LifeGroup: Building the Kingdom

Notes 13th July 2025

When we read Acts 2 and Ephesians 4, we get a glimpse into the heartbeat of the early church. These believers weren't passive attendees, but active participants in a Spirit-filled community: learning, sharing, praying, eating, serving, and being transformed together.

As we explore these passages, let's ask ourselves: What kind of church are we becoming? What would it look like for us to live this kind of faith, not just on Sundays, but in our lifegroups, our homes, at work, in our streets, and relationships?

The short but powerful section of Acts 2 gives us a window into the everyday life of the first Christians. It's not a list of doctrines or a church manual, but a living snapshot of a community shaped by Jesus and the Holy Spirit. As we read, let's slow down and notice not just what they did, but what kind of people they were becoming and what that might mean for us today.

Read Acts 2:42–47

Consider

- What stands out to you most in this description of the early church—and why do you think that is?
- What patterns or rhythms of life do you notice in this community?
- What do you think "devoted" might have meant for them in daily life? How does that word strike you?

Here's a helpful summary of the key elements that shaped the life and experience of the early church in Acts 2:42–47.

1. **Devotion to Apostolic Teaching** – Ongoing discipleship rooted in Scripture.
2. **Fellowship** – Shared life, mutual care, deep community.
3. **Breaking of Bread** – Likely includes shared meals and the Lord's Supper.
4. **Prayer** – Regular, corporate, and individual prayer.
5. **Signs and Wonders** – Evidence of God's power and presence.
6. **Sharing of Resources** – Radical generosity, meeting each other's needs.
7. **Daily Gathering** – Frequency of meeting, shared rhythms of worship.
8. **Praising God** – Corporate worship and thanksgiving.
9. **Growth** – The Lord adding to their number—evangelistic fruit.

Consider

- If you were to gently evaluate your small group, what do you think might be the weakest area?
- Why do you think that might be?

Take some time to pray over what you've discerned, asking God to guide and strengthen you as you grow, especially in areas where you feel weak or stretched. Trust Him to work in and through you as you walk by faith.

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Read Ephesians 4:11–16

In this part of Paul's letter to the Ephesians, we get a vision of the church not just as a gathering, but as a body—living, growing, and becoming mature in Christ. Paul speaks about how God equips His people with different roles and gifts for a shared purpose. As we read, let's pay attention to how unity, maturity, and spiritual growth are meant to work together in the life of the church.

Consider

- What different roles or people does Paul mention in this passage? Why do you think he highlights these?
- What do you notice about the purpose behind these roles or gifts? What are they meant to lead to?
- Which part of this passage feels most challenging? Which part feels most encouraging?

To finish you may want to use this prayer

Prayer:

Heavenly Father,

We thank you for the gift of your Church; one body, many parts, brought to life by your Spirit and held together in Christ. Thank you that we don't walk this journey alone, but as part of something much bigger: your family, your body in the world.

We praise you for the example of the early church in Acts, for their devotion, their shared life, their joy, and their radical love. And we thank you for the vision in Ephesians of a church growing in unity, maturity, and Christlikeness: every member equipped, every part doing its work in love.

Thank you for this small group. It is a space where we can grow deeper, be equipped, learn to commit, to care, and to be built up for service. Help us to encourage one another, challenge each other gently, and walk in grace and truth.

We also see the places where we fall short. We bring before you the areas of weakness in our church, in our group and in ourselves. They are places where we need renewal and courage. Pour out your grace where there is apathy. Bring transformation where there is fear or weariness. Give us a deeper hunger for the coming of your kingdom among us, a greater heart for prayer, and a stronger commitment to mission and evangelism.

Build us up, not for ourselves, but for the sake of your world. Form in us a church that is Spirit filled, Christ centred and Kingdom shaped.

In the name of Jesus, our Lord and Saviour,
Amen.