

I like Church... because it's a place I belong! Acts 2:42-47

Small Group & Personal Bible Study Lesson: Pastor Dennis Hadley



Daily Scripture Reading:

1. Acts 1:1-11
2. Acts 1:12-26
3. Acts 2:1-13
4. Acts 2:14-36
5. Acts 2:37-47

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

Work at Caring for Your Church Family

If a restaurant gives the impression it doesn't care about its patrons, it's going to be in trouble before long. Even years of quality service can be quickly undermined by carelessness in this area. What's true about food is even more critical for places where "spiritual food" is served.

Becoming a caring church is not something that's resolved by agreeing, "This is a good idea; let's come up with a clever logo." Everybody must own the concept and work at making it a reality (*And it will require us to call on God to change us and mold us into caring individuals he can use*). Even then, it takes time to build the kind of reputation for caring we desire. But, oh, the excitement when word gets around that "here you'll find the extended family you always wanted to be part of."

That's what Acts 2:42-47 reveals about the New Testament church. *Excerpt used by permission from 50-day Spiritual Adventure*

Small Group Lesson: Romans 12:9-16

1. Which of Paul's instructions does our church follow well? Give an example.
2. Which do you long to see practiced in our church more?

3. What is one area where you personally need to improve to help your church become a more caring family?

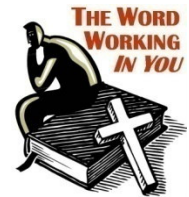
Read 1 John 4:7-12

4. In one sentence, summarize what John is saying.
5. What are some of the reasons John gives to encourage us to love one another. How can reminding yourself of these reasons help you care for people who seem unlovable?
6. Would a visitor in our church be able to recognize that love is important to us?

*Optional Lesson: Becoming a Caring Family by Lou Diaz
(Copies Available in Lobby)*

Action Step #1: "Learn to Look & Listen with the Eyes and Ears of Jesus"

As you read the gospels, it becomes apparent that Jesus had great eyes and ears. He was always seeing the hurt and picking up the cries of those around him. He didn't just hear, he listened, he didn't just see, he responded. As Jesus' disciples, we are to show his kind of love to one another within the church and to others outside the church (John 13:35; Galatians 6:10). Many of us have hearts that overflow with compassion when we are aware of people's suffering, but we aren't always good at becoming aware. We may have Jesus' heart, but we need his eyes and ears as well.



Think about a typical day at church, at work, in the community, or with friends. People around you may be crying

out for someone to really love them with Jesus' kind of love, but are you hearing those cries? Are you seeing those hurts? You may smile and greet others but miss the urgent message under the surface: "SOS! I need some care!"

The kind of church you've always longed for is a caring family, one that works hard to be attentive to needs within the church and without. You can do your part by asking Jesus to train your eyes to see and your ears to hear as he does.

Directions: Every day, say the Looking & Listening with Jesus Prayer. Feel free to put it in your own words, but try to keep the basic idea. You're asking the Lord for guidance and checking in to see if you are seeing and hearing the same things he is. This is the sort of prayer that will affect your whole life. You will begin seeing and hearing everything in a new way.

Tip: You might develop a catchphrase that you can remember and repeat throughout the day: "Let me see with your eyes and hear with your ears, Lord," Send these sentence prayers to God from time to time each day.

The Looking & Listening With Jesus Prayer

Lord, I long to be part of a caring church family,
But often I'm not sensitive to how people are really suffering.
Please teach me to see people like you do and to listen with your ears
of compassion.
I pray for [FILL IN A NEED YOU'VE HEARD RECENTLY].
Lord, help me respond with a heart that cares the way you do. Amen

Action Step Follow-up

- I am praying the looking & listening with Jesus Prayer

Reflection: In what specific ways could you become more sensitive to the needs of others?



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Pastor Tim Wood

**I Like Church: Because it's a place to belong
Acts 2:42-47**

(42)They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. (47)Praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Who are the people that belonged to the Church?

1. We belong to the Word

2. We belong to each other

3. We belong to God

4. We belong to our community