

5 Ways Every Member Can Strengthen Their Church

Acts 2:42-46

Introduction:

- We have been in Acts 2 for a little bit studying the inauguration of the church
- When we study the beginning of the church we learn about what God's expectations are for local churches.
- We've mentioned already that God expects every Christian to be a part of a local church, to be serving using their gifts in that church, and to be involved in the evangelism ministry of the church
- Today we are going to look at 5 simple ways members can strengthen their church

I. **ATTEND FAITHFULLY- V. 42, 46, HEBREWS 10:25**

- a. The truth is, if we believe what the Bible says about the importance of the local church, if we desire to see the church become strong- we will attend its services regularly!
 - i. The old-fashioned, tried and true method- never miss a service! We would never miss a meal!
 - ii. Our faithfulness should be increasing more and more- Heb 10:25
 - iii. Don't let TV/entertainment/leisure keep you from the assembly! Christ died to give us this privilege!
 - iv. Many say, "Pastor my job schedule just won't allow it."
 1. Have you tried praying and asking God to change your hours/job?
 2. Have you decided that church services are very important and a vital part of your life! Pray for God to give you this habit!
- b. Consider the need for fellowship- v. 42

- i. We were created with a desire for friendship, and companionship. We need the right kind of companions! The local church provides the community that we need to encourage each other, and reprove each other
 - ii. Internet/Social Media cannot give us true community
- c. koinonia (translated here as fellowship) has the idea of association, communion, fellowship, and **participation**; it means to share in something.
- d. Consider the Lord's Supper- v. 42
 - i. This was a key part of the early church's fellowship! Some churches call this Communion
 - ii. Some call it a sacrament- it is not! This does not impart grace to obtain salvation
 - iii. We call it an ordinance – one of two which Christ gave to the church (Baptism)
 - iv. Both ordinances are to be observed by believers trying to obey the NT
 - v. Jesus gave the command to his disciples in Matthew 26, and was clearly a command followed by the early church (I Cor. 11:24-28). To be kept until Christ returns!
 - vi. The meaning: it is a **memorial**. The elements are symbols picturing Christ's broken body and shed blood.
 - vii. The Lord's Supper reminds us to examine ourselves, and confess our sins, and that there is cleansing in the blood of Jesus
 - viii. We observe the Lord's Supper several times a year during our Sunday evening service. V. 26 He does not tell us how often to observe this.
 - ix. Some Christians teach these ordinances as optional- take it or leave it. According to the NT it was not an option! It was faithfully observed by believers in the early church!
 - x. We miss a lot when we miss church!

- e. Consider the opportunities for preaching and teaching! This is to be the focus of every service! II Tim 4:2 “Preach the Word!

II. BE A BIBLE STUDENT- ACTS 2:41-42

- a. The church is the pillar and ground of the truth- so we must teach the truth, most importantly we must know the truth!
- b. Is it possible that after all these centuries we can still have the same doctrine that the early church had? YES! Absolutely!
 - i. Many scriptures teach the permanent, incorruptible nature of the Bible- I Peter 1:23-25, II Peter 1:21
 - ii. We can know the doctrine of the Apostles, and we can continue in that doctrine in our present day! Illustr Pastor Sexton at Spurgeon’s church in London.
 - iii. Thankfully, God allows us to sit under the apostles’ doctrine – the New Testament record. Every pastor should seek to be unoriginal in the sense that we don’t have our own doctrine, but the apostles’ doctrine.
- c. See II Tim 4:2-4. “Christians” today don’t want doctrine, they want entertainment! Sadly, that is why many are deceived and easily led astray. TD Jakes is a popular preacher, and yet no one seems to mind that that he denies the Trinity.
- d. Hebrews 5:11-14, II Tim 2:15
- e. There are corrupting influences at work in the world, Matt 16:6, “Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.”

III. SEEK UNITY

- a. The first-century churches enjoyed great unity, and rightly so! – v. 44
- b. Now all who believed were together, and had all things together (in common): With the influx of more than 3,000 believers, most of whom stayed in Jerusalem and didn’t have jobs, the family of Christians had to share if they were to survive.

- c. We shouldn't regard this as an early experiment in communism because it was voluntary, and temporary. This did not continue for very long.
- d. Don't sow discord- don't gossip or spread rumors
 - i. Oftentimes, people will call, talk to me in person, or you can even send me an email.
 - ii. The wrong thing to do is to sow discord
- e. James 4:11, Speak not evil one of another, brethren. Jesus said, "Blessed are the peacemakers..."
- f. See Eph 4:31-32

IV. REBUKE SIN

- a. We may not naturally think that this is conducive to unity, or to church growth. But it is conducive to the right kind of unity, and biblical growth
- b. Church members (not just pastors) ought to do the work of exhortation and rebuking!
- c. Our unity must be based on Christ. When one of our brothers or sisters does something that would grieve Christ, it should grieve us.
- d. See Romans 16:17-18, Eph 5:11, and Gal 6:1
- e. In Acts the church grew by addition, multiplication, and by subtraction! Acts 5- Ananias and Saphira's sin. I Cor. 5:1-2

V. Pray -v. 42

- a. This was not just a spice in their Christian life. It was the main ingredient
- b. "...Men may spurn our appeals, reject our message, oppose our arguments, despise our persons -- but they are helpless against our prayers."
- c. What the Church needs today is not more machinery or better, not new organizations or more novel methods, but men whom the Holy Ghost can use-- men of prayer, men mighty in prayer.- E.M.Bounds
- d. Pray for your pastor and church leaders, pray for one another, pray for revival!

Let's pray that each of us can strengthen our church here! It starts with individuals making a decision!