

The Body of Christ: The Heart of this Relational Gospel

- * As we have looked at what being The Body of Christ is all about, we have attempted to avoid preconceived ideas of culture, tradition opinion!
- * We have admitted the difficulty of this!
- * We have asked: “From a scriptural viewpoint, what does it look like?”
- * We have tried to convey the incredible privilege of being a part of this “spiritual family.”
- * We have asked what it really means to be “nurtured and cherished” by The Lord Jesus?
- * The Bottom Line: We are the expression of God in the earth...Good or Bad!

I. This is what the practice of our faith should look like!

Acts 2:42-47 (NIV)

42 They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. 43 Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. 44 All the believers were together and had everything in common. 45 They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. 46 Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, 47 praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

- A. If we would get back to God’s design for the Body of Christ and start acting like the Body of Christ, we could be much more effective in reaching those whom Jesus loves!
 - 1. The early church didn’t “strategize” to get folks interested in coming to their gatherings!
 - 2. They simply BECAME WHO GOD DESIGNED THEM TO BE!
 - 3. The simple drew people because God was among them!

- B. It seems that the key word in the reference about the early Church in Acts is: DEVOTED!
 - 1. DEVOTED TO- The Apostles teaching.
 - 2. DEVOTED TO- Fellowship.
 - 3. DEVOTED TO- Breaking of Bread
 - 4. DEVOTED TO- Prayer

C. In our church culture today, at least the one we all live in, we want:

1. We want to experience “biblical awe” without the same devotion seen in scripture.
2. We want to develop a Sunday services that entertains and draws crowds for the sake of crowds...not for people’s sake!
3. We want people to give “ninety minutes” of their time per week and believe that can lead to transformation!
4. We use cheap substitutes for the real presence of the living God!

II. What would change if we did what the Early Church did? What does it mean to be devoted to teaching, fellowship, communion and prayer?

A. Devoted to the Apostles teaching!

Ephesians 2:20 (NIV)

20 Built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NIV)

16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17 so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

John 6:63 (NIV)

63 The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you— they are full of the Spirit and life.

1. Do we really have a healthy devotion to scripture? No!
2. Jesus said His words are life...and we wonder why our lives are void of true life!
3. Isaiah even said this:

Isaiah 55:10-11 New International Version (NIV)

10 As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, 11 so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.

B. Devoted to the Breaking of Bread!

1. According to custom, history and the scripture, this “breaking

of bread” was actually a meal in which part of it was taking the Lord’s Supper together!

2. This was the sharing together of the very core of their faith! In the midst of all the stress, confusion and division, this time of “communing together” held relationships together!
3. Communion is an intimate act of remembering the Body and Blood of Jesus! The only thing that really sets Christians apart is accepting the work of Christ!
4. If communion ever becomes routine or boring, check your heart!
5. It’s not just intimacy with the Lord, but with each other!

C. Devoted to Fellowship!!

1. This is simply “doing life together!”
2. If our church experience is simply showing up to a service, we are missing the entire point of being a part of a local church!
3. We see the practice of coming together for the purpose of being sent out! Life really happens in the “everydayness” of life!
4. The early church had a dedication to one another that was impossible without God’s presence and the closeness of relationship. Relationship that comes only through fellowship!

D. Devoted to Prayer!

Acts 4:31 (NIV)

31 After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.

1. When they came together, in gatherings or in fellowship, things happened as they prayed!
2. This kind of devotion makes church activities look boring!!
3. If we would truly be the church we would not have to develop activities to “draw people to church!”
4. Our purpose as the Church of Jesus is to reveal God! Rather than create pep rallies!!! Are we drawing folks to God or us?

