

## The Path to Stability

Acts 2: 42-44

Today I want to conclude our series: *Church – A New Testament Model*. Once again we are in the book of Acts, immediately following Pentecost. The Lord had ascended back to the Father, and the Spirit had come, filling the believers. The presence and power of God was evident among the church in Jerusalem, with thousands coming to faith in Christ. [Acts 2:41 – Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.](#)

At this moment, the church was in her infant stages. Although she was very young, she was also very pure. At this point, the preferences and stigmas of men had not yet influenced the church. The pressures of modern culture had yet to make their mark on the church. She was born in the power of the Spirit and God was multiplying her numbers in a miraculous way.

Sadly, very few, if any, local congregations closely resemble that of the early church. We are thousands of years removed, and forced to deal with the influences introduced by man. Rather than trying to imitate the “successful” church down the road, we need to pattern our lives and actions after the biblical model. If the church is to possess the power of God, and impact our modern culture, we must seek to resemble the early church. We need to adopt the New Testament model rather than the popular, contemporary model.

As we conclude the series, I want to examine the [disciplines](#) exercised by the early church as we consider: [The Path to Stability](#). First we discover:

**I. Their Commitment to Doctrine** (42) – [And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.](#) Immediately following the miraculous birth of the church, we find they have come together in steadfast commitment to the apostles' doctrine. This speaks of the teaching and preaching of the Word by the apostles. The early church placed a premium on the Word of God. It was viewed as the priority among them.

- I appreciate the commitment to the Word here at Fellowship. It is viewed as the priority among us. However, we must continue to guard our commitment to the Word, and never allow anything to replace its preeminence among us. Far too many congregations have given the preaching and teaching of the Word a lower place of emphasis within their services and activities. Many have replaced an emphasis on the Word with music, drama, and entertainment. We often hear folks say, “We had a great service today. The preacher didn’t even get to preach.” Modern culture would have us to believe that God does His best work among the church during song services or some sort of entertainment. That may generate a sense of excitement and appeal to

the flesh, but it certainly doesn't fit the New Testament model. Many congregations have raised a generation of anemic Christians, illiterate to the Word, because there was no emphasis on teaching sound doctrine! [John 8:31 – Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed.](#)

**II. Their Communion through Fellowship (42) – And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.** Following their commitment to sound doctrine, we find their communion through fellowship. This speaks of much more than gathering under the same roof, or sitting on the same pew. This has the idea of “*fellowship that involves participation.*” It speaks of “*partnership and sharing.*” They enjoyed one another's company and fellowshiped together. There was a sense of community among the early church. They benefited from one another and helped each other grow and mature in the faith.

- We too must continue our commitment to fellowship with one another. We face much in life that is impossible to bear alone. We all need the strength and benefit of community within the church. I am encouraged at the close of our services. Many of you appear in no hurry to leave. You genuinely enjoy the relationships you've established with fellow believers. We even get together and fellowship outside of regularly scheduled services. Strong, stable churches are made up of those who desire fellowship with one another. When churches experience division, lacking genuine fellowship, they are vulnerable to attack, and often weak in the faith. [Heb.10:24-25 – And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: <sup>\[25\]</sup> Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting \*one another\*: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.](#)

**III. Their Confidence in Prayer (42) – And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.** The church possessed a strong commitment to prayer, being confident of the power available through earnest prayer. This does not refer to a few individuals who sought the Lord in prayer, but a unified, concerted effort through prayer. The church body recognized the urgency of their time, and understood the necessity of fervent, corporate prayer. The church in Jerusalem was built upon sound doctrine and prayer! They well understood the necessity of these essential elements.

- I know that we are a praying church, but I am convinced we could be more diligent in our praying. We need the commitment and resolve of the early church. Fellowship desperately needs the prayers of God's people, interceding for one another and pleading for the power and presence of God to move among us, transforming lives for His glory!

- Prayer is the strongest tool we have access to, and yet is likely the least utilized aspect of the average Christian life. I will admit that my prayer life could use improvement. Every born again believer has access to the throne of grace. The Lord, Jesus Christ is seated at the right hand of the Father, interceding on our behalf. We have the privilege of making our requests known to Him. He stands ready and able to assist us through every need and burden we have. We must make consistent, confident prayer a priority! Pray for those in places of leadership; pray for those who are weary and burdened; pray for those who have yet to be saved by grace; pray that we will remain a Gospel-centered church, where the truth is proclaimed and lived out before others; pray for God to work among us in mighty ways, using us for His glory!

**IV. Their Conformity to Christ (43a)** – *And fear came upon every soul.* The church in Jerusalem not only experienced miraculous numerical growth, she experienced radical spiritual growth. The lives of believers were completely transformed in Christ. Every one within the church possessed a holy and reverent fear of the Lord. This speaks of “*reverence and respect while being amazed and astonished.*” The church was filled with those who were living daily in reverent fear of the Lord as they were being conformed to the image of Christ. There was no doubt that these had been saved by grace. Their lives were changed and they were growing in faith.

- This aspect of Christian living has largely been lost in our modern day. The cares of life and complacency have generated a casual approach to the church and our service to the Lord. We do not stand in utter amazement of our Lord. Most spend little, if any time preparing for our services. There is little communion with the Lord throughout the week. We attend services on a regular basis, without any expectation of a move of God, and we typically receive what we expect. The average church goer puts little into the service and receives even less.

- I am praying for a move of the Spirit among us that will shake us from our complacency and generate an earnest expectation of God to work among us in ways we have never experienced. We need to see the Lord, high and lifted up! We need to spend time in communion with Him and in His Word each day. We need to draw nigh to Him, and earnestly desire Him to conform our lives to His image! A church that fears the Lord will see evidence of His favor and blessing! Those who fear the Lord will experience the awesome power of God in their lives.

**V. Their Credibility among Society (43b)** – *And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles.* As the church lived in fear of the Lord, she experienced His awesome power among them. The apostles were enabled to perform great miracles within society. Even those outside the faith had to admit that something supernatural was happening in their midst. God was at work and it was evident for all to see.

- We do not have the power to perform miracles like the apostles did, but there is a principle here we need to embrace. Although we are limited, our Lord is not. He still possesses the power to move in our midst and reveal His presence in undeniable ways. A strong and stable church will be recognized within the community. All will not believe, but word will get out that the Lord is working among strong churches. The evidence will be undeniable. The believers will live in such a way that others recognize their genuineness of faith. The church will have a testimony among the community that cannot be denied.
- That is what I desire for us; not for our glory, but for the Lord's. I want Fellowship to be a place known for the presence and power of God. I want our people to be known for their love for the Lord and faithfulness to Him! Not physically speaking, but spiritually, I want the Lord to set this place on fire so the community will be compelled to come and watch it burn. I want folks to hear of the great and mighty things God is doing in our midst! I want us to be known as a people who love God, one another, and our fellow man. I want us to have a solid, convicting testimony within our community.

**VI. Their Cooperation in Unity (44) – [And all that believed were together, and had all things common.](#)**

We considered this verse a few weeks ago, but its significance cannot be over-emphasized. The early church possessed great unity. They were together and had all things common. There was no division or hindrance among them. The church was not made up of cliques or mini-congregations. They embraced a common faith and vision. They stood together, united in Christ. They possessed a compelling purpose and were committed to move forward together.

- I have seen individuals grow spiritually in the midst of a divided congregation, but it is rare. If we are to be a strong, vibrant church, we must possess unity. We must be willing to embrace a common vision and pursue a common purpose. Fellowship has potential to experience amazing growth and blessing, but we must be united to attain it. We must seek the greater good of the church and the glory of God above our own preferences and desires. We must be willing to lay aside anything that would hinder us becoming what God desires of us. United we can see miraculous blessing, but divided we will fall. Unity is essential to stability!

**Conclusion:** This has been a powerful and convicting passage. While Fellowship is a great church, we too have room for improvement. Has the Lord spoken to you today? What do you desire for our future? Are you willing to conform to the will of God in order to accomplish His purpose for our lives? If He has spoken, heed His call and respond in obedience. If you are yet unsaved, respond to the call of salvation in order to become part of the church, the body of Christ!