

empowered

----- ORDINARY PEOPLE. EXTRAORDINARY GOD. -----

Small Group Study #2

Church Alive

Pray and ask God to speak to your group during today's study. Open up your Bible and read Acts 2:42-47.

1. After 3000 people become Followers of Jesus at Pentecost, the church needed to organize itself. They needed to create community practices that would help every believer grow deeper in faith, while also continuing to reach outward. The Spirit led them to create "house churches." These house fellowships carried out the whole mission of the church. When you read the verses today – what do you identify as their key practices? Which of these practices does your small group engage in? Which could you add into the mix?
2. While the early "house churches" were the primary places where believers grew in discipleship and reached out to those in their spheres of influence, their larger gatherings were also important. In Jerusalem all the house churches met together in the Temple Courts. In Corinth they met in the larger homes of wealthier Christians. Bethel is a community of the large gathering (Sundays) and the small gathering (small groups). How do you see the two gatherings interacting with each other? What is the unique role of each one? Why do we need both?
3. Verse 47 says "And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved." What do you think made the early church so magnetic to people far from God? How do you think we can live this out today?

Read Acts 4:32-5:11

1. The early church was marked by radical generosity. Verse 34 says that "there were no needy persons among them" because "from time to time" property was sold to bless those in need. Have you ever been part of, or have you heard of, stories of radical generosity in the church? What did that teach you about God's heart?
2. The early church was also marked by radical holiness. Mirroring the story of Achan (Joshua 7), at this essential time in the development of the church a harsh penalty was given by God to one couple. In the story, the character of Barnabas is contrasted with Ananias and Sapphira. While land is sold and the money given to the community in both cases, there is a key difference between the heart of Barnabas and the hearts of Ananias and Sapphira. Why do motives matter in honoring God with our whole lives? What does this have to do with holiness?

Prayer

Ask God to bless your small group in a new and fresh way. Ask Him to lead you into all the fullness of Acts 2:42-47. Have the verses open in front of you so you can pray through them.

Pray also for God to reveal to you a way you can radically bless someone in your group's sphere of influence.

Optional Small Group Worship Elements

Additional Scripture Readings for further reflection

Matthew 28:16-20

Deuteronomy 15:4

John 13:35

Joshua 7