

What Are the Marks of a New Testament Church?

Date: 1/31/16

Read Together

Read the Scripture and overview below before your Life Group meets.

Scripture passage: Acts 2:37-47

If you have ever put together a puzzle or built a model involving multiple parts, you know its much easier if you can see the finished product. A unifying picture gives context, meaning, understanding, and vision. For many church is all about the “parts.” Many engage with these “parts” and enjoy serving within the church and participating in Bible studies and programs. And these are all good things! There are times, however, when we need a better understanding of the whole – a picture unifying all of these parts and fulfilling a mission God has intended for His people.

In Acts we see that a moment of decision for the first church led them into a life of discipleship that reshaped and reconfigured their lives together. They became parts in a bigger picture and larger place. Since the message of the church defines the mission of the church, we must fully understand what makes a New Testament Church. In doing so we can become a biblically functioning community of believers who not only share a common confession of faith, but also share common commitments of identity, generosity, and hope.

Pray Together

Use the first few minutes of your lesson to lead your group in a focused prayer time.

- **Praise** Jesus as the author and perfecter of our faith. Praise Him for His faithfulness to complete His Bride, the Church.
- **Repent** from any disobedience to the Word of God.
- **Ask** the Holy Spirit to prompt you to read the Word, pray, and obey God’s commands.
- **Yield** to the Spirit’s power and obey!

Discuss Together

Use these questions to engage in an informative and impactful discussion with your Life Group.

- Briefly discuss the importance of understanding the mission and vision of the Church. Direct your group to Proverbs 29:18.

Read Acts 2:37-47

- A New Testament Church is a gathering of people who share a common confession of faith in Jesus Christ. (vv. 38-39)
 - Discuss the meaning of “repent.”
 - How is true repentance a declaration of desperation for God?
 - Pastor McKinley called repentance, “a siren of hope.” What does this mean?
 - Have you been “wrecked” for the Gospel? Share your story.
 - What is New Testament baptism?
 - Why is baptism a matter of obedience?



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- A New Testament Church is a gathering of people who share a common craving for biblical instruction. (v. 42)
 - Talk about the importance of solid biblical teaching within the church and personally, and its impact on patterning a person's way of life toward the Gospel.
 - Do you desire for your heart and mind to be shaped and influenced by the truth of God's Word or the trends of the times?
 - Why is remaining in the Word of God vitally important to the growth and maturity of a believer? (See John 1:1, 15:4 Hebrews 4:12)
 - Have you prayed for hunger and thirst for God's Word recently? Pray for yourself and others to crave God's Word this week.
- A New Testament Church is a gathering of people who share a common identity in a new community. (vv. 42, 46)
 - Discuss the connection, association, and interaction of the three activities listed in these verses: fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayer.
 - How has "doing life together" as a community of believers impacted your life?
- A New Testament Church is a gathering of people who share a common commitment to generosity. (v. 47)
 - How has sacrificing and giving to others strengthened your faith, grown you as a Christ follower, and helped you move beyond yourself to focus on others for the sake of the Gospel?
- A New Testament Church is a gathering of people who share a common hope in a sure salvation. (vv. 46-47)
 - Does your hope in Jesus Christ give you a daily source of encouragement and strength? Give an example from your everyday life.
 - How have you seen the favor of God extended to our church, your community of believers, and you personally as a result of the hope and security that comes from Christ?

Do Life Together

These questions are meant to encourage you to apply spiritual truth and live on mission for Jesus. It is your Life Group leader's responsibility to challenge you and hold you accountable to taking steps of growth and faith. Take these questions to heart. Allow the Holy Spirit to prompt you to grow in your role as a disciple and ultimately, a disciple-maker.

- As a result of understanding the "big picture" of the New Testament Church, whom will you impact with the Gospel of Christ this week?



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