

Marks

of Discipleship

Daily Prayer ■ Weekly Worship ■ Bible Reading
Giving Time, Talents & Resources
Spiritual Friendships ■ Service In & Beyond
the Church

February 26, 2023

Day 1: Acts 2:42

And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

Teaching is explaining either *why we believe* or *what we believe*. The apostles' teaching showed how Jesus fulfilled the Old Testament. Fellowship is sharing with another your life. The sharing is more than verbal but actually going through times of joy and sadness together. Breaking of bread refers to eating meals together. It is not communion but the eating of a meal as a community. Prayers are a way of talking about worship. In Jewish tradition worship and prayer were the same thing.

Question: How would you define "fellowship?"

Challenge: This Sunday see how our worship follows the pattern above and how it does not follow it.

Scripture: Acts 2:42-47

Day 2: Acts 2:43

And fear came upon every soul; and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles.

Signs and wonders are evidence that God approves of something or more often that the message comes from God. The difficulty is figuring out what is a true sign or just someone claiming a natural event is a sign from God. The healing in the first century was a sign that the illness was not a result of sin and therefore not a punishment from God. If a sign or wonder brings about life and demonstrates the love of God then it is from God.

Question: Why were they afraid?

Challenge: Think of something that used to scare you. How did you get over being scared?

Scripture: Jeremiah 32:21

Day 3: Acts 2:44

And all who believed were together and had all things in common;

This early community of Christians in Jerusalem shared all the necessities of life. There were other groups that also did this (military and religious groups) but the Christians shared all things to witness to the love of God. The point is not the sharing but the *why* of the sharing. If we share to show how righteous we are then it would be better to hoard than share. Everything we do in God's name must demonstrate the love of God.

Question: Do you have some things (material things) in common with someone else?

Challenge: Do you approve of sharing everything? Why or why not?

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 12:7

Day 4: Acts 2:45

and they sold their possessions and goods and distributed them to all, as any had need.

While it is true that the members of this church did not have many possessions, there were some that had a good amount. The giving of all they had was done so that some of them could be about the work of preaching and teaching. As the church grew it was those who were in full time Christian work (Bishops, Priests, Monks and Nuns) who gave up all they had and shared all things in common. There is a story of a Bishop who did not want to be Bishop because he had a lot of wealth. His congregation forced him to take holy orders anyway because he was the most qualified. He became a great leader in the Church but he had to give up all his wealth to the church.

Question: What is the biggest donation you have ever given? How did you feel giving it?

Challenge: How do we, as a society, try to carry out the above verse?

Scripture: Luke 12:22-40

Day 5: Acts 2:46

And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they partook of food with glad and generous hearts,

The rhythms of life for this community involve daily worship, meals together, and most importantly celebrating their new life in Christ. The phrase "glad and generous hearts" refers to the attitude with which they approached the everyday and dull tasks of living. Everyday eating was changed from a requirement to a celebration. Each day was celebrated in everyday tasks. It was more than being happy. They realized that through the day Christ was with them giving meaning and life to those every day tasks. They witnessed to the love of God in all they did and they did it generously, which meant they did not think they would run out of love.

Question: What do you think about going to a worship service every day?

Challenge: What does it mean to eat with a glad and generous heart?

Scripture: Ecclesiastes 3:1-13, 9:7-9

Day 6: Acts 2:47

praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

The result of this sharing of the love of God was that they were admired by all those who did not feel meaning in their life. The people in Jerusalem responded to the good news of Jesus Christ through the words preached and the life lived by the Christians.

Question: What do you admire about God?

Challenge: How can we as Christians "have favor with all the people?"

Scripture: Acts 2:42-47