

WORD

⁴⁶And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts,
⁴⁷praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved. **ACTS 2:46,47**

The book of Acts records how the church started, grew, and spread. It is an exciting depiction of how a few unschooled followers of Jesus changed the world by boldly proclaiming His gospel to the world. In this lesson, we will look at what the church is and why we exist.

1 The church is a community of believers.

³⁸And Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. . . .”
⁴¹So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. **ACTS 2:38,41**

Jesus’ followers came together because of their common faith. Their backgrounds, personalities, and preferences took a backseat to their belief in Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection. These followers—including us—make up the church. How is our misconception of the church as a building different from what the Bible says the church is?

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2

The church is a community of believers that help each other grow.

And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

ACTS 2:42

The community of believers grew in their faith by studying the apostles' teaching, praying, and sharing life together. In the same way, we will grow as we are part of a community that seeks after God. How have you grown in your faith as you've been part of a local church?

3

The church is a community of believers called to go and make disciples.

¹⁹"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." **MATTHEW 28:19,20**

The church grew in obedience to Jesus' command—they were not supposed to stay where they were. Instead, they were to go and make disciples, baptize them, and teach them to obey God. This is the story unfolding in the book of Acts. Why shouldn't the church keep the gospel to herself? Why should we tell those far away from God about His salvation and mercy?

APPLICATION

- Do you believe in Jesus and trust in Him for your salvation? If not, would you like to know more about what He has done for you, so you could put your hope and faith in Him today?
- How have you grown in your relationship with God as part of a community of believers? How can you, in turn, help others grow this coming week?
- Are you a disciple? Are you making disciples? How can you apply what you've learned today?

PRAYER

- Thank God for the community of believers He has placed you in. Thank Him for your pastors, leaders, and friends.
- Pray that you would help one another honor and obey God always. Pray that the church would always be united in fulfilling God's purpose on earth.
- Pray that the gospel would continue to be preached and more disciples would be made through the church.



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