



Life Group Study Questions*

Sent - Part 3 (Acts 41-47) "A Powerful Unity"

There is declining commitment to attend worship services, and serve in church all over America over the past few decades.

1. Does your own experience support this conclusion? Why or why not?

Spend time discussing some of the reasons why members might miss corporate worship on Sunday mornings (i.e., vacation, extracurricular activities, etc.).

In some denominational circles, it was not uncommon for churches in the past to carefully track and reward perfect attendance on Sunday mornings. Many church researchers realize these times are well behind us. "Fatigue from the night before and the threat of a mild rain storm are often excuse enough for some to stay home rather than attend a church's weekly gathering" (Rainer). What a fascinating contrast between this attitude and that of the early church, as we will see in Acts 2:41-47.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ACTS 2:41-47.

2. Why was belonging to a community of believers so important to these first Christians? What made these believers want to get together? What did the people demonstrate by selling their possessions and by their unified commitment to the church?

3. Of the five functions—worship, biblical teaching, fellowship, service, and evangelism—which do you more naturally gravitate toward? Why is the balance of all five important for the individual Christian and the church as a whole? What are needs improving in your life and in the life of the church?

4. What impact do you think the early church had on it's community (v. 47)? What can the world learn about God through healthy Christian community? For first-century Christians, what was the draw of becoming part of a local body of believers? Is it the same draw today? Why or why not?

5. Read Matthew 16:24-26 - What did Jesus say a disciple is willing to sacrifice?

* For quality discussion take time to answer all questions as thoroughly as possible

The unity of the church was a testimony to God's presence, and "every day the Lord added to them those who were being saved" (v. 47). The early church was a growing church. They made loving other believers as themselves a priority for their fellowship, even to the point of selling private property in order to provide for members in need (vv. 44-45). They followed Jesus' Great Commandment to a "T." They had a joyous commitment rather than a begrudging participation. As a result, God honored them by blessing them with new members every day.

Sadly, today's church have become a preference driven church.

Think about the following questions?

What is a preference? What are some of the preferences you have about church?

Which of your preferences are more important than others?

How many of your preferences have to be fulfilled in order for you to faithfully attend your church's weekly gathering?

Dr. Thom Rainer states that there are three common preferences about church—the music style, the preaching style, and a lack of comfort in worship.

What is the common thread running between these examples?

In all of these examples, the time of corporate worship is about me, myself, and I. It is about my needs, my preferences, and my wants. It's hard to find God in this scenario. We tend to make worship all about us, when it is supposed to be all about God.

How can we go from preference centered, to Christ centered?

APPLICATION

Dr. Rainer calls the church to four simple items of action when it comes to corporate worship: I will attend worship services; I will pray before I attend worship; I will pray as I enter the worship center or sanctuary; I will pray that I will be a worshiper instead of a judge.

How might putting these resolutions to practice revolutionize corporate worship at our church?

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