

9-10-2023

The Church

*"I believe that only one power exists on this sorry planet that can (transform the human heart). It's the power of the love of Jesus Christ, the love that conquers sin and wipes out shame and heals wounds and reconciles enemies and patches broken dreams and ultimately changes the world, one life at a time. And what grips my heart everyday is the knowledge that the radical message of that transforming love has been given to the church."*

*"That means in a very real way the future of the world rests in the hands of local congregations like yours and mine. It's the church or it's lights out. Without church so filled with the power of God that they can't help but spill goodness and peace and love and joy into the world, depravity will win the day; evil will flood the world. But it does not have to be that way. Strong, growing communities of faith can turn the tide of history. They can! Don't bother looking elsewhere. The church is it." - Bill Hybels, Courageous Leadership*

*So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. **42** And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. **43** And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. **44** And all who believed were together and had all things in common. **45** And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. **46** And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, **47** praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved. Acts 2:41-47*

*And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness. **32** Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common. **33** And with great power the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. Acts 4:31-33*

## Unity

*"All the believers were one in heart and mind."*

### 1) The Word

*And they **devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching** and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. Acts 2:42*

You need to study God's word

*"If most people would trade their TV time for Bible reading, they'd finish the entire Bible in four weeks or less." – John Piper*

- Read the Bible daily

*“The best evidence of the Bible’s being the word of God is to be found between its covers. It proves itself.” – Charles Hodge*

- Read good books about the Bible by good theologians
- Listen to or stream good preaching by Bible-based preachers and teachers

*“Sometimes we confuse our agenda we have for God with God Himself. The best way to not speak for Him and let Him speak to you – the scriptures.” – Tim Keller*

## 2) Prayer

*And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread **and the prayers**. Acts 2:42*

***And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness... Acts 4:31***

*do not be anxious about anything, but in **everything** by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving **let your requests be made known to God**. Philippians 4:6*

*casting all your anxieties on him, because **he cares for you**. 1 Peter 5:7*

*Rejoice always, **17 pray without ceasing**, **18** give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18*

*Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, **3** for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. **4** And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. James 1:2-4*

*My sheep **hear my voice**, and I know them, and they follow me. John 10:27*

## 3) Have a great witness.

*And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and **the fellowship**, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. Acts 2:42*

## 4) Be devoted to learning together

- Make church services a priority

*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 10:25*

- Make attending a Bible study a habit

*And with great power the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. Acts 4:33*