

I like Church... Renewing Our Vision, Acts 2:22-47

Small Group & Personal Bible Study Lesson: Pastor Dennis Hadley



Daily Scripture Reading:

1. Acts 2:22-36
2. Acts 2:37-41
3. Acts 2:42-43
4. Acts 2:44-45
5. Acts 2:46-47

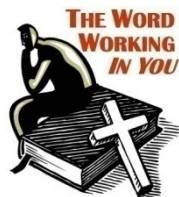
➤ What has God revealed to you from the book of Acts this week?

Small Group Lesson: Acts 2:22-47

1. According to Acts 2:47, who is responsible for adding to the numbers of the church? ‘
2. How does knowing that God will add to those being saved, help you understand the purpose of the church better? What comfort do you find in that truth?
3. The Word of God is powerful as is seen in Acts 2:22-41. How can knowing the Word of God is all you need help you be more willing to read it, believe it, obey it, and give it away?
4. What differences do you see between the church of Acts in 2:42-47 and the church of America today?
5. How might being a part of a small group enable you experience the church of Acts more closely?

Action Step: Meet with Others

During the course of the next eight or nine weeks we would like all of the church to meet together in homes and then come together at EVC to worship and hear the word of God as we study the book of Acts and learn from the blueprint of the early church.



We want to encourage you, maybe even push you, to make a decision to join a group. You may choose to join an existing group, start your own group in your home (or at Starbucks), or just meet with a few friends or family members. You don't have to find twelve people to meet. A group can be as small as three or four people. You don't need a Bible Study leader. You just need the word of God to read through the reading plan each week and meet once a week to go through the lesson and questions in the bulletin together.

The Local Church

First we need to make some observations about a Biblical definition of the church. The word "church" in the N.T. never refers to a building or a place. It always refers to a people: either the total number of believers who have ever lived, or a local group of those believers. For example, in Ephesians 1:22, 23 Paul says that God, having raised Christ from the dead above all rule and authority, "put all things under his feet and made him head over all things for the church which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all." That is the universal church, the whole number of the redeemed who look to Christ as their life and their authority. In this sense there could never be such a thing as churches. There is only one church, "one body" (Ephesians 4:4).

But in the N.T. the word "church" also is used to refer to the group of believers in a particular city and in a particular house. For example, Acts 11:22 refers to the "church in Jerusalem," 1 Corinthians 1:2 refers to the "church of God which is at Corinth," 1 Thessalonians is addressed (in 1:1) "to the church of the Thessalonians" and so on. 1 Corinthians 16:19 says, "The churches of Asia send greetings. Aquila and Prisca, together with the church in their house, send you hearty greetings in the Lord." In Colossians 4:15 Paul sends greetings to Nympha and the church in her house. And Paul's letter to Philemon is also addressed to "the church in your house." So there seem to be three levels at least where the word "church" applies to God's people. One is the universal body of Christ including all believers of all times. Another is a group of Christians associated because of their geographic togetherness in a city. And a third would be a smaller segment of believers who gather in a home. These last two groups might be identical in a city where there were so few Christians they could all meet in one home. But in a city with thousands of Christians, like Jerusalem, small house churches must have developed quickly.

I would define a local church like this: a local church is a group of baptized believers who meet regularly to worship God through Jesus Christ, to be exhorted from the Word of God, and to celebrate the Lord's Supper under the guidance of duly appointed leaders. According to this definition there are at least seven qualifications if a group wants to be a church in the N.T. sense. 1) The people must give evidence that they are believers--that they trust Jesus as Savior and Lord. The N.T. makes it clear that we are adopted into the family of God through faith (John 1:12, 13). 2) The people must be baptized. Jesus commanded in Matthew 28:19 that the way to make disciples was by "baptizing them . . . and teaching them." This was the uniform practice in the early church. 3) There must be a regular assembling. A group of people who only came together say once a year could not rightly be called a local church because there are essential activities of the church which lose their meaning when not done corporately. Therefore, Hebrews 10:25 commands us not to neglect to meet together. 4) Among these meetings there must be gatherings for worship. This follows inevitably from the ultimate value placed on Jesus Christ who calls us together and from our relation to God through him. The church is destined to live to the praise of God's glory (Eph. 1:6, 12, 14); therefore, it would contradict our nature not to assemble for worship (Acts 2:47; Romans 15:6, 7). 5) Our meetings must include exhortation from the Word of God. We were born anew through the living and abiding word of God (1 Peter 1:23); and our life in Christ is preserved not by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God (Matt. 4:4). The shepherds of the church were the provision God has made for feeding his sheep. Therefore, we strive not to be the church where the Word of God is neglected. 6) Along with worship and exhortation we must celebrate the Lord's Supper in order to be the church. We are commanded to "do this in remembrance" of Christ (Luke 22:19; 1 Cor. 11:24). Neglecting this ordinance might seem inconsequential at first but I think a church will bleed to death through that amputation. 7) Finally, all of this must take place with the guidance of duly appointed leaders. Paul appointed elders in all the churches (Acts 14:23), he gave instruction about the qualifications of deacons and elders in 1 Tim. 3 and Titus 1, and he said that Christ had given pastor-teachers to the church to equip the saints for ministry (Eph. 4:1, 12). *Excerpt from "The Local Church: Minimum vs. Maximum" by John Piper*



September 21, 2008

Pastor Tim Wood

I Like Church: Renewing Our Vision Acts 2:22-47

1. What did Peter preach about?

Verse 22 -

Verse 23-

Verse 24- 32-

Verses 33-34-

Verse 36-

2. How did the people respond?

*They were convicted – Verse 37

*3,000 accepted the message! – Verse 41

3. The Lessons for the Church – Renewing our vision

Lesson #1 –

Lesson #2 –

Lesson #3 –

EVC's Vision Statement
Developing Eternal Relationships with God, His Word and People