

What We Come to Church to Do - Fellowship

July 22, 2018

Ephesians 2:19-21 ESV

19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,

20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone,

21 in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord.

Has the Church in America moved off and outside of the foundation laid by the foundation of the original apostles and prophets?

Acts 2:37-47 NASB

37 Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?"

38 Peter said to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

39 "For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself."

40 And with many other words he solemnly testified and kept on exhorting them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation!"

41 So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls.

42 They were continually devoting themselves (*proskartereō - continue instant, continue steadfastly, give oneself continually, to persevere and not faint, constantly diligent, wait on constantly*) to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship (*koinōnia - communication, communion, community, joint participation, intercourse, intimacy, a gift jointly contributed*), to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

43 Everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles.

44 And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common;

45 and they [began] selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need.

46 Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart,

47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.

The Church is an intimate community of:

- **Repentance** - vs. 38 "Repent..."

The Church is a community of deep and genuine repentance; a true turning from sin, originating from godly sorrow, marked by unmistakable change in behavior and lifestyle as evidenced in godly fruit.

Acts 2:37

37 Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?"

Matthew 3:4-8 ESV

4 Now John wore a garment of camel's hair and a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey.

5 Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region about the Jordan were going out to him,

6 and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.

7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"

8 Bear fruit in keeping with repentance.

James 5:14-16 ESV

14 Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.

15 And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.

16 Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.

- **Forgiveness of Sins** - vs. 38 "...be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins..."

God's love, grace, mercy and forgiveness is truly unlimited and incomprehensible for anyone (sinner and saint) who is repentant with true godly sorrow.

Romans 5:20 CSB

20 But where sin multiplied, grace multiplied even more.

1 John 1:9 ESV

9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Hearing the Truth of God's Word, the wickedness of our depravity and the certainty of eternal judgment and damnation creates an unspeakable gratitude and a shameless loyalty to Jesus.

Luke 7:44-47 CSB

44 Turning to the woman, he [Jesus] said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she, with her tears, has washed my feet and wiped them with her hair.

45 "You gave me no kiss, but she hasn't stopped kissing my feet since I came in.

46 "You didn't anoint my head with olive oil, but she has anointed my feet with perfume.

47 "Therefore I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven; that's why she loved much. But the one who is forgiven little, loves little."

- **Receiving the Holy Spirit** - vs. 38 “you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

God loves to freely pour out on His children the Holy Spirit, who brings us help, illumination and power.

Luke 11:11-13 ESV

11 What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent;

12 or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion?

13 If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"

John 14:16 KJV [HELP]

16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter (paraklētos - called to one's side, NAS - "Helper", CSB - "Counselor"), that he may abide with you for ever;

John 16:13 ESV [ILLUMINATION]

13 When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.

Acts 1:8 ESV [POWER]

8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

To deny the Holy Spirit, His Person, His gifts, to deny the birth of the Church on the day of Pentecost, is to deny the very One Who makes the Church the Church.

- **Divine Appointment** - vs. 39 “...as many as the Lord will call to Himself...”

The Church gaining and losing members is not the result of marketing, technology, human effort or failure. The Church and its members are sovereignly governed by the Head, Jesus Christ, and administered by the Holy Spirit.

John 6:41-44 ESV

41 So the Jews grumbled about him, because he said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven."

42 They said, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does he now say, 'I have come down from heaven'?"

43 Jesus answered them, "Do not grumble among yourselves.

44 No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day.

Ephesians 2:21-22 NASB

21 in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord,

22 in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.

1 Corinthians 12:18 NASB

18 But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired.

- **Holiness and Purity** - vs. 40 “Be saved from this perverse generation.”

First and foremost, the Church is the dwelling and habitation of God on the earth. This is the Church’s identity, function and purpose before any other priority. A holy God does not dwell in the midst of sinful people.

2 Corinthians 6:16-18 ESV

16 What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, “I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.”

17 Therefore go out from their midst, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; then I will welcome you,

18 and I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to me, says the Lord Almighty.”

2 Timothy 2:4 ESV

4 No soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuits, since his aim is to please the one who enlisted him.

- **Devotion and Commitment** - vs. 42 “They were continually devoting themselves...”

The devotion and commitment to one another comes from the clear understanding that the eternal destinies of our brothers and sisters are at stake. The Church is not a social club where we receive personal validation from the acceptance of others. We are responsible to care for each other every day until we all reach heaven.

Hebrews 3:12-14 ESV

12 Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God.

13 But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called “today,” that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

14 For we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end.