

INGREDIENTS TO A GREAT CHURCH: LESSONS FROM THE EARLY NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

The early NT church enjoyed a period of great worship, fellowship, discipleship, ministry and outreach. The church was blessed with remarkable spiritual, relational, resource and numerical growth. We can be inspired and share in their blessings by learning and following their example.

KEY PASSAGE: ACTS 2:42-47

Background to Acts 2:42-47 = Acts 1:1 - 2:41

- Jesus resurrected, spends 40 days on earth and gives final encouragement, ascends into heaven. Church starts out with 120 people (1:1- 26)
- Prayer (1:14)
- Promised Holy Spirit comes (2:1-13)
- Peter's Biblical based sermon to the city of Jerusalem (2:14-41)
- 3,000 new believers in response to Peter's sermon!!! 2500% growth in one day!! (Acts 2:41)

From this passage, we can identify 15 ingredients to a great church:

[An underlying foundation for these ingredients is LOVE – love for God and love for people inside and outside the church. We see the Great Commandment (Mat 22:34-40) and the Great Commission (Mat 28:18-20) in action]

1) **Biblical Teaching**

- Bible equips us for good works (II Tim 3:16-17); learning and applying the word is a great foundation to build our lives upon (Mat 7:24-27)

- Gifted leaders equip the body (Eph 4:11-16)

Notes:

2) Fellowship

- Jesus intends for us to love each other (John 13:34-35)
- Should be a no “class” system within the church (Rom 12:16,3; Gal 3:26-29)

Notes:

3) Communion

- Valuable for remembrance, proclamation, reflection & cleansing (I Cor 11:23-32)

Notes:

4) Prayer

- Need constant prayer for each other (Eph 6:18)
- Valuable to pray together (Acts 1:14)

One helpful prayer model:

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Notes:

5) Awe/appreciation of God

- We should feel a sense of joy for what God has done (example: Acts 16:25-34)

Notes:

6) Signs/wonders

- Jesus is still willing to do great things today! (John 14:12-14)

Notes:

7) Unity

- Jesus desires us to be in unity ... it's a great witness to the world (John 17:20-23)

Notes:

8) Sharing/generosity

- Great generosity is rewarded (Acts 4:32-35)

Notes:

9) Meeting of needs

- Real love includes actions and meeting of needs (I John 3:17-18)
- Refer to parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37)

Notes:

10) Regularly meet at church

- Meeting corporately on a regular basis offers opportunity for mutual encouragement and stimulation to love and good works (Hebrews 10:24-25)

Notes:

11) Meeting in homes (small groups)

- Jesus modeled for us; supports discipleship, fellowship, and relationship building

Notes:

12) Eating together

- Jesus modeled for us; provides opportunity for celebration, fellowship and relationship building

Notes:

13) Praise & Worship

- It's good to be thankful and give thanks! (Col 3:15-17)
- We should give thanks for everything! (Eph 5:19-20; Rom 8:28)

Notes:

14) External favor/connections

- Our good works glorify God and gain us favor with people (Mat 5:13-16; I Pet 2:9-12; Rom 13:3; I Tim 2:1-6)

Notes:

15) New believers

- Seeing people saved is positively portrayed throughout Acts
- Jesus came to seek and save the lost ... and we should seek to see the lost saved too (Luke 19:10; Acts 1:8; Mat 28:18-20)
- For practical pointers and ways to pray see Col 4:2-6

Notes:

Another Encouraging Passage: I Thes 5:11-18