

**Main Text:** Acts 2:42-47

**Main Point:** To show the essentials of a real church. What are the basic “must haves” for a church to be *the church*?

**Introduction:** Today we are going to be concluding chapter 2 of the book of Acts! What an amazing time we have had working our way through these first two chapters!

**Recap:** 1) Jesus commissions his disciples, 2) Jesus ascends into Heaven, 3) The church is put in order, 4) The Holy Spirit is poured out, 5) Peter addresses the crowds, 6) The church is established.

Now as we come to the last paragraph of the chapter, and just before we get into chapter 3 we get this nice little sneak peek into the what made this 1<sup>st</sup> Century Church so special. We are allowed to see the secret recipe.

Opening Question: Do you have any secret family recipes? Of course we are familiar with some famous secret recipes right...(Big Mac Secret Sauce, Busch’s Baked Beans, KFC)

Today we will look at the essentials of a real church. If these ingredients are in the mix, then we too can become a powerful church!

### **Acts 2:42-47**

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.

A deep sense of awe came over them all, and the apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders. And all the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had. They sold their property and possessions and shared the money with those in need. 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— 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.

In today’s message we are going to look at the 4 primary/essential ingredients that must be in the mix for a church to work.

**Ingredient #1:** They devoted themselves to the Word of God (v. 42 *Apostles Teaching*)

**Explanation:** The first thing that we need to really understand is the implication for this word “devoted”, because it impacts all four ingredients.

The word here means *extreme, continual, and intense devotion despite whatever hardship or difficulty result in one’s life because of that devotion.*

The very first essential ingredient that the early church had was extreme, continual and intense devotion to the Apostles Teaching (the Word of God). They had this kind of devotion despite the fact that their teachings were considered radical and on the fringe and would certainly bring hardship and persecution.

**1 Thes. 2:13** shows us that the Apostles were very aware that their words and writings were just as much Scripture (the Word of God) as the Old Testament Law/Prophets. They recognized that they were writing and speaking on behalf of God.

And therefore they were not pledging extreme, continual, intense, radical love to charismatic leaders, but to the special revelation of the message of God’s Son, the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

This devotion most certainly brought hardship, persecution, imprisonment, and death to the early believers...but they only continued to grow and strengthen.

**Illustration:** We will see a perfect example of their boldness in Acts 4 when Peter and John are brought before the same people who arranged for the death of Jesus, the same people who paid Judas the 30 pieces of silver, the same people who threatened the crowds if they didn’t say Crucify Him! Peter and John looked boldly at them and proclaimed that they would not stop speaking on behalf of God, and that they feared God more than them.

*<sup>18</sup> So they called them and charged them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. <sup>19</sup> But Peter and John answered them, “Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge, <sup>20</sup> for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard.”*

*<sup>13</sup> Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus.*

**Application:** On a scale from 1-10, 10=the kind of devotion we see here and 1= no devotion, where would you fall today? Are you the kind of Christian that would stand up for the word of God in the face of judgement and punishment? Are we the kind of church that will remain faithful to the word of God even if it means being labeled politically incorrect? Our devotion must start here with the word of God, because it is our foundation for faith and practice.

**Ingredient #2:** They devoted themselves to the each other (v. 42 *The Fellowship*)

**Explanation:** They were devoted to the Word of God. The 2<sup>nd</sup> ingredient is a *extreme, continual, and intense devotion despite whatever hardship or difficulty result in one's life because of that devotion...*to each other!

**Their devotion to the Word of God informed how they treat one another.** The Fellowship does not refer to people on the outside. It is referring to fellow believers. They had an extreme level of commitment to one another. Everywhere throughout the beginning of the book of Acts we see them in *one place and one accord united*. As the church began to grow and expand beyond that original group, factions and fighting began to plague the church...this is why so many of Paul's letters address the issue of infighting and disunity.

At first this may sound like the early church was an exclusive group and they only cared about those in their number...that could not be further from the truth.

John 13:34-35

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. ***By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.*** – Jesus

We see the phrase *The Lord Added To Their Number Those Who Were Being Saved*.

By the time we get to Acts 12 the word *Multiplied* is being used.

**There was something so attractive and evangelistic about a unified, devoted, loving, and patient church! People couldn't help but want to join!**

**Illustration:** Unfortunately, some have rightly said that Church can be the fakest 2 hours of your week. Some have said they feel more acceptance and love in a bar than they do a church, or that they wouldn't want to go to church because the church doesn't even treat their own people well. Recently I heard a quote that states, "The Church is the only army on earth that shoots its own wounded."

**Application:** Who would want to be a part of a church that is full of judgmental, hypocritical, gossiping, angry, bitter, people? NO ONE. NOT EVEN ME! But when we are devoted (*extreme, continual, and intense devotion despite whatever hardship or difficulty result in one's life because of that devotion...*to each other...in that way...there is nothing more attractional, nothing more evangelistic.

Help me love on people, receive people as Jesus received us. ***Romans 15:7 Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.***

**Ingredient #3:** They devoted themselves to the communion (v. 42 *Sharing of Meals*)

**Explanation:** I think this is something that Skypointe does well. If we do anything well...its eat! We are serving breakfast each week, and we see people from all back grounds together in one place and enjoying each other's company.

Often times through, in recent weeks I have spoken to people who for whatever reason...feel ashamed of their appearance or smell and don't feel like they can worship with us...Help me pass the word...YOU ARE WELCOME HERE!

The 3<sup>RD</sup> ingredient is a *extreme, continual, and intense devotion despite whatever hardship or difficulty result in one's life because of that devotion....to communion!*

### **What is communion?**

- It is an opportunity to remember what Jesus did for us, and what he is going to do for us.
- It is an opportunity to get our lives back on track with Christ.
- It is an opportunity to pledge our love to God and one another.
- It is an opportunity to pledge our devotion and declare our participation with Jesus.

Doing this right...brings life and peace.  
Do this wrong can bring destruction.

We see this illustrated for us in 1 Cor. These people had taken something that was beautiful and turned it into something completely perverted.

**Illustration:** Serve Communion

**Application:** Communion is both horizontal and vertical. I think many times in religious circles we think of communion as something only between us and God, but it is also something between US AND US.

Look at verse 46.

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—

Hebrews 10:25 warns us against forgetting or forfeiting/neglecting this core tenant of the church.

*And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.*

- Jesus' return is closer now than ever before.
- We know things will get bad for believers right before his return.
- In other words...we need each other now more than ever.

How have you been doing with your regular, scheduled, systematic, attendance of church?

**Ingredient #4:** They devoted themselves to prayer (v. 42 *and to prayer*)

**We are going to conclude today's message with an introduction of the upcoming sermon series on prayer.**

This sermon series will also be accompanied with

- regularly scheduled prayer meetings here at the church
- and in our home group Bible Studies. (Temple and Homes)

What did they do when they were waiting on the Holy Spirit- Called a prayer meeting (Acts 1)

What did they do when they needed to set the church in order- prayer (Acts 1)

What were they doing when they experienced the Power of the Holy Spirit.-prayer meeting (Acts 2)

What were they doing when they raised up the crippled beggar- On their way to prayer Acts 3

What did they do when they faced persecution- Called a prayer meeting Acts 4

I could go on and on in every chapter of the book of Acts...

- When hardships were faced...
- When decisions needed to be made...
- When direction for the future was needed...
- When they needed healing...
- When they were surprised by an unexpected need...

What did they do **THEY PRAYED!**

**PRAYER MOVED GOD...SKYPOINTE NEEDS MORE PRAYER.**

**Conclusion:** (example: Have you ever gone to make something...and you are so excited...and then you realized that you are missing a key ingredient?)

I think of all the ingredients **PRAYER** is the one we have the least of...and we need to get back to the basics. (more to come on this in the coming weeks)