

## What The Lord Desires A Local Church Should Be

As Christians, we need to make sure we desire the same type of local church the Lord does

## Introduction

- The Jews wanted to remake Jesus into their image of the Messiah
- Likewise, many Christians today want to make the local church into their image rather than following the Lord's pattern, implementing His desires

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## Introduction

What type of local church do you desire?

Social group that we like, feel comfortable with these kind of people

Rich local church

Socially-minded church

"Partied" church

Traditional church

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## Introduction

- Whatever we desire a local church to be will determine the type of local church we will strive to develop
- What we need to do is not follow our own desires of what we want a local church to be but we should seek to desire a local church to be what the Lord desires it to be
- In the New Testament, He has given us His pattern showing us what He would have a local church to be

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## Introduction

- The Lord's universal church is that body of people He saves through the gospel by the blood of His Son
- Then, a local church is where members of His universal church meet together in a given place and seek to be what He desires them to be, working and worshipping together as He directs

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## Jesus' Universal Church

Eph 1:22 And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church,

Eph 1:23 which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

Act 2:36 "Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ--this Jesus whom you crucified."

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## Jesus' Universal Church

Act 2:37 Now when they heard *this*, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?"

Act 2:38 Peter *said* to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

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## Jesus' Universal Church

Act 2:41 So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls.

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## A Local Church

Act 2:42 They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

Php 1:1 Paul and Timothy, bond-servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons:

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## What The Lord Desires A Local Church Should Be

Members devoted to  
The apostles' teaching  
Worship

Members who feared God  
Benevolent members  
Unified members  
Members who edified

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## What The Lord Desires A Local Church Should Be

Members who evangelized  
Members who preferred one another's company  
Members who praised God  
Influential members

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## What The Lord Desires A Local Church Should Be

Act 2:42 They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

Act 2:43 Everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles.

Act 2:44 And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common;

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## What The Lord Desires A Local Church Should Be

Act 2:45 and they *began* selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need.

Act 2:46 Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart,

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## What The Lord Desires A Local Church Should Be

Act 2:47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.

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## Devoted Members

Act 2:42 They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

Devoting or steadfastly means to be earnest toward, to persevere, be constantly diligent

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## Devoted Opposite of Sluggishness

Heb 6:10 For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love which you have shown toward His name, in having ministered and in still ministering to the saints.

Heb 6:11 And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end,

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## Devoted Opposite of Sluggishness

Heb 6:12 so that you will not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

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## Devoted Opposite of Lukewarmness

Rev 3:14 "To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God, says this:

Rev 3:15 'I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I wish that you were cold or hot.

Rev 3:16 'So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth.

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## Devoted To The Apostles' Teaching

Act 2:42 They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

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## Devoted To The Apostles' Teaching

- Only way we can know how to be saved is through the apostles' teaching
- Only way we can know how to live as Christians and behave as a local church is through the apostles' teaching
- The apostles devoted themselves to teaching the saints and they devoted themselves to learning

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## Devoted To The Apostles' Teaching

Act 6:1 Now at this time while the disciples were increasing *in number*, a complaint arose on the part of the Hellenistic *Jews* against the *native* Hebrews, because their widows were being overlooked in the daily serving of *food*.

Act 6:2 So the twelve summoned the congregation of the disciples and said, "It is not desirable for us to neglect the word of God in order to serve tables.

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## Devoted To The Apostles' Teaching

Act 6:3 "Therefore, brethren, select from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task.

Act 6:4 "But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word."

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## Devoted To The Apostles' Teaching

Mat 28:19 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,

Mat 28:20 teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

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## Devoted To The Apostles' Teaching

- Elders, preachers and teachers in a local church need to be just as devoted to teaching today and members need to be just as devoted to learning
- We must go beyond just being baptized and passively worshipping, passing our time
- This teaching is vital to our salvation

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## Devoted To The Apostles' Teaching

1Ti 3:2 An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach,

1Ti 4:15 Take pains with these things; be *absorbed* in them, so that your progress will be evident to all.

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## Devoted To The Apostles' Teaching

1Ti 4:16 Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things, for as you do this you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you.

2Ti 2:2 The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

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## Devoted To The Apostles' Teaching

Eph 4:15 but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all *aspects* into Him who is the head, *even* Christ,

Eph 4:16 from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

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## Devoted To The Apostles' Teaching

- A local church that does not desire this teaching is on its way out
- A local church is only strong when it has faithful leadership and strong preaching and teaching of the Word

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## Devoted To The Apostles' Teaching

Act 20:28 "Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.

Act 20:29 "I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock;

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## Devoted To The Apostles' Teaching

Act 20:30 and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them.

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## Devoted To The Apostles' Teaching

2Ti 4:2 preach the word; be ready in season *and* out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction.

2Ti 4:3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but *wanting* to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires,

2Ti 4:4 and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths. 31

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Members who feared God  
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Unified members  
Members who edified

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## What The Lord Desires A Local Church Should Be

Members who evangelized  
Members who preferred one another's company  
Members who praised God  
Influential members

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## Devoted To Worship

Act 2:42 They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

Fellowship, the breaking of bread and prayer indicate collective worship, bowing the heart before God

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## Devoted To Worship Opposite of Forsaking Assembling

Heb 10:24 and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds,

Heb 10:25 not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging *one another*; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.

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## Devoted To Fellowship

Act 2:42 They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

Fellowship means communion or sharing in common spiritual things, being partners with God and one another, involves approval and endorsement of others

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## Devoted To Fellowship

- Fellowship has nothing to do with social matters including eating of meals
- Rather, fellowship refers to those spiritual activities in which they were partners with God and with one another
- Some of these activities include
  - Preaching the gospel
  - Partaking of the Lord's supper
  - Helping needy saints

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## Devoted To Fellowship

Php 1:5 in view of your participation in the gospel from the first day until now.  
1Co 10:16 Is not the cup of blessing which we bless a sharing in the blood of Christ? Is not the bread which we break a sharing in the body of Christ?  
Rom 15:26 For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem.

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## Devoted To The Breaking of Bread

- Again, they were not devoted to social meals but in remembering the Lord's death, the sacrifice for our sins
- Are our minds upon Him when we partake of the supper?

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## Devoted To The Breaking of Bread

Act 20:7 On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul *began* talking to them, intending to leave the next day, and he prolonged his message until midnight.

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## Devoted To The Breaking of Bread

Mat 26:26 While they were eating, Jesus took *some* bread, and after a blessing, He broke *it* and gave *it* to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is My body."

Mat 26:27 And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave *it* to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you;

Mat 26:28 for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins.

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## Devoted To Prayer

- Prayer was not some empty public ritual but was a constant, diligent practice of communicating with God, lifting up to Him their heartfelt requests
- Prayer was not limited to just their assemblies but was a vital part of their daily lives
- Prayer is powerful because the God who hears and answers prayer is powerful

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## Devoted To Prayer

Col 4:2 Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with *an attitude of* thanksgiving;

Col 4:3 praying at the same time for us as well, that God will open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned;

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## Devoted To Prayer

Php 4:6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

Php 4:7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

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## Devoted To Prayer

Act 12:5 So Peter was kept in the prison, but prayer for him was being made fervently by the church to God.

Act 12:6 On the very night when Herod was about to bring him forward, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and guards in front of the door were watching over the prison.

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## Devoted To Prayer

Act 12:7 And behold, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared and a light shone in the cell; and he struck Peter's side and woke him up, saying, "Get up quickly." And his chains fell off his hands.

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## Members Who Feared God

Act 2:43 Everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles.

Fear means to be afraid or alarmed  
Greek word is the one from which we get our word phobia

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## Members Who Feared God

- They were not casual in their service to God but did so in fear
- Caution – casualness of participation and dress in worship
- They recognized they were serving an awesome God
- Those Christians who say "I don't fear God, I love Him." are misguided lacking the quality of godly fear needed to serve Him acceptably

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## Members Who Feared God

Heb 12:28 Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe;

Heb 12:29 for our God is a consuming fire.

1Co 14:40 But all things must be done properly and in an orderly manner.

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## Members Who Feared God

Psa 89:6 For who in the skies is comparable to the LORD? Who among the sons of the mighty is like the LORD,

Psa 89:7 A God greatly feared in the council of the holy ones, And awesome above all those who are around Him?

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## Members Who Feared God

2Sa 6:6 But when they came to the threshing floor of Nacon, Uzzah reached out toward the ark of God and took hold of it, for the oxen nearly upset *it*.

2Sa 6:7 And the anger of the LORD burned against Uzzah, and God struck him down there for his irreverence; and he died there by the ark of God.

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## Members Who Feared God

Mat 10:28 "Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

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## Members Who Feared God

2Co 5:9 Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him.

2Co 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

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## Members Who Feared God

2Co 5:11 Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men, but we are made manifest to God; and I hope that we are made manifest also in your consciences.

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## Benevolent Members

Act 2:44 And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common;  
Act 2:45 and they *began* selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need.

Benevolence means to meet the needs of others (in this case saints) – food, clothing, housing, medical care

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## Benevolent Members

- Out of their love for God and love for one another, they shared what the Lord had given them to help all those saints who were in genuine need of life's necessities
- There is no indication they lived communally where no one owned anything but as they had ability, they sold their properties and possessions to help others in need

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## Benevolent Members

Act 4:34 For there was not a needy person among them, for all who were owners of land or houses would sell them and bring the proceeds of the sales  
Act 4:35 and lay them at the apostles' feet, and they would be distributed to each as any had need.

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## Benevolent Members

1Jn 3:16 We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

1Jn 3:17 But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him?

1Jn 3:18 Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth.

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## Benevolent Members

- As they worked and were blessed by the Lord beyond their needs, they acted so their brethren could be relieved
- This was done then and should be done now without any centralized organizations being involved
- In this way, they acted like Christ

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## Benevolent Members

Eph 4:28 He who steals must steal no longer; but rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have *something* to share with one who has need.

1Ti 5:8 But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

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## Benevolent Members

1Ti 5:16 If any woman who is a believer has *dependent* widows, she must assist them and the church must not be burdened, so that it may assist those who are widows indeed.

Act 20:35 "In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner you must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'" 61

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## Unified Members

Act 2:46 Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart,

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## Unified Members

- Based on their submission to the apostles' teaching, they were united with God and with one another
- Their unity was not a unity of compromise but a unity of mutual agreement upon and practice of the Word
- A local church that is not unified on the Word will not progress!

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## Unified Members

Joh 17:20 "I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word;

Joh 17:21 that they may all be one; even as You, Father, *are* in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me.

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## Unified Members

Act 2:42 They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

1Co 1:10 Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment.

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## Members Who Edified

Act 2:46 Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart,

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## Members Who Edified

- They built each other up through the Word daily
- The only encouragement that can strengthen our faith and help us grow in the Lord is the Word of God, the apostles' teaching
- Their edification was not limited to weekly meetings or even to the temple itself but it was a constant part of their lives and should be in ours

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## Members Who Edified

1Co 14:26 What is *the outcome* then, brethren? When you assemble, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification.

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## Members Who Edified

Act 20:32 "And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build *you* up and to give *you* the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

Eph 4:29 Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a *word* as is good for edification according to the need of *the moment*, so that it will give grace to those who hear.

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## Members Who Evangelized

Act 2:46 Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart,

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## Members Who Evangelized

- Evangelism was a daily personal concern to the members of the Jerusalem church
- They did not limit evangelistic activity to inviting visitors to a weekly assembly
- They were so committed to personally evangelizing that they continued to do so under adverse conditions

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## Members Who Evangelized

Act 5:40 They took his advice; and after calling the apostles in, they flogged them and ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and *then* released them.

Act 5:41 So they went on their way from the presence of the Council, rejoicing that they had been considered worthy to suffer shame for *His* name.

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## Members Who Evangelized

Act 5:42 And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they kept right on teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.

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## Members Who Evangelized

Act 8:1 Saul was in hearty agreement with putting him to death. And on that day a great persecution began against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.

Act 8:2 *Some* devout men buried Stephen, and made loud lamentation over him.

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## Members Who Evangelized

Act 8:3 But Saul *began* ravaging the church, entering house after house, and dragging off men and women, he would put them in prison.

Act 8:4 Therefore, those who had been scattered went about preaching the word.

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## Members Who Preferred One Another's Company

Act 2:46 Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart,

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## Members Who Preferred One Another's Company

- Not only did they worship and work together as a local church but they also were together socially, ate their meals gladly together
- What is behind this being together socially?
- Because of their faith in and love for the Lord, they loved and preferred each others' company

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## Members Who Preferred One Another's Company

Rom 12:9 *Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good.*  
Rom 12:10 *Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor;*  
Rom 12:11 *not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord;*

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## Members Who Preferred One Another's Company

Rom 12:12 *rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer,*  
Rom 12:13 *contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality.*

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## Members Who Preferred One Another's Company

- Our social gatherings should never be only social in nature, devoid of any spiritual attitudes and behavior, patterned after the world
- But there is something wrong when Christians try to make social gatherings a collective work of the local church rather than a natural extension of simply being individual Christians who share mutual interests, goals and purpose

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## Members Who Preferred One Another's Company

Deu 6:4 *"Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one!*  
Deu 6:5 *"You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.*  
Deu 6:6 *"These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart.*

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## Members Who Preferred One Another's Company

Deu 6:7 *"You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up.*  
Deu 6:8 *"You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead.*  
Deu 6:9 *"You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates<sup>84</sup>*

## Members Who Preferred One Another's Company

1Co 11:33 So then, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another.

1Co 11:34 If anyone is hungry, let him eat at home, so that you will not come together for judgment. The remaining matters I will arrange when I come.

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## Members Who Preferred One Another's Company

- There is something wrong when Christians prefer to be with people in the world in social settings more than they do with the people of God
- We must be the type of people that the world wants to imitate
- We should have no reason to envy the world

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## Members Who Praised God

Act 2:47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.

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## Members Who Praised God

- They praised God not only when assembled together but in their daily lives
- Praising God in word and also song, in the assembly and in the world
- Praising God in their behavior as His obedient children

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## Members Who Praised God

JAM 5:13 ¶ Is anyone among you suffering? Then he must pray. Is anyone cheerful? He is to sing praises.

ACT 16:25 ¶ But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns of praise to God, and the prisoners were listening to them;

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## Members Who Praised God

Heb 13:15 Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name.

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## Influential Members

Act 2:47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.

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## Influential Members

- By living the devoted Christian life, they influenced others to want to be saved
- To do less than that will destroy our ability to evangelize as the Lord intends
- We live the Christian life foremost that the Lord may be praised and honored above all

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## Influential Members

1Pe 2:11 Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul.

1Pe 2:12 Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe *them*, glorify God in the day of visitation.

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## The Lord Added Them To His Body, His Church

Act 2:47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.

Don't you want to be added to His only saved body, His church today?

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## The Lord Added Them To His Body, His Church

Act 2:38 Peter *said* to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Act 2:41 So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls.

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