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WARM-UP

- Tell us about one of your favorite family celebrations.
- When was the last time you met someone new? Share your experience.
- What is the most recent get together you had with your friends? What did you like the most about it?

WORD

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**

The apostles and followers of Jesus preached the gospel for the first time during the Festival of Pentecost to the Jews gathered in Jerusalem. Peter told them to *repent and be baptized* as an external and public display of their decision to follow Jesus. On that day, 3,000 Jews *were added* to the disciples (around 120 in number), creating the very first church community. Here we will look at three qualities that defined the first church community, which we can apply in our context as well.

1 Shared Faith

⁴²And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. ⁴³And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. **ACTS 2:42,43**

The book of Acts says that the first church community *devoted [itself] to the apostles’ teaching*. With only 120 disciples to teach 3,000 new believers, they would have had to come together to listen to teachings about Jesus. The new believers began to share expressions of faith, such as the Lord’s Supper, or communion. This gave them a unique common ground. This shared faith eventually led to shared life. What does it mean to “devote” yourself to something? How have you learned to devote yourself to the Word?

2 Shared Life

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

⁴⁵And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. ⁴⁶And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts . . . **ACTS 2:44-46**

The new shared faith of the believers brought them into one community. They shared and even sold *possessions* and *belongings* to provide for those in need. They went to the *temple* and ate together. This is what our church community today should be like. We should share life together: be generous, have compassion, and actively be with those in our church community. How did you learn to value the church and share life with others?

3 Shared Mission

. . . 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 2:47**

The 50,000 or so inhabitants of Jerusalem surely noticed a 3,000-member community that sprang up literally overnight. The first thing they would see is the way the believers shared faith and life with one another. God used this first church community to change the hearts of those who saw them, adding to *their number day by day those who were being saved*, and giving the community a shared mission. The purpose of being together is to tell others about Jesus, and lead more to Him. What's the mission of our church, and what's our role in it?

APPLICATION

- What is your idea of church, and how does it differ from what the Bible says about it? What's one thing you learned today and how will you apply it in your life?
- Are you part of a church community that Christ can use to draw others in and change lives? What can you do to grow in your faith with other believers?
- Who among your family and friends is not yet part of a church community? What can you do to invite them to be part of our community this week?

PRAYER

- Thank God for your Victory group and those in your church community who are willing to walk with you in devotion to the Word of God and to fellowship.
- Ask God for opportunities to be generous, show compassion, and share meals with your family and friends in the church.
- Pray for a chance to draw family and friends who have not yet heard and understood the gospel into your church community this week.



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