

The Church overcomes an internal complaint. - Epic Church - Week 5

Book of Acts of the Apostles - Acts are the expressions of God and are Epic Spectacular earthly expansion of the heavenly kingdom.

Very impressive growth numerically.

Awesome ministry of healing and miracles.

Exceptional Development of early community.

Good news spreading just like Jesus promised at his ascension.

Church growing very rapidly.

Acts 6:1 disciples increasing by leaps and bounds

They had relevant preaching - Christ lived, died, and rose again.

Sudden Growth can lead to

Growing pains

Challenges

Opportunities

This forming community of believers are -

The representation of God's ways on the earth.

A complaint arises.

6:1b the Hellenistic Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food.

This keeps us in the humble realization that it is through Christ real life and all good exists.

As this community of believers grew in numbers the task for caring for those in need became increasingly difficult.

####. Acts 6:2,3 So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. 3 Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will

turn this responsibility over to them...

They had Relevant preaching - the truth - there had to be equal relevant living - - free to live out God's ways here on earth

The reflection of the health of a family, a church and ultimately a society is how well we take care of our children and widows - those who are vulnerable.

Disintegrating Community demands action.

The apostles realized that they represented the voice of God on the matter of community - a community that should reflect the ways of God.

Scripture encourages Community. Friendship. Family.

The 1995 Chicago heat wave was a heat wave which led to 739 heat-related deaths in Chicago over a period of five days. Most of the victims of the heat wave were elderly poor residents of the city.

41 of those people were buried in a mass grave called "the potters field" no one surfaced to claim their body or grieve their passing 41 people died alone

The breakdown of family and community in our culture has left many with a pain medicine cannot help - Loneliness or Aloneness

Just like our creator we have a desire know and be known - true friendship

To love and be loved

To serve and be served

Celebrating others and being celebrated

Worldly concept of friendship - feeds natural selfishness

What can I gain from this friendship.

Hitch myself to a rising star for self advancement.

Pretending we care about someone so they will join our cause or buy our product.

Community takes effort, requires energy - building community takes time
Very challenging - risk involved - sometimes hurt

We see that here in ACTS - choose 7 men from among you KNOWN to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. How do you know someone is wise - being with them! - watching them make decisions!

The group knew these men were responsible.

Build strong community ie CHURCH - community supersedes denomination and personal dogma

Romans 12

Get real in loving others - no acting or pretending.

Hate when things go wrong for others and celebrate the good that happens

Be devoted to one another.

Practice playing second fiddle.

Respect each other.

When the Church which is a fellowship or community of believers is functioning as the true body of Christ great and supernatural events take place.

One such event. Happened here when the early community of Christ followers recognized and admitted they were missing it.

The Good news spread - this risen savior is changing lives to goodness.

Those living out their faith increased.

A large number of priest became obedient to the faith.

In Christ we are each a thread

in the fabric of good community

and becoming a - relevant living - church

Discussion Questions:

The first church experienced growing pains. What are some experiences you have had that reflect growing pains in your own spiritual life or church experience. Did you ever feel overlooked?

The choosing of the 7 in Acts 6:1-6 reveals early church organization. Why do you think people say they dislike organized religion? What is it that can

attract these same people back to the true church of Jesus Christ?

How do you think the early church believers chose from among themselves 7 men?

The greatest positive contribution the church made to my life in recent years has been in the following two or three ways _____, _____, _____.

My church experience has been lacking in _____.

If I could no longer be part of a church body, I would really miss _____.

In recent years, two of the significant contributions I have made to the church body are _____ and _____.