

Title: What Should The Church Be Doing?

Text: Acts 2:41-47

*I would like to ask you a question?*

Take your Bibles, please, and turn to the book of Acts. Acts chapter 2.

Our subject: WHAT SHOULD THE CHURCH BE DOING? I do not ask that in a naive way. I am asking it of myself as well as you. It is a subject of great importance. And how we answer that question will determine what we do and what we do not do around this place that we call "<sup>Jesus-Baptist</sup>our Church."  
*you*

So, let's answer the question by looking at the Bibles answer.

Acts chapter 2 beginning with Vs 41.....(READ Vs 41-47)

*Bible Open - No Yes*

PRAYER

Our Father we pray that in this time together you would speak to our heartts by your Holy Spirit. We are so aware that what must be done must be done by you. And Father we pray that you would open our understanding and our attention so that we might see where we fit into this passage. That we might know our responsibilities as members of the body of Christ. Father, we pray that we might clearly understand what the church should be doing. And in understanding we might be doers of the Word. And we ask this in the name of Jesus, our Lord and Saviour.....Amen.

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(1B) WHAT SHOULD THE CHURCH BE DOING? I choose this text in Acts chapter 2 because this is when the church was born. And out of many different passages this passage tells us that the church should be doing basical four things. Four <sup>Basic</sup>great things which should be part of <sup>the operation of the church</sup>our operation, if we are to be the church of Jesus Christ.

(1C) Number one, Vs 42 tells us that the church should be emphasizing the essentials. And these essentials are found in Vs 42. The church should be emphasizing the basic essentials.

Vs 42 says, "And they"...Now, who are "the they?"...Vs 41..."those who have received His word were baptized; and there were added that day about three thousand souls."

Vs 42..."and they"...These three thousand souls...this new church.."They were continually devoting themselves to four things."

Now, I would like to point out something here from the Greek text. You all know that the N.T. was written in Greek? In the Greek text the definite articule "THE" is in front of each one of those four activities. It should read: "THE APOSTLES TEACHING"...THE FELLOWSHIP...THE BREAKING OF <sup>the</sup> BREAD"... THE PRAYER...

WHY IS THAT IMPORTANT? Because he is not talking about these things in a general sense. Like: it would be nice if you do them." He is talking about specific definate activities of that N.T. Church. "They continually devoted themselves" ..meaning "they never gave up." It was a constant habit of their life to emphasis these four essentials. O.K. WHAT ARE THEY?

(1D) Number one: the apostles teachings or doctrine. Dear Friends, the teaching of the Word of God is to be primary in what the church is doing. And this means ..not just the pulpit,..but throughout the church..Sunday School...bible studies...youth programs.....<sup>FAMILY Devotions</sup>The teaching of the Word of God.

(2D) Secondly, the fellowship."

You see, the church, "the ecclasic" means "the assembled ones together." And the local assembled ones .."the believers" were to continue, constantly steadfast in the fellowship.

*Out* Why does Hebrews 10:25 say: "not forsaking our own assembling together?" Why does it say that? Because one of the four esstials is "THE FELLOwship."

And I don't think there is a believer in this assemble <sup>today</sup> who doesn't know what I mean when I say we are <sup>LIVING</sup> ~~serving~~ in a world, ~~today~~, that is in vast need of fellowship. And what do we see our world doing? We are isolating ourselves. We are all to busy to have fellowship. We have to many things going on.

Dear friends, **I** come back and I see these four essentials in the Word of God and the one that is greatly missing is "THE FELLOWSHIP."

(3D) The third essewntial is the breaking of the bread.

Not simply breaking bread as it says in Vs 46. In verse 46 it is talking about eating as it is explained there. But, in Vs 42 we have the articule "the" and it is talking about a particular event. I believe it is referring to communion. They continually devoted themselves to this event called the Lord's supper.

(4D) And the fourth essential is prayer.

Now, please be carefully with this word "prayer." This word "prayer" is the word for "worship." It is not just referring to daily prayers that you might offer to God. The Greek is referring to "CORPORATE WORSHIP." They continued to devote themselves to "worship."

Dear friends, it is essential for believers to worship together. Corporate worship should be at the top of your list of priorites. It seems that we modern Christians take worship on a take it or leave it bases. I went to worship last Sunday, I don't have to go this Sunday...

That attitude is sad. It is sad that so many who use the name "christian" follow the practice of the world. The Bible teaches that we are to continually devote ourselvs to worship.

*out*  
*Hbr 10:25 - Forshake not our assemblies together*  
*The World say - I don't have to go to church.*

O.K. WHAT SHOULD THE CHURCH BE DOING? We should be emphasizing the essentials: the teaching of the Word of God, Fellowship, Communion, and worship.

(2C) Now, secondly, as to what the church should be doing, it should be deminstrating its unity to the people of Salem.

Notice Vs 44..."all those who had believed were together, and had all things in common." "And they began selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need. And day by day continuing with one mind in the Temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart."

The church should be deminstrating her unity. ~~I would like to share~~  
~~going to do that, it involves 3 things~~  
~~three things about this unity.~~  
*And of our own*  
*Now, how do you deminstrate your unity*

(1D) Number one: the bases of unity. What is the bases of the unity of all believers in the church? *What is The Bases of our Unity?*

Vs 44.. "All those who had believed were together." Dear friends, the bases of unity begins ~~with~~ <sup>and ends with</sup> belief in Jesus Christ.

Now, I would like to share an application that is not to popular in this day and age. Dear friends, we cannot have fellowship with non-believers. We associate with non-believers to share with them the message of Christ. But, what fellowship has light with darkness? The Bible says "be not unequally yoked together with unbeliever."

Dear friends, one of the reasons the church is weak or our lives do not demonstrate the power of the early church is because we find our greatest delight in the companion of non-believers, and we gain our social attachments there and not with Christians. And if you are doing this, I say to you with all the love that I can..you are living on dangerous grounds, spiritually.

*omit*

The Bible teaches Christian to demonstrate their unity. To have fellowship with Christians. Not with non-Christians. Oh, we are to associate with non-Christians for the purpose of winning them to Christ. We are to love them. We are to care for them. We are to do anything in order to see them come to Christ. But, to have quote "fun" ..to have "social ties" for purposes of not to win them to Christ, I say to you that you are living on grounds of disobedience. For the Bible admonishes Christians to continue steadfast and not to forsake the assembling of yourself together. Fellowship with Christians. All who believed were together.

(2D) Secondly, there are burdens that come along with this unity.

Great burdens. ~~What are they?~~

Vs 44.. "and had all things in common; and they began selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all as anyone might have need."

You say, "that ~~sounds like communism.~~ <sup>is not very practical</sup> *you are not telling us to* ~~I remind you that is is~~

~~Christian communism. Not the worlds kind.~~ *sell all our property and give it to the church, are you?*

*shared with all who had*

They ~~parted~~ everyman as he ~~had~~ need. They gathered their possession together. WHY DID THEY DO THIS? Answer: persecution. You see, the early church sensed that immediate persecution. They were cut off from the theocracy of Israel. They couldn't buy or sell from the shops because they professed the name of Christ and had been baptized. Thus, they suffered greatly as Christians.

You will remember Saul, himself, a Pharisee was making havoc of the church the Bible says in Acts chapter 8. Saul was persecuting the church. He was taking men and women to prison. The early church was under great stress. And so they brought their possessions together in order to survive.

Dear friends, what if persecution happened, today, in this country? I wonder if we could say "Let us gather all our possessions together and give to everyone as he has need. I wonder if we could do that?"

But, <sup>you say</sup> we are not under persecution? So, is there an application for us today? <sup>Yes,</sup> say there is. It is the principle, I believe, of sharing burdens. When a brother or sister is suffering, financially or physically, do we pay attention? Do we take responsibility? Do we care for one another? You see, when we do, we are demonstrating our unity.

~~and~~ all the way through the N.T. the Bible teaches that Christians ought to care for one another. ~~For this reason should have...~~

In I Corinthians 12 it says that if one member suffer than all the members suffer with him. AND DO YOU KNOW HOW WE SUFFER?.....We suffer because we become weak in our testimony....We become a non caring church... ~~And~~ we run the danger of not being effective in our ministry in this area.

Who wants to be part of a church who doesn't care..... <sup>Dear Friends,</sup> ~~People~~ there is nothing so important in this day. <sup>as people caring for people.</sup> ~~And we must be sensitive to the Holy Spirit and sense when people have needs. Physical, financial, whatever they might be to have the care to demonstrate our unity in Jesus Christ.~~

The point is....we need to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit and sense when people have needs. Physical, financial, whatever they might be to have the care to demonstrate our unity in Jesus Christ.

If we simply come here on Sunday and attend these services and then go home. And that is the extent of our unity. I say to you we are ~~fall, fall~~ <sup>fall, fall</sup> from the truth of the N.T. We must began to sense what the Bible is all about. And I personal believe that with the coming persecution that is going to happen to us in these United States it is going to become imperative for christians to fellowship with one another. That we be together in this. And we realize the bond that we have in Christ. ~~And~~ And we <sup>ought to</sup> demonstrate our unity.

Now, Third, When do We Show This Unity  
(3D) So, there are burdens to this unity. But thank God there are ~~burdens~~  blessings. ~~Coming back to Acts 2,~~ Look at vs 46... And day by day continuing with one mind in the temple."

(1) Now, that doesn't mean in the temple area where the sacrifices were going on. It is not that place. That is another word used in the N.T. The word used, here, refers to the entire temple area complex. Where the market place was. Where the mulitude of people gathered.

The point is: in the average stream of life they were together with one accord. These Christians. In the average market place of the day where the mulitude of <sup>unbelievers</sup> ~~people~~ gathered ..that is were the crhstians were having ~~one~~ one accord. or Unity

-7-

Vs 46

(2) And, also, they were breaking bread from house to house. And the next statement explains it. It says they were taking their meals together. Should christians invite one another over for dinner? Answer: absolutely.....Yes

And I guess the perfect remark at this point would be: I will be glad to accept your invitation after this service..... (Hc)

But, really, folks, we must see this.....the christians were together. All the time they were together. <sup>So far</sup> And notice it says with one mind or one accord, meaning with one passion or desire. You know, when Christian are together God gets the glory. But when we are divided glory comes to self. When Christians come ~~together~~ with one accord, one passion, like-minded, God gets the glory.

(3) And notice, also, as they gathered not only in the temple area but in different <sup>homes</sup> ~~places~~, as they were taking their meals together, notice, it was done with gladness and sincerity of heart.

The word "gladness" means "with extreme joy".....And the word "sincerity" means "without wax".....in other words ..no hypocricay....It was sincere and there was joy and love being expressed as christians fellowshiped together in the midst of persecution and hardship and suffering.... <sup>Isn't that good</sup>

The blessings that come when we are willing <sup>to</sup> pay the price of bearing one another's burdens.....Why do we continue to settle for second best in our christian lives?.....I am reminded of what Jesus taught when he said: "blessed are the merciful for they shall receive mercy.....The blessings of unity. And when we do that - The church will grow

(3C) Third, as to what the church should be doing...The third thing is exalting God. Vs 47 says, "they were praising God, and having favor with all the people.".....Praising God.....Exalting God.....We look at some of the things that happen in our lives and we conclude: How can I praise God. Some of you listening to me this morning <sup>haven't</sup> ~~have~~ praise God in a long time. When was the last time you You haven't lifted your eyes to God and said: Thank you Lord. I praise your wonderful name for what you are doing in my life."

You might be having a trail, you might be suffering, and you say how can I praise and thank God for what I am experiencing?

I heard the tremendous story of a song that I would like to share with you at this time. A man named Luther <sup>Bridgers</sup> was a great Methodist preacher of years ago. He preached in ~~the South~~ South Georgia. And ~~they~~ <sup>They</sup> ~~tell~~ <sup>story goes</sup> us that this man had one of the greatest voices the world had ever heard. When he would sing the crowds would ~~move themselves~~ <sup>be moved</sup> to tears. He married a beautiful girl and they had three wonderful children. This Methodist preacher ~~was~~ went into evangelism, and he was in great demand. They tells us he was one of the great preachers of the ~~south~~ South. One time he left on a two week evangelistic tour. He kissed his wife, two boys, and a baby girl good by and he went off to these meetings. He preached his heart out. And on the last night of that two week ~~meeting~~ <sup>camp</sup> at 1:00 in the morning he was called to the telephone and a friends said: "~~we~~ <sup>Luther am</sup> ~~am~~ sorry to inform you that your hourse caught on fire and your wife and children died in the fire."

<sup>Bridgers</sup> Luther ~~dropped~~ <sup>dropped</sup> to his kness and he cried out to the L<sup>0</sup>rd, "lord, I have preached the gospel to all that you have told me to. I told them that Christ would comfort them in their time of need. And oh, God, I pray that you would grant ~~this~~ <sup>this</sup> comfort to me now."

And he later testified that the L<sup>0</sup>rd put his arms around him. And he said "I could feel those arms as real as your presence here."

But the story goes that he carried the agony of his sorry in his heart for months- But he always gave praise to God that the love of Christ was sustaining him.

~~When he went back home to pick up his life and to start all over again,~~ One day he found himself at the piano and he wrote a song. A song that came from the dpth of his heart; and it has since become a ~~great~~ <sup>great</sup> classic And here is what he wrote.....

~~453~~  
~~623~~



There's within my heart a melody, Jesus whispers sweet and low;  
Fear not, I am with thee, peace, be still, In all of life's ebb and flow  
Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, Sweetest name I know,  
Fills my every longing, Keeps me singing as I go

And that one song was the testimony of Luther Bridgers throughout <sup>the</sup> ~~his~~ ~~entire~~ <sup>rest of his life</sup> life. He wanted to praise the name of Jesus for everything that happened to him. Where ever he went he would tell folks how wonderful it was that God had taken his family to be with him. And he was looking forward to seeing them some day in heaven. And how wonderful it was to experience God's peace... ~~and comfort~~

And I look at this little phrase in Acts and ask: What was the church doing? They were praiseing God. And they were doing this continually. It was a habait of life. ~~for~~ <sup>The midst of persecute</sup>

And oh, there is nothing so heartwarming, so welcoming, so reassuring to <sup>a person's life</sup> ~~people's lives~~ as to see a group of christians praiseing God. And thankin him for everything he goes, whether joy or sorrow.....

(4C) And the finaly thing the church should be doing is evangelizing the lost. The last statement says, <sup>vs 47</sup> "the lord added to the church daily...day after day. Those being saved.

The Bible teaches that Christ sent out his disciples two by two to be his witnesses to <sup>the</sup> world in need of the gospel. These people were taking <sup>The great</sup> ~~their~~ comission seriously, and they were witnessing and leading people to Christ. And thus, Luke was able to write that the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved." <sup>It</sup> ~~It~~ is true that the HolySpirit works in the heart of a person and brings that person to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. But, the Bible teaches that the Holy Spirit works through Christians. And he works in our willingness to be a messenger of the Gospel...

And it is obvious that this wasn't a Sunday thing. For the Lord was adding to their number daily.....

ch. 11... singing... about church

Dear friends, every christian has the responsibility before God to be a witness. Look around and ask yourself: "HOW MANY PEOPLE ARE MEMBERS OF THIS CHURCH BECAUSE OF MY WITNESS?" HOW MANY?

You see, every christian should make up his mind that his one desire, his one passion, that he be all things to all people for one reason: that I may some how win some. Knodwing the fear of the Lord, we persede folks. *We need to be concerned that people be saved.*  
~~ARE WE REALLY CONCERNED THAT PEOPLE BE SAVED?~~

Dear friends, I hope we believe that there is only one message to be preached; and that is that only Jesus Christ can save us. Human ability, culture, and good standing, and education will not do it. You must accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour in order to be saved. And if you are here, today, and you have never placed your faith and trust in Jesus Christ, you have never made the greatest decision of life by asking Jesus to come into your heart, then I pray that you will do so, right now. Jesus it God manifested in human life. And there is no one else who can save us. Jesus is the answer to your problems.....Jesus is the answer to your needs...Jesus is the only one who can give life and life more abundantly.

DO YOU KNOW JESUS? YOU CAN! Just ask him to come into your heart.... "If we confess our sins He is faithful and just and will forgive our sins, and cleans us from all unrighteousness...."

And dear members of this church. WHAT SHOULD WE BE DOING?

- (1) One: *practicing* ~~emphasizing~~ the essentials: The Word of God, Fellowship, Communion, and ~~worship~~. *Prayer*
- (2) Deminstrating our Unity *by sharing burdens*
- (3) Exalting the wonderful name of Jesus *even in the midst of trials*
- (4) And witnessing to those who need the Lord.

Let's Close in prayer

*Focus of The Word - Not hears only*

Thank Folks For Their Love