

The Church
“Biblical Community”

Acts 2:42-46

For most churches in America, the definition of Biblical community will be understood in a variety of ways, depending on the leadership’s understanding of the meaning of the term. Therefore, it is incumbent upon us to gain the full understanding of Biblical community from the teaching of Scripture and not the preference or presupposition of man.

What are the CHARACTERISTICS of a true New Testament church?

From last week, 1) Worship; 2) Teaching; 3) Prayer...

4) FELLOWSHIP (v.42b)

One of the unfortunate consequences of religion is the absence of true loving community as defined by the Scripture. A closer consequence is how the “religion” emphasis has shaped our own approach to “church.” We “go” to church and we “do” church so that our religious conscience is eased – but we have missed “being” the church.

5) The LORD’S SUPPER/COMMUNION (v.42c)

Observing the Lord’s Supper is to remember – to reflect – to contemplate – to meditate on His choice to die in our place: His choice to become sin for us...the perfect sinless God-man, humbling Himself and becoming obedient to death, taking our punishment so that by His stripes we are healed, and dying the death of separation from God so that we might live in relationship with God.

6) COMMUNITY (vv.43-46)

As we unpack these verses, we can see each piece that makes up the characteristics of true Biblical community:

- ***The PRESENCE and POWER of the freedom of the Holy Spirit. (v.43a)***

The life of the church at Jerusalem was so genuine and spiritually powerful that everyone “...**every soul**...” whether inside or outside the church was awed not by the church’s building, not by the church’s programs, or anything that reflected human ability and achievement – but by the supernatural power of its life source. This avenue of presence and power is achieved through the freedom the Holy Spirit has to use the spiritual gifts of its people.

- ***The spiritual TRANSFORMATION through the TEACHING of Scripture. (v.43b)***

Today, the Holy Spirit still performs miracles by His own design – mainly through the sound doctrinal teaching of Scripture – He performs the greatest miracle of all, the conversion of a sinner to a relationship with Jesus Christ through faith.

- ***SACRIFICIALLY meeting the financial and physical needs of one another. (vv.44-45)***

This is something that puts the authenticity of our relationship with the Lord to the test. Question: Do we trust the Lord with our finances? Do we believe that what we have, the Lord has blessed us with? Do we truly love one another enough to sacrificially meet a financial need or provide what might be lacking?

- ***Commitment to AUTHENTICITY. (v.46)***

The reality of Jesus' sacrifice is seen in the authenticity of His followers. People who gather together and yet do not truly know each other cannot rightly be called a community. The Bible commands the confession of sin, struggles, and praises which is evidence of a life of transparency. This characteristic also bears with it a commitment to engage in the proper means of fighting back sin for the good of the sinner, the health of the body, and the glory of the Lord. Where does this happen best? Small group.

There are two things that stand out in v. 46: worship and small group. Worship is the gathering of us on Sunday mornings to worship. Worship has three characteristics: singing, praying and teaching. Is Sunday morning important? Absolutely YES! In fact, it is commanded – ***(cf. Hebrews 10:23-25).***

What are the PRACTICAL implications of a true New Testament church?

Love one another (John 13:34, 15:12)

Outdo one another in showing honor (Romans 12:10)

Live in harmony with one another (Romans 12:16)

Comfort and agree with one another (2 Corinthians 13:11)

Serve one another (John 13:1-20; Galatians 5:13)

Bear one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2)

Forgive one another (Ephesians 4:32)

Submit to one another (Ephesians 5:21)

Be honest with one another (Colossians 3:9)

Encourage one another (1 Thessalonians 5:11)

Confess to one another (James 5:16)

Pray for one another (James 5:16)