

Sermon Title: A *Spirit-Filled Church*

Text: Acts 2:42–47 (NLT)

The Believers Form a Community

42 All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord's Supper^[a]), and to prayer.

43 A deep sense of awe came over them all, and the apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders. **44** And all the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had. **45** They sold their property and possessions and shared the money with those in need. **46** They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity^[b]— **47** all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved.

Welcome

Welcome everyone.

Celebrate 7 days.

Recap past few weeks: Jesus was born into the world to be born into us and to empower us to live life to the fullest.

We've been looking at the role of the Holy Spirit and what him living in us changes about our lives.

We're going to be in Acts chapter 2, starting in verse 42 if you'd like to turn there in your Bible.

Sermon Introduction

Everyone needs something to **aspire to**—a vision of life that's bigger than survival. Everyone needs something to **fight for**—something worth sacrifice, effort, and commitment.

Everyone wants to belong - to be fully known and fully loved.

The Bible gives us that kind of vision in Acts 2. Not a perfect church or an easy church—but a **compelling one**. A people living with purpose, devotion, generosity, and joy.

And at the center of that vision is the concept of **family**.

In fact, in Romans 8 which is a chapter all about what A spirit filled life produces it says this,

Romans 8:14-15

14 For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. **15** The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship.^[i] And by him we cry, “*Abba,[g]* Father.”

Now, let's be honest—family is not perfect and it's often not easy. Some of us come from families marked by love and stability. Others come from families marked by pain, absence, or disappointment. But even with all its flaws, family is still something most people are willing to fight for, sacrifice for, and stay committed to.

That's because family meets some of our deepest human needs: to belong, to be known, to be supported, and to matter. And while we might not have perfect brothers and sisters, we do have a perfect father who is leading us to be a healthy family.

In Acts 2, God is forming a new kind of family—not based on bloodlines or geography, performance or personality, but on **Jesus**. And while this family is still imperfect, it is something worth aspiring to and giving our lives to.

Acts 2:42-47

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43 A deep sense of awe came over them all, and the apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders. **44** And all the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had. **45** They sold their property and possessions and shared the money with those in need. **46** They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and

generosity^b— **47** all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved.

Here's the personal promise of this passage:

When you belong to God's family and live this way, you don't just help build a healthy church—you experience a healthier life.

- You gain **direction and the ability to change**, because God's Word and Spirit shape you.
- You gain **support**, because you're not meant to follow Jesus alone.
- You gain **freedom**, as generosity loosens the grip of fear, scarcity, and isolation.
- You gain **joy and purpose**, knowing your life is part of something that makes a difference, something eternal.

Acts 2:42–47 shows us what happens when ordinary people commit to an extraordinary way of life together. Not perfection—but **transformation**. Not isolation—but **family**.

And the invitation for us today is simple:

Will we settle for attending church, or will we aspire to **being the family of God**?

But this kind of family doesn't happen by accident. It begins with people who are shaped by something greater than themselves—and in Acts 2, it starts with a deep devotion to the Word of God.

Point 1: A Spirit-Filled Church Is Grounded in God's Word

Define – What is the main point?

“**42** All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching...”

The early church was marked by intentional devotion to the apostles' teaching. Their faith was not casual or occasional—it was rooted in learning, truth, and spiritual formation. They were building a foundation - roots.

Illustrate – Story, picture, or quote

A house built without a foundation may look fine for a while, but the first storm reveals what it's really standing on. A tree with shallow roots will look fine on a nice day, but it

won't withstand the winds. In the same way, a believer or church without deep roots in God's Word will not withstand pressure.

The early believers didn't gather merely for information, but for transformation. They were building a foundation for their lives to withstand the storm they lived in.

Story about building a retaining wall while it was raining.

Argue – Supporting Scripture

- **Psalm 1:1–3** – The one who delights in God's law is stable and fruitful.

1 Oh, the joys of those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, or stand around with sinners, or join in with mockers. **2** But they delight in the law of the **LORD**, meditating on it day and night. **3** They are like trees planted along the riverbank, bearing fruit each season. Their leaves never wither, and they prosper in all they do.

- **2 Timothy 3:16–17** – Scripture equips believers for every good work.

16 All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. **17** God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work.

Apply – How can this be lived out?

- Make Scripture a daily practice.
- Ask not only, "What does this mean?" but, "How should this shape my life?"
- OYB, Daily Defining Moments, YouVersion
- Get in a group where you'll learn to study and wrestle with Scripture together.

Because the next we see in this passage is they're not doing this alone. The second thing they are committed to is authentic spiritual community.

Point 2: A Spirit-Filled Church Is Committed to Authentic Spiritual Community

Define – What is the main point?

“**42** All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord’s Supper^[a]), and to prayer.”

The believers shared life together—not just services, but meals, prayers, struggles, and joy. Fellowship was essential, not optional.

Components of authentic spiritual community: time, focus/intentionality/purpose (formation/transformation), prayer, conflict, food.

My community group.

6 years

Lot of food, lot of time, lot of prayer, lot of laughter and tears, and some conflict. A lot of growth.

As a church, what we do to help you experience this is groups, so I want to break this down very simply so you can see what we’re trying to do and why bc different churches do this different ways:

Two types of groups: topical and community.

Our groups generally are:

1. Volunteer leader led. This is the model we see in Scripture. The apostles are dedicated to teaching and prayer and they delegate other responsibilities to those in the church - and it’s in fellowship with each other that they learn to live out the things they’re being taught.
2. Gatherings of 8-10 people who are trying to learn to be with Jesus, become like Jesus and do what Jesus did together. This is that shared focus and intentionality and what makes it different than some of the other types of community you might have - family, friends, co-workers, sports families.
3. Hosted in homes. We have some that meet at church b/c they don’t have a space conducive for a group, but most meet at homes because that environment is often so much more relaxed, relational, and helpful in creating the environment we want for this type of community.
4. Our long term community groups stay together long term (no specific time commitment), meet weekly, and have a spiritual practice each month that they are learning about and doing together. Our staff has created videos, questions, and practices to help with this.
5. Short term community groups essentially do the same thing, but they are an easier on-ramp and a short term commitment for those of you newer to the

church or newer to doing a spiritual group like this. They are a 1 semester commitment.

6. Topical groups are focused on a specific area (marriage, parenting, addiction recovery, spiritual freedom/deliverance. These are also often easier groups for someone newer to the church because the commitment is a semester just like the short term community groups and focus on helping you in a specific area you are interested in. What often happens is a topical group will get to know each other over the semester and decide to become a community group together and we love that!
7. Groups are our first line of pastoral care. Groups often support, pray, and care for each other as others in the group go through difficult circumstances. Group leaders can pray for you, direct you to resources, and can get you connected to the right person on our staff if you need that.

As Christ followers, doing what Jesus did, on the mission that God has given us, we must continue to grow and reach new people. We have to get bigger.

And as Christ followers, doing what Jesus did and growing relationally, living in authentic spiritual community, we must get smaller so that every person has a place where they are seen, known, cared for, and where they can work out their faith as we grow together to become more like Jesus.

Groups are how we do this.

Illustrate – Story, picture, or quote

Over 100 groups trying to live this way together.

Joseph Hellerman writes in *When the Church Was a Family*:

“The primary metaphor for the church in the New Testament is family.”

The early church didn’t function like an event—it lived like a household.

Argue – Supporting Scripture

- **Hebrews 10:24–25** – Believers are called to gather and encourage one another.

24 Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. **25** And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.

Apply – How can this be lived out?

- Move from attending church to belonging to community.
- Prioritize relationships that support spiritual growth.
- Practice patience, forgiveness, and vulnerability as family values.
- Get in a group!!! Next 2 weeks. Make space. Prioritize these relationships.

As we are grounded in God's Word, living in authentic spiritual community, learning to connect and to love each other it produces the third thing we see.

Point 3: A Spirit-Filled Church Lives with Radical Generosity

Define – What is the main point?

“**44** And all the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had. **45** They sold their property and possessions and shared the money with those in need. **46** They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord’s Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity—“

The early believers held their possessions loosely and met one another’s needs. Their generosity flowed from unity and trust in God.

Illustrate – Story, picture, or quote

Joseph Hellerman notes that in the ancient world,

“Family members were expected to provide for one another, even at great personal cost.”

Generosity wasn’t extraordinary—it was normal for a family.

Argue – Supporting Scripture

- **2 Corinthians 9:6–8** – God supplies abundantly to generous givers.

6 Remember this—a farmer who plants only a few seeds will get a small crop. But the one who plants generously will get a generous crop. **7** You must each decide in your heart how much to give. And don’t give reluctantly or in response to pressure. “For God

loves a person who gives cheerfully.” **8** And God will generously provide all you need. Then you will always have everything you need and plenty left over to share with others.

- **Acts 4:32** – No one claimed private ownership; they shared everything.

32 All the believers were united in heart and mind. And they felt that what they owned was not their own, so they shared everything they had.

Apply – How can this be lived out?

- View resources as stewardship, not ownership.
- Look intentionally for needs within your church family.
- Practice generosity with time, hospitality, and encouragement. (Lead a group! Join a team! CORE!)
- Be intentional to grow in your financial generosity:
 - Give something.
 - Give something consistently.
 - Give a percentage.
 - Up your percentage to 10%. (called a tithe).
 - Give an offering: to church at large, to a specific ministry, ministry area, Build His House.

Now we've got a real family - grounded in God's Word- being transformed to look like more like Jesus, living in authentic community, supporting each other with radical generosity, and others start to take notice...

Point 4: A Spirit-Filled Church Becomes a Powerful Witness

Define – What is the main point?

“**47** all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved.”

The church's shared joy, unity, and devotion made the gospel visible. God used their everyday faithfulness to draw others to Himself. It creates purpose, meaning, something to fight for together. It changes lives, changes communities, changes cultures.

Illustrate – Story, picture, or quote

John Mark Comer writes in *Practicing the Way*:

“People are far more likely to be curious about Jesus when they see a community living a life they want.”

The early church’s life together made Jesus compelling.

Argue – Supporting Scripture

- **Matthew 5:13-16** – Let your light shine so others may glorify God.

13 “You are the salt of the earth. But what good is salt if it has lost its flavor? Can you make it salty again? It will be thrown out and trampled underfoot as worthless.

14 “You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. **15** No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. **16** In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.

- **John 13:34–35** – Love identifies true disciples.

34 So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. **35** Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples.”

Apply – How can this be lived out?

- Live your faith consistently, intentionally, authentically (even if imperfectly) in everyday life. You are an ambassador everywhere you go.
- Let gratitude and joy shape how you represent Jesus.
- Be a part of the family and trust God with growth; our role is faithfulness. If you’ve tried before, try again. If you’re frustrated, don’t give up!

Closing Thought

Acts 2:42–47 doesn't describe a perfect church—it describes a **Spirit-empowered one**. When believers devote themselves to truth, community, generosity, and to being a joyful witness, God still does what only He can do: **transform lives and grow His family**.

Conclusion: An Open Invitation to Belong

Acts 2 doesn't just show us what the church *did*—it shows us what Christ *created*. This kind of community didn't begin with better organization or stronger commitment. It began when people encountered **Jesus** and when they allowed the Holy Spirit to transform them.

Just a few verses earlier, Peter preached that Jesus was crucified, buried, and raised to life—and the people asked, “*What should we do?*” The answer was simple: **repent, believe, and receive new life**. And that same invitation is still open today.

Becoming part of the church doesn't start with joining a building—it starts with trusting a Savior.

If you've never placed your faith in Jesus, today can be the day you begin a relationship with Him. You can simply come to Him in faith, confess your need for forgiveness, and trust Him as Lord and Savior. When you do, God doesn't just change your future—He adopts you into His family.

And for those who are ready, this church is not just a place to attend—it's a family to belong to. A community where we grow together, serve together, give together, and follow Jesus together.

So today, the invitation is clear:

Come to Jesus. Receive new life. Join His family.