

## Marks of A Healthy Church, Part 4 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.*

Would you want to a part of a Church that looked like Acts 2? It sounds so exciting.

- They learned together
- They were devoted to each other
- They joyfully ate together
- They prayed together

AND...the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

HOWEVER...this same group of people and the Churches that were planted from them experienced great challenges as well:

- Acts 4 – persecution begins
- Acts 5 – pride, lies & greed
- Acts 6 – division based on ethnicity
- Acts 7 – more persecution
- Acts 8 – more persecution + confusion over who is included in God’s offer of salvation
- Acts 10 – more debate over who to let into the Church
- Acts 15 – two of their best leaders experience deep conflict that is never repaired

What does all of this mean? The first Christians are normal people having normal experiences. For better AND for worse, they are a model to us. The summary description of the life of the Church in Acts 2 is a description of what our Church experience can look like. This is where we want to be.

This week, we learn that they were devoted to THE prayers. That’s different than saying they were devoted to prayer. This is not a reference to personal prayers but corporate prayers. THE prayers. They prayed together. Being devoted to the prayers speaks of a community at prayer.

These first Christians, who were Day of Pentecost Spirit-filled Christians, were devoted to praying together. Why? What was the motivation to pray? Acts 2 is before the persecution and the problems, so what drove them to pray?

It seems that the reason they are devoted to praying together has to do with the last words of the Risen Lord Jesus on earth which we have recorded for us just a bit earlier in Acts:

*“You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” Acts 1:8 (HCSB)*

These first Christians pray because of the enormity of the task. They have been entrusted with the task of reaching the world with the gospel. They cannot do this in their own strength. They are driven to prayer. When these First Christians just did their thing – they enjoyed the favor of people, they were intensely persecuted AND they reached a lost world.

## **Home Group Discussion Questions:**

### From Last Week's Message:

- How are you doing in the area of hospitality? What's the hard part of being hospitable for you? What's the easy part?
- How will you respond to this week's challenge: Begin the process of becoming intentional with regard to hospitality?

### From This Week's Message:

1. What challenged you from this week's message?
2. In your opinion, do you think the Acts 2:42-47 passage is a description of normal people?
3. Are you comfortable praying out loud with other people? What are some things you can do to move you toward the privilege of enjoying prayer with your brothers and sisters in Christ?  
(Example: Pray out loud in private. Some people never pray out loud even in private so the idea of praying out loud with others is intimidating.)
4. What obstacles do we often face in pursuit of the responsibility to pray together?
5. Take some time to pray for our Easter services, Cross of Love and Discover Faith events. In addition to praying for these presentations, pray for people to respond to the gospel.