

A BIBLE BASED PROGRAMME FOR THE CHURCH

(Act 2:42) And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

(Act 2:43) And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles.

(Act 2:44) And all that believed were together, and had all things common;

(Act 2:45) And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all *men*, as every man had need.

(Act 2:46) And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart,

(Act 2:47) Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

Introduction:

With Pentecost being so close to us I do believe that it is good to go back and examine the behaviour of the believers when they first experienced the power and anointing of the Holy Spirit. I also believe that the eagerness and the attitude of those early believers should also be found in our hearts and minds.

This portion of the Bible is rich with what should actually take place in a church. In this article we will look at 'how' we should behave without looking at the 'what' we should do. By this we will look at the general guidance given in the Word and leave you as the reader to plan your specific action regarding what you understand in the Bible.

The Doctrine

It is important to know what and why we believe something, and here we have many believers who think they know what the Bible teaches but sadly that is as far as it goes. We must go beyond a knowledge and purpose in our hearts to adhere to what we believe. With the word "stedfast" being used in this passage we get the idea of sticking to something without budging from it.

There is no compromising the teaching of Scripture. Most homes have Bibles and most people have a smattering of knowledge of what the Bible teaches. The challenge that we face is how detailed a knowledge of the Bible do we want. We must bear in mind that the more we know the Word, the more we will be convicted by the Word, and the more we will understand the Will of God.

The Social Life

Many people think of church being a place where you just go to receive teaching. As soon as the service has ended then we all go our separate ways, only to see each other at the next service. The fellowship aspect is generally ignored because we see ourselves as being entitled to our privacy and quite honestly do not appreciate people knowing us too well. We know that churches are notorious for gossip and on the other hand there are those believers who we would not normally associate ourselves with outside the walls of the church.

We are therefore challenged to accept all our brothers and sisters regardless of their background, culture and education and treat them all with the same Christ kind of love. This is a tough expectation because I am sure that we will all agree that there are times when we rub each other up the wrong way.

The Spiritual Life

Breaking of bread will to me be linked more to the Communion Service even though I do know that it is also a time when believers shared meals with each other. To remember the supreme sacrifice of Jesus Christ jolts me back to the reality of my state and my need of a Saviour.

Having meals with fellow believers is not a special occasion but rather is a normal activity in the church demonstrating that we are in fact fellow believers.

Praise and Worship

As soon as we read about prayers we immediately think of intercession or asking God for something. To many Christians this is the sum total of their prayer life. We ask God and He becomes a slot machine giving us all that we want or demand.

Somehow we have avoided the fact that we were saved to serve God and not God serve us. Yes! Prayer is an act of worship and praise. It is a time when we are able to just say that our God is an awesome God who deserves our adoration on bended knee.

God in Action

I believe that the miracles and wonders that we so desire to see in the Church will become a reality when we commit ourselves to what I have just written. As a person who has a long Pentecostal background I love to see the Holy Spirit display the mighty power of God and I believe that most believers have the same mind.

In most churches when we see the miracles and wonders we think that we have reached the pinnacle of ultimate ministry. We are very happy to witness miracle after miracle and being members of churches where we see miracle after miracle. Yet if you think that you have now had the ultimate experience then I must tell you that your thinking and theology is flawed.

The Unity of the Church

Miracles and wonders are relevant today and have their proper function in the Body of Christ. They are supposed to result in us being together. Sadly this is no longer the case as we are divided by trying to see where the most miracles and wonders are taking place and being a part of that specific ministry.

As soon as another greater and more powerful manifestation of God appears then we move with the flow. We go where the "Spirit" is. Is this the unity that we see in the first church? Yet we do not realise that we need unity because the church has a greater and more important function to fulfil.

Helping the Needy

I guess it is easy to give a person some money if they are in need. We have so many beggars on street corners whom we pity or anger us and depending on our mood we give them something or ignore them. I have always wondered why I feel guilty when I ignore a person in need and soon realised that through

the work of salvation I have been changed into a person who cares. Just like Jesus had compassion, so I too must have compassion and must care about others.

Here we try and find a loophole and we make the smooth statement that we help our fellow Christians. This is very nice and might be a salve to your conscience for a little while, but lets be honest, we are ignoring what the Bible says.

The words “all” and “everyman” clearly tells us that there is no place for discrimination. We cannot say that a person must first come to our church or get saved or become a member or be baptized before we help them.

If you see a need then you and I must do something about it. It was so easy to do this in the early church because the believers saw God in action in their personal lives and in the Church. Today we first want to ask God if He wants us to help a person in need whether the person is a believer or not.

Conclusion:

What is important to me in this passage is the fact that all these things were regular or daily practises. It was not a once off campaign. Every day the church was relevant, which meant that individual believers were relevant. As a result of that faithful routine we read that God added daily to the church those who were being saved.

Whilst I am not against evangelistic crusades, and campaigns, and outreaches, I somehow think we are missing the mark. We are trying to add to the church taking over from God instead of caring for the people both saved and unsaved.

Welfare in the local church is considered as an after thought where we try to help others after we have met all our local church program requirements,

MAYBE IN THE LIGHT OF THIS PORTION OF THE WORD HAVE WE NOT GOT THINGS WRONG?

WHERE IS OUR CARING FOR ALL MEN?

DO WE CARE?

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