

## I like Church... that cares about the community! Acts 5:12-16

*Small Group & Personal Bible Study Lesson: Pastor Dennis Hadley*



### Daily Scripture Reading:

1. Acts 7:1-53
2. Acts 7:54-60
3. Acts 8:1-8
4. Acts 8:9-25
5. Acts 8:26-40

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

### Capture the Heart of Our Community

If our church burned down, or the church doors had to be permanently closed for some reason, would anyone in our community grieve as they passed by? It is our passion to see Evergreen Valley Church be a church that our community would miss if we were no longer here. I pray that the people in our community will see us as a special part of the Evergreen area so that God may be glorified.

Some churches have become adept at capturing the heart of their community. While not compromising what they believe, they are, as their Lord was, well thought of by outsiders. Acts 5:12–16 states that the early Christians were highly regarded by the people. More and more men and women were being converted, which speaks well of the impact the believers were having.

Do you get the feeling that the New Testament church was more community oriented than are most churches today? We want you and EVC to be highly regarded by our community. We want to see us have a positive impact for Jesus on our community. If we learn to cast better “shadows” with our lives, it could be as Mr. Rogers said, “a beautiful day in the neighborhood.”

*Optional Lesson: Capturing the Heart of the Community by Dick Dill (Copies available in the Lobby)*

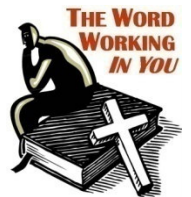
## Small Group Lesson: Matthew 5:13-16

1. How is our church salt and light to our community? (Think about our work in Kids Clubs, Senior Centers, and other local ministries, and some of our community events...)
2. Think about someone in our church that lives out having a heart for his/her community. Share with the group, what this person is doing to serve others and how that shines a light in the community.
3. A little salt and light go a long way. Think about it, salt on the bland food has a great affect on the taste. Light in the darkest places shines brightest and is the most noticeable. What are some things you personally could do to help your church be salt and light?
4. Notice the purpose of letting your light shine is to draw others to God. What people do you hope will see our church's light and be drawn to God? How can you help make that happen?

### Action Step #4: Attract Others by Saying Good Things about the Church

We Christians can be expert complainers. We whine about every little detail of church life and then wonder why the people we invite don't want to come. We may long for our church to capture the heart of our community; we may yearn for our church to have a good reputation—but how can it when we're always complaining about what's wrong?

What if we changed our strategy by changing our attitude? What if we started focusing on the good things about our churches (Philippians 4:8)? What if we regularly told others,



inside the church and out, about those good things? What if each church member became sort of a public relations rep for the church? We might just give people reasons for wanting to come, rather than reasons for staying away.

**Directions:** Every day this week write down something good about our church (or people in our church family). It should be fun to see how the things you can come up with. Think of ways your church friends are serving the community in various ways. Pray about it, and then try to tell someone outside our church about one of those good things. You can share with fellow members too, but try to talk to some people outside your church that is not yet a follower of Jesus.

Then, during the coming weeks invite him/her to church. Once you've been saying good things about the church for a while, he/she may want to come.

#### Action Step Follow-up

- I am listing one good thing everyday about my church  
I have shared a good thing with someone outside my church
- I am asking the Holy Spirit to help me identify pollution in my life
- I am prepared to meet with My King in worship this week
- I am praying the looking & listening with Jesus Prayer

#### 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

*Reflection: How has thinking about the good things in our church brightened your days?*

October 19, 2008

Pastor Tim Wood

### I Like Church: Blessing our Community Acts 5:12-16

(12) The apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders among the people... (13) No one else dare joined them, even though they were highly regarded by the people. (14) Nevertheless, more and more men and women believed in the Lord and were added to their number. (15) As a result, people brought the sick into the streets and laid them on their beds and mats so that at least Peter's shadow might fall on some of them as he passed by. (16) Crowds gathered also from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing their sick and those tormented by evil spirits, and all of them were healed.

1. Facts from these verses.

2. How can we bless our community?