

Connections: Fighting for Faith

Memory Verse: 2 Timothy 4:7 *“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.”*

Lesson: Acts 2:41-47 “A Church of Small Groups”

- What do you notice in verse 41?

I notice that 3,000 people became believers and joined the Church that day. I guarantee they didn't have a big enough sanctuary or enough children's rooms to handle that kind of growth but I highly doubt that was a concern. They had a different plan.

- How many people were added to their number that day?

I am not sure how many believers there were at this point but it is clear it grew by 3,000 in one day.

- How do you think they connected that many people together?

Since it is impossible for the eleven disciples to shepherd 3,000 new believers they took an approach of meeting in small groups in the home. In this model of the early church we see that every member becomes a minister. By meeting in small groups in homes they got connected close to a few whom could live life with them, know how to pray for them, know their struggles and their rejoicing. The Church in a small group setting becomes family.

***Ask: How has our small group become like family for you?**

- Looking at verse 46, in what two places did the 3,000+ followers of Jesus meet?

They met in the Temple Courts and in Homes. In our model, we meet on Sunday at EVC and then also in homes in small groups. Our church is far from 3,000 people but yet it is way too big to know everyone or to get really connected without being in a small group.

- Why do you think they met together so regularly?

They needed encouragement. They needed to hold on to what they had received in Jesus Christ and that is hard to do alone. They had needs to combat fears. They needed to combat lies. They needed help to stay the course and follow after

Christ in the midst of lies that they would hear about their new faith. They had needs that could only be fulfilled by God in prayer. They had physical needs that required community to meet. And at the same time, they had gifts from God to share to meet others needs that required community as well. They needed others to help them see how God wanted to use their lives for His glory.

- What else do you notice about the early Church?

They learned together. They praised God together. They ate together. They helped one another when a need arose. They used their Spiritual Gifts to serve one another in love. They worked as a unified body to glorify God and share the good news.

Read Hebrews 10:19-25

- What does this verse teach you? How does it connect to what you read in Acts 2? How does it connect to 2 Timothy 4:7? How does it relate to being a Church of Small Groups?

It teaches me that we have a great truth we possess and we need others to keep the faith strong and to allow God to use us to our fullest intent.

I think Hebrews 10 reinforces the model we see in Acts 2. We need each other. We need to connect, grow, and serve together.

In 2 Timothy 4:7, Paul is talking about making it to the end and that is what Hebrews 10:25 is encouraging us to help each other toward.

I believe the best way for us to encourage one another all the more is to meet together in small groups as a Church. We can come together on Sunday morning to worship together and celebrate. But real community and real service is best in a small group.

In October, EVC will be starting a church-wide study called **4G Spiritual Formation**. During this eight week study we want everyone to join a small group.

- How can your small group help get people connected into small groups?

Discuss this question together and be open to anyone's leading. Discuss the things below and ask God to lead you.

Consider these actions:

- ❖ Pray for people at EVC to join a small group
- ❖ Invite people from EVC to join your small group
- ❖ Multiply your groups by having two or three people in your group start a new group at a different location.
- ❖ Consider dividing your group in half so you can double in size.
- ❖ Pray that others in our church will begin to host a small group in their home therefore making more groups available.
- ❖ Encourage someone you know to start a small group.
- ❖ Pray about becoming outreach focused by inviting non-church friends, neighbors, co-workers, family to join your small group.

Personal Daily Scripture Meditation

- Day 1: Acts 2:38-41
- Day 2: Acts 2:42-43
- Day 3: Acts 2:44-45
- Day 4: Acts 2:46-47
- Day 5: Hebrews 10:19-25