

Marks of A Healthy Church, Part 3 **Acts 2:41-47**

*A healthy Church is marked by a deep commitment to the Lord,
to His people and to His work in the world.*

God has made us for community – first with Himself and then also with others. From the early pages of the Bible to the very last pages of the Bible you can find God working in the lives of His people to bring them together *as a people* and *not as a collection of individuals*.

When God's people began in a formal way, they began with one man that became a nation – Israel. When God's people are found at the end of Scripture they are one people – the Church. God has saved you, in part, to belong to the community of His people. The local Church is an expression of that.

All who enter into eternal life through the cross enter into a family. All who enter into this family, enter through the cross.

Acts 2:42 includes this statement:
They were devoted to ... the breaking of bread.

A quick reading of Acts 2 might lead you to conclude that this is a reference to communion. We are probably all familiar with the words of institution – *On the night He was betrayed, Jesus broke bread and gave it to His disciples....*

Acts 2:42 may sound like communion but that's not what is being referred to here.

There is a pattern in Scripture that indicates the breaking of bread was a common way to initiate an ordinary meal...

Luke 9:16 – This is an ordinary meal. The Lord's Supper has not been instituted yet.

Luke 24:30, 35 – This is an ordinary meal in which the Risen Lord Jesus is a guest.

Acts 27:33-36 – Paul urges men to eat a meal. These are men who know nothing of the Last Supper.

When the first Christians gathered together one of the things they did was they joyfully ate together. They shared life and love over a meal. They practiced hospitality through meals.

Please evaluate: *When was the last time you invited someone to your home for a meal?*

It's no accident that the form of the meal shared in community is not detailed for us. We're not told what they ate, what time they ate, with whom they ate. We're not told about the form of the meal or the length of the event. We're not told here that they sang songs or read Scripture or spoke of their faith stories or challenged each other to follow the Lordship of Jesus Christ. It may have included all of that.

We are only told that they broke bread from house to house. They shared life and love in the Lord. Even if you are not a Bible teacher or an extrovert or a long-time Christian, you can use the place where you live or perhaps, an affordable restaurant, as a place where ministry happens.

Pursue hospitality, Romans 12:13

Home Group Discussion Questions:

1. How are you doing at spending time in God's Word?
2. How are you doing in the area of hospitality? What's the hard part of being hospitable for you? What's the easy part?
3. In what ways do you think it is "godly" to be hospitable?
4. Acts 2:46 says they ate together with a joyful and humble attitude. Do you recall what it was that produced this attitude? Hint: Something to do with sins forgiven, see Acts 2:37
5. How will you respond to this week's challenge: Begin the process of becoming intentional with regard to hospitality?