



A Growing Community

THE CHURCH

Acts 2:41-47

The church is a radically devoted community where the transforming power of God is actively transforming the lives of those inside and outside the church.

Growing Requires...

Your Radical Devotion (41-42)

Baptism symbolizes a radical departure from your old life in a public confession of devotion to Jesus (41; Acts 8:36-38; 10:38; 16:33; 22:16; 1 Pet. 3:21).

The expected radical commitment level of Jesus' followers in the church requires you to be "continually devoted" (42; 1 Cor. 15:58; Gal. 5:1; Phil. 1:27; 2 Pet. 3:17).

Growing churches are composed of growing disciples devoted to the "apostles' teaching" in the inspired Word of God (42; 2 Tim. 3:16-4:2; 1 Tim. 4:13, 16; Tit. 1:4).

Jesus commanded in the Great Commission for his church to make disciples by "teaching all" he "commanded" (Mt. 28:20).

Everything the church does begins with the "foundation of the apostles and prophets" whose writings form the authoritative truth of who the church is and what the church does (Eph. 2:20).

"Fellowship" is not built on commonalities like neighborhood, culture, and customs but is grown through relationships that encourage and edify one another in the things of the Lord (Heb. 10:24-25).

"That which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ."-1 John 1:3

The "breaking of bread" during the Lord's Supper refocuses us on *who* Jesus is, *what* he did, and *who* we are because of his sacrifice (Mt. 26:26-29; 1 Cor. 11:24-25; Gal. 1:4; Eph. 5:2; Tit. 2:14).

Radically devoted churches pray for the power of God internally so they can "speak [God's] word with all boldness" externally (Act 4:29; 4:24-31).

Your Radical Devotion...

1) Needs the Church Community

"And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near."-Hebrews 10:24-25

Your life in Jesus is designed to be continually lived in the community of the church because you need the church to stir and encourage you.

2) Seeks Missional Success

Churches must keep in front of them their unifying vision of why they exist so they have missional success.

"If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples."-Jesus in John 15:7-8

Growing Requires...

God's Supernatural Intervention (43-45)

When Jesus moves powerfully in a church, it causes people to pause in awestruck wonder at God's powerful presence working supernatural "wonders and signs" (43).

Being "together" in unity is the supernatural by-product of believing in Jesus' message (the Gospel) and his mission (making disciples) (1 Cor. 5:10).

The fellowship and unity of the church leads believers to personally invest their resources in others (Acts 4:32-37).

The growing church mirrors Jesus' self-sacrificing giving in our relationships with one another (Mtt. 5:42; Lk. 12:33; Acts 20:35; 1 Jn. 3:17).

God's Supernatural Intervention...

1) Begins with Thirsting for God

"As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God?"-Psalm 42:1-2

Every time the church gathers you should arrive thirsty to meet with God.

2) Expects God to Supernaturally Intervene

"Expect great things from God, attempt great things for God."

-William Carey, Pioneering Baptist Missionary to India

"God is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us..."-Ephesians 3:20

Growing Requires...

Effective Outside Witness (46-47)

The larger gathering in corporate worship should lead to smaller groups of believers meeting in homes "demonstrating glad and generous hearts" (46).

The church must be a public people whose Christian witness is on display before a watching world with the aim of "having favor with all the people" (47).

The growth of the church in effectively transforming the culture fulfills Jesus' promise to "build" his church (Mt. 16:18; Acts 2:41, 47; 5:14; 6:1,7; 9:31; 11:21, 24; 16:5).

Effective Outside Witness...

1) Begins with Relational Living

As FBC grows larger, the church must grow smaller through meaningful relationships.

In May, FBC will launch new summer small groups designed to build life-transforming relationships.

2) Demands Transformed Lives

Outsiders will never believe what we say about Jesus until they first see the evidence of Jesus transforming the way we live.

"The people held them in high esteem. And more than ever believers were added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women were constantly added to their number..."-Acts 5:13-14

Challenge—Am I radically devoted to Jesus growing me and his church?

