill of being a Christian, the wonder of being saved?

4. This church was dynamically _____ through Christ

See what the apostle said in Philippians 4:13. The church pictured here in Acts 2 was what it was “through Christ”.

In Acts 2:4 we have the record of the empowering which took place on the Day of Pentecost, and in Acts 4:31 we read of a repetition of The Holy Spirit’s filling in the hearts and lives of these Christians. All that we have seen of this church was the manifestation of The Spirit’s work. Christ Himself, by The Holy Spirit, made this church what it was.

Notice two special ways in which this empowering affected the members of the church, and through them the outside world:-

1. *The members of the church were _____ and this made a great impression on all the people.*

ACTS 2:43 (NLT) A deep sense of awe came over them all, and the apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders.

We read, “Everyone was filled with awe”. These early Christians were holy and Christ-like; they were characterized by godliness, and verse 47 tells us that they enjoyed “the favour of all the people”.

2. *The members of the church were _____. Verse 43 tells us that “many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles.” Are we powerful or pitifully weak?*

Acts 1:8 (NKJ) But you shall receive power when The Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

We have the power to live The Gospel and to preach this Gospel.