

Surrey Chapel Fellowship Group Notes 27/28th February 2013
Acts 2:40-47 The First Church

This passage describes the activities and attitudes of new believers in the early days of the church in Jerusalem. To correctly understand this passage we need to determine which activities were unique to the early church and which are normative for the church today.

Devotion

The Apostles' Teaching - This was the teaching of Jesus, during his 3 years of ministry and also the 40 days between the resurrection and ascension, as passed on by the Apostles.

Fellowship - What would this have included? What does it include today?

Breaking of bread - This probably included having a meal rather than just the sacrament that we practise today.

Prayer - Look at Acts 4:24, 6:4, 12:5, 13:3 and 20:36 and reflect on the priorities and practice of prayer by the early church.

Could we describe ourselves as devoted to these activities? Both individually and corporately?

Awe

A feeling of reverential respect mixed with fear or wonder. - Oxford Dictionary

Here it was a response to the miracles, that the apostles were performing, that attested to the power and glory of God.

What do we mean when we sing "Now in reverence and awe we gather round your word"?

Do we approach God with a sense of awe today?

Sharing

v.44 This is not a command to a Christianised version of communism as some have argued. The giving here is voluntary, not compelled by government, and was used to help those in need. The Bible also has much to say about individual property rights. However this verse is an encouragement to generosity. See 2 Corinthians 8:9-15.

Praise

Worship was a natural response to the visible signs that God was at work.

What does it mean to have a glad and sincere heart? How should this affect our worship?

Conversions

"The Lord added to their number" - Emphasises that salvation is a work of God not man.

It is interesting to note in verse 47 that they enjoyed "the favour of all the people". A few weeks earlier the people of Jerusalem welcomed Jesus then days later shouted "Crucify Him". Now they are popular but opposition and persecution return later in the book of Acts.

If you have knowledge of revivals or other parts of the world where the church is growing strongly, compare those situations with the early church as described here in Acts and the church in Britain today.

Prayer Points

Identity course

Preparations for Easter

Local outreach & CAP

ADB