

SERMON NOTES

Acts 2:42-47

BUILDING COMMUNITY

1. Why are we here?

- ∅ What's God big plan?
 - To make disciples of all nations
 - To renew, complete & heal creation, through his people
- ∅ What sort of community is needed to achieve this mission?
- ∅ New community formed on Day of Pentecost. Filled with God's Spirit, they spent their time in:
 - Teaching
 - Fellowship
 - Breaking of Bread
 - Prayer & praise
 - Caring for others
- ∅ As a result, God added many people to their number daily
- ∅ The Church is God's 'delivery system' to achieve his purposes
 - To be effective it must be 'One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic'

2. The Church is One

- ∅ United – unity is a gift of God.
 - We don't create it, we must preserve it (Ephesians 4:3)
 - Reverse the Tower of Babel
 - Bring different cultures together in mutual love and understanding
- ∅ Positive and Affirming
 - No public criticism of other denominations or groups
 - Looking to Jesus not each other

- ∅ Shared Vision – dynamic not static
 - Make sure everyone knows it
- ∅ Encourage one another
- 3. **The Church is Holy**
 - ∅ Embody the message. Holy means 'set apart (for God's service)'
 - ∅ Is holiness a gift or must we strive to achieve it?
 - Christ died to make his Bride holy
 - We are called to grow into the likeness of Christ - let the Holy Spirit make it a reality
 - ∅ Nurture and maintain holiness through:
 - Worship, Word & Sacraments
 - Prayer for one another
 - House Groups or peer groups (eg, no hint of immorality Eph 5:3-5)

4. The Church is Catholic

- ∅ Orthodox (in doctrine), faithful to Scripture & teaching of the apostles
- ∅ No denomination perfect - look for wholeness across all denominations
- ∅ Avoid divisive labels

5. The Church is Apostolic

- ∅ Apostles were 'the sent ones', doing what Jesus did
- ∅ They were also 'messianic': anointed by and filled with the Holy Spirit
- ∅ Chosen by God for a purpose, to build the community of God's people
 - a foretaste of heaven
 - doing the five things we saw from the start in Acts 2:42-47

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Acts 2:42-47 (NIV)

⁴² They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

⁴³ Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles.

⁴⁴ All the believers were together and had everything in common.

⁴⁵ Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need.

⁴⁶ Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts,

⁴⁷ praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

**Your hand, O God, has guided
your flock, from age to age;
your faithfulness is written,
on history's every page.
Our fathers knew your goodness,
and we their deeds record;
and both to this bear witness;
one Church, one Faith, one Lord.**

**Your heralds brought the gospel
to greatest as to least;
they summoned us to hasten
and share the great King's feast!
And this was all their teaching,
in every deed and word,
to all alike proclaiming:
one Church, one Faith, one Lord.**

**Your mercy will not fail us,
nor leave your work undone;
with your right hand to help us,
the victory shall be won.
And then, by earth and heaven,
your name shall be adored,
and this shall be their anthem:
one Church, one Faith, one Lord.**

**Through many days of darkness,
through many scenes of strife,
the faithful few fought bravely,
to guard the nation's life.
Their gospel of redemption -
sin pardoned, peace restored,
was all in this enfolded:
one Church, one Faith, one Lord.**

**And we, shall we be faithless?
shall hearts fail, hands hang down?
shall we evade the conflict
and throw away the crown?
Not so! In God's deep counsels
some better thing is stored;
we will maintain, unflinching,
one Church, one Faith, one Lord.**