

A Church on Mission Together

Welcome

Intro: Prayer for Iranian Christians

- As I was praying for the Christians in Iran this week, I was just inspired and challenged by Christians there, despite the persecution and opposition they face. Today there are 1.2 million Christians about 1.5% of population growing 20% a year. That means they will add, 240k new believers this year. This was also happening in the early church.
- **Early Church**
 - o **Acts 1:15**: Approximately **120 believers** gathered in the upper room
 - o **Acts 2:41**: Following Peter's Pentecost sermon, **3,000 souls** were added.
 - o **Acts 4:4**: The number of *men* alone grew to about **5,000**. Including women and children, scholars often estimate the total community was between **8,000 and 15,000** at this stage. There were only 50k people living in Jerusalem.
- **Definition: What if that happened at Definition, in our city, today?** What if 20% of Greensboro came to Christ each year. **50k** in the city and **100k** in the county? If God can do it in the first century and God is doing it in Iran, then why not us?
- **Matthew 28:19-20, This is actually what Jesus asked us to do!**

How did the early church do it? 6 characteristics of a church on fire!

1. Praying Church.

Explain: The issue here is **Desire**. What you desire most is what you pray for most. For too many Christians, God is a means to an end. God, His kingdom, His glory, His mission, His family must be our greatest desire. Luke mentions the church praying 50 times and in every chapter. They were a praying church. What if we began to cry out to God for our family, our friends, our co-workers, our city and our world. What if we prayed like we live in Iran and bombs were falling? Passion, desperation, desire!

Quote: "The kingdom of God does not belong to the well-meaning but the desperate."
"Work as if everything depends on you and pray as if everything depends on God."

Illustrate: Brooklyn Tabernacle, My house shall be called a house of prayer, visit

Argue: **Matthew 7:7-8**

Apply: 7-days, Easter, pray!

2. Spirit Empowered Church.

Explain: The issue here is **Surrender**. Does my life revolve around my agenda or pleasing Jesus. The early church understood, we cannot fulfill the mission or God or our purpose without God's help. Jesus said, wait for the promise. We are not leaving this room until the promise comes. This should be our posture every day. I will not begin my day without God's favor.

Illustrate: March 14- OYB. Mary- virgin, teenager, highly favored. God used her to change the world. Mary did not set out to change the world. She was just trying to please God.

Argue: Luke 1:46-55

Apply: What does your life really revolve around? God, are you my first priority?

3. **Bold Church.**

Explain: The issue here is **Courage**. **Acts 2:** Peter. **Acts 4-5:** Peter and John. **Acts 6-7:** Stephen. **Boldness is not arrogance.** We are not proudly proclaiming, we are right, you are bad. We are humbly proclaiming the good news. God loves you, Jesus died for you, and through faith in Christ your sin can be forgiven, you can know and walk with God, you can have eternal life and abundant life. You can live with purpose. Change is possible. They refuse to let anyone silence them.

Illustrate: If you spend time with me, it will not be long before I am talking about my wife, about Jesus, and how we can change the world.

Where does this courage come from? Acts 4:8-13

Apply: Who are you working on? Who will you invite for Easter?

4. **United Church.**

Explain: The issue here is **Humility**.

Illustrate: Armchair quarterback, ACC championship.

Our Purpose: Helping people follow Jesus and experience the hope of redemption.

Our Strategy: Be with Jesus, Become like Jesus, and Do what Jesus did.

Our values:

- Jesus is our Focus
- People are our priority
- Authenticity is our Aim
- Amen is our Attitude
- Generosity is our Privilege

Apply: Attend Core

5. **Generous Church.**

Explain: The issue here is **Sacrifice**. **Acts 2-5**, believers "had all things in common". They sold their property to give, they did business to give, and they collected offerings to give. They understood, reaching people cost something.

Argue: John 3:16, motivated by gratitude and love, we give.

Why does God care about my money and ask me to give? Money is dangerous.

Argue: 1 Timothy 6:10, Matthew 19:23, Luke 16:10-13

- Giving directs your heart. **Matthew 6:19-22**
- Giving builds your faith. **Luke 6:38**
- Giving makes you happy. **2 Corinthians 9:7**
- Giving gives your money and job purpose. **Acts**
- Giving causes you to end up with more. **Malichai 3**
 - Free from mammon

Monthly Practice: Bible Study

- Eternal investment
- Flourishing relationships
- Stronger marriage
- Happier children

Apply: What is God asking you to do? No one knows, God knows.

6. Participating Church.

Explain: The issue here is **Responsibility**. There is no such thing as a spectator Christian. God wants you to get in the game. God does not have a plan B. When you read the book of Acts, there were no spectators. Often in America people have a consumer approach to church.

Quote: Kennedy, "Ask not what your country can do for you but what you can do for your country." "Ask not what your church can do for you but what you can do for your church." When we all live this way, we are all blessed!

Argue: **1 Corinthians 12:12-31, Read: Matthew 16:21-27, Psalm 52:8, "I am like an olive tree flourishing in the house of God."**

Apply: Christians in the first century, India, Nepal, China, Iran today are all in.

Illustrate: The world has yet to see...I will be that man. What about church?

Next steps: Core, Attend, Connect, Serve, Men- lead by example

An Edict for Lasting Peace in Iran, 5 March 2026

In the name of The One Who Was, Who Is, and Who is To Come. Who is above all and before anything that was. All things are from Him, through Him, for Him, and in Him, are held together. He is Eternal. Manifest in the flesh, but with no sin, justified in the Spirit, witnessed to by angels, believed on in the world, He is the Most High, the Sovereign, the Powerful, and Supreme over all.

He alone is worthy of adoration. He was slain to receive power. Now resurrected, all riches, wisdom, strength, and honor belong to Him. He is full of mercy, grace, and truth. He is the Eternal Judge, and He alone has the power to forgive sins. Blessed be His Holy Name. His name is Jesus, and He is God.

May the Grace and Peace of Our Savior, Jesus, who is God, be upon you.

This edict is from the leadership of 52 Jesus Kingdom movements throughout Iran.

In the words of our Messiah, "*Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God.*" For the last 600 years, the peoples of our country have suffered under the oppression of evil, and today we are praying for peace to come to our land. We request that every Jesus follower on earth join with us in this opportunity to rescue our nation from evil and to build up every family, tribe, language, and people in our land to worship and honor Jesus, our God and King.

The righteous cry out, and the Lord hears them, He delivers them from all their troubles. Psalm 34:17

Pray for the end of violence, terror, and all kinds of evil that have controlled the hearts and minds of the people of Iran. There can be no peace without the rule of the Prince of Peace, and we call on believers everywhere to intercede on behalf of every person in Iran.

I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession, and thanksgiving be made for all people—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. (1 Timothy 2:1-6)

We ask for prayer by name, for each of the religious and political leaders of Iran. Ask the Most High God to intervene through signs, wonders, dreams, and visions that they might find salvation in Jesus - the one mediator between God and humankind. We ask for every person to find forgiveness for sin and freedom from shame by humbling themselves before Jesus, who is the ransom for all people.

This is our "kairos" moment and we must not miss this. In our hearts we carry the burden of reaching all 90 million of our brothers and sisters who are now badly suffering in spirit and body. We must rescue thousands of children whose future lives have been taken from them and directed toward violence and death. Together, by the mercy of God, let us hear the words of Jesus and "*let the children come,*" restoring their hearts, their lives, and their future into God's kingdom.

Monthly Practice: Bible Study

We must also rescue this next generation from the lies they have been told and the hopelessness that has settled over millions of these young men and women. Many have lost loved ones, seen their hopes destroyed, and they do not deserve a future of violence, evil, and war. We pray for a generation of Esthers and Daniel to rise up again from Iran and exalt the Most High God and the salvation available through Jesus our Savior King.

Now let us unite and contend for peace and the rule of love to find freedom in the hearts of all Iranians. Let us pray until this request has become a reality in every village, every town, every city, and among every language group in Iran.