

A WHOLE NEW TEAM

WEEK 4

AN
ATHLETE
STUDY

BREAKING THE BANNER

The run onto the field in the pregame charges the atmosphere. From a fan's perspective, you see the banner with a logo or slogan. More or less unexpectedly, the static, tranquil banner busts open as a wild bunch of mad-dog players bombard the field. The fans erupt as the team takes the field and the game gets underway.

Last Week we discussed Pentecost, the pivotal moment in history when God's people were assembled in the Church. The "Church" broke through the banner that day and ran onto the field. Don't think bricks and mortar. Think of the people; *those who accepted [Peter's] message [and] were baptized, and that day about three thousand people were added* (Acts 2:41).

Imagine the impact of 3,000 new players hitting the field in Jerusalem! The first church was a megachurch. What impact did that have on the city? How did the Apostles handle such immediate growth? The answer may surprise you.

Immediately after Pentecost, there was one Church in one city. Today, Christ's Church (the big "C" church) is made of up of all believers all around the world. However, there are hundreds of thousands of little "c" local churches. While the big "C" Church is invisibly made up of believers, it's important to realize that the little "c" church is visibly made up of both believers and unbelievers. Because of this, the church you see on the corner will never be *perfect* until the *Perfecter* comes (see Ephesians 5:27).

So, what did the first church look like? As we'll see today, they focused on the very same things that a healthy church today must focus on as well.

ACTS 2:42–47

⁴² And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. ⁴³ And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. ⁴⁴ And all who believed were together and had all things in common. ⁴⁵ And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. ⁴⁶ And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

You might know her, you might not like her. You should. You should love her. Although this song was released almost 20 years ago, no other song teaches, challenges, and convicts us about the church quite like Lecrae's *The Bride*.

This is one of those songs where every line is worth studying—you don't have to agree, but you should consider. Scan the QR code to listen.



DISCUSSION

Have you ever evaluated your priorities? If so, what are they? If not, why not?

1. To what 4 priorities did the Church devote themselves? (42)

2. How did the world respond to this community? (47)

-How did the Lord respond? (47)

3. Select 3 "One Another's" from the Study Notes. How does the example of the Church in action fulfill these "one another's"?

4. On a scale of 1 to 10 how well do you practice the four priorities from the Study Notes? Why?

-Apostle's teaching:

-Fellowship w. other believers:

-Breaking Bread:

-Prayer:

Finding a local church to call "home" is hard. Like a biological family, it can have just a ton of emotion involved. If you need help connecting with a faith family, or if you've been hurt by the church, talk to your coach today!

ICEBREAKER

OBSERVATION

INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

A WHOLE NEW TEAM

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STUDY NOTES

LAYING THE FOUNDATION

Through one brief, Spirit-empowered sermon, God initiated his New Covenant community. But what is the Church? It's not buildings or denominations. It is all believers, the Body of Christ on Earth, working as one in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Paul would later write about the Church that it has *been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone* (Ephesians 2:20). Architecturally speaking, the cornerstone is the priority; it sets the standard for the whole building. If it isn't level, the whole building will be unstable. Although the importance of the cornerstone could hardly be overstated, that does not diminish the importance of the foundation. It gives support to the whole structure and nothing can be more damaging to the life of a building than a weak foundation.

Fortunately, Christ is the perfect cornerstone and the foundation laid by the Apostles and Prophets is equally perfect through the Spirit's power. But what is the foundation? It is the practice and writing of these great men of God. The foundation is not only what we see the Apostles *doing* in Acts 2, but the *record of their doing it* by Luke.

Now, mixing metaphors with architecture and sports, the foundation for an athlete's game is the fundamentals. The foundation must constantly be revisited and reexamined in order that the foundation of an athlete's game is solid. In Acts 2:42–47, we see 4 priorities as it relates to the foundation of the Church's game. It is these 4 priorities that the Apostles exemplified as foundational, and they should constantly be revisited, reexamined, and practiced by the Church.

GOD'S TEAM PRACTICE PRIORITIES

Priority #1, the apostles' teaching leads the pack. For the Greeks, top placement means top priority. This naturally follows the Great Commission, which centers around making disciples by **teaching** them to obey what Christ taught (Matthew 28:19–20). After all, one cannot obey unless someone teaches them *what* to obey—the apostles' teaching in the Bible. The Bible is how God revealed himself, how we can know him sufficiently for salvation, and must be the basis for everything God's Church does.

Priority #2, they were devoted to loving others in **fellowship**. This Greek word (*koinonia*) means more than "hanging out." Biblical fellowship is a shared loving commitment that sacrifices for

others. This idea is witnessed in the repeated New Testament phrase referred to as the "One Another of Scripture." The "One Another" were exemplified in the Church's sacrificial love and humility when they **were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need.**

Priority #3, they were devoted **to the breaking of bread**. Sharing meals **in their homes** reflected deepening family relationships, not just a doctrinal or organizational affiliation. It is one thing to see somebody socially, it is a whole other thing to fellowship through sharing a meal in one's home.

Priority #4, they were devoted **to prayer**. Perhaps following Jesus' pattern (John 17), the Church prayerfully united with the Lord and one another. As we continue in Acts, we'll see how this commitment played a critical role in the early church and for its leaders.

GOD'S TEAM REFLECTS JESUS

As his body, the Church reflects what Jesus is like. Just look at the response by people who witnessed the Church in action—an **awe came upon every soul... all who believed were together and had all things in common... day by day** they would gather together in the **temple... and the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved**. No one forced or required their participation. They functioned in the Spirit, practicing the priorities and reflecting their founder, Jesus.

People too often associate the Church with Sunday services and buildings. The Church isn't a place, it's a people. However, don't make the mistake that so many people do—you need to connect with a local church.

A healthy church is like a training facility with a practice field, weight room, and recovery suite with ice baths. The game isn't what happens inside the walls of the church, it's about what happens outside. But just like a team wouldn't play well if they skipped the training facility, Christians will never be as effective for God's team without connection to a faith family. It's in and through the church that you experience biblical training, multi-generational fellowship, discipline and discipleship. It's more than a Bible study (which is important), it's the Bride of Christ!

ONE ANOTHERS OF SCRIPTURE

1. MEMBERS OF... (Ro. 12:5)
2. DEVOTED TO... (Ro. 12:10A)
3. HONOR... (Ro. 12:10B)
4. HARMONIOUS TO... (Ro. 12:16)
5. LOVE... (Ro. 13:8)
6. EDIFY... (Ro. 14:19)
7. ACCEPT... (Ro. 15:7)
8. INSTRUCT... (Ro. 15:14)
9. GREET... (Ro. 16:16)
10. WAIT FOR... (1 COR. 11:33)
11. CARE FOR... (1 COR. 12:25)
12. BEAR WITH... (EPH. 4:2)
13. BE KIND TO... (EPH. 4:32)
14. SUBMIT TO... (EPH. 5:21)
15. ESTEEM... (PHIL. 2:3)
16. ENCOURAGE... (1 THESS. 4:18)
17. CONFESS SIN... (JAMES 5:16A)
18. PRAY FOR... (JAMES 5:16B)
19. OFFER HOSPITALITY... (1 PET. 4:9)
20. FELLOWSHIP WITH... (1 JN. 1:7)