

A New Family Model

(Acts 2:41-47)

Introduction

1. Accelerate: Jesus accelerates us by the power of the Holy Spirit to a transformative, relational, missional life in Christ.
2. The Church is not a social club or religious institution, but a family in Christ (cf. Eph 2:19).
 - a. Our passage: A new way of doing family in Christ, which applies to both homes & churches.
3. Background
 - a. [Acts 2:1-41] Jesus fills His followers with the promised Spirit, & they miraculously speak in unlearned, foreign languages about Jesus, fulfilling Scriptures, leading 3000 people to believe & follow Jesus.
 - b. With 3000 new members, they need a clear focus on what's important to grow as a family in Christ.

Practices of a great Jesus family [Acts 2:42-43]

1. [42] The new church family was devoted (consistently/persistently focused) to practicing 4 key areas together:
 - a. Pursuing truth about Jesus together, through studying the apostles' teaching.
 - i. The cornerstone of a great family of Christ is based on both knowing the truth about Jesus, and applying it to daily living (cf. John 15:10).
 - ii. We don't have the eyewitness apostles, but we do have their accurate historical records in the Word.
 - b. Fellowship: Commitment to share life in common.
 - i. *Koinonia*: From "common"; not what they already have in common, but creating common ground.
 - ii. "I pledge to be authentic, loving, accepting, challenging, involved in your life."
 - iii. Also a commitment to tangibly share & provide for each other's needs (cf. Acts 2:44-45).
 - c. Breaking of bread: Do life in Christ together.
 - i. They participate in the daily experience of sharing a meal together (not just with their literal family).
 - ii. This includes communion (cf. Luke 22:19), reminding them Jesus is the center of their community.
 - iii. They don't just talk to each other; they do life together & reflect on Jesus together.
 - d. Prayer
 - i. Seeking God's direction & power, giving thanks & praise, praying for each other's needs.
 - ii. Actively submitting to God's will to set the right foundation for this new family in Christ.
2. We need each other to fully experience life in Christ.
 - a. Satan's lies:
 - i. "I'm better off without too much entanglement; I need to protect myself & not get too close."
 - ii. "I just need Jesus; I don't need this level of involvement/commitment to others."
 - b. [43] As they engage in these 4 practices together, they experience the presence, power & promises of God.
 - i. Truth: The believers experience miraculous things as they share life in community.
 - ii. As a God-filled community share life in common together, they become the kind of family & church where we see lives changed, and God's powerful provision & healing.
 - c. Application: Do I practice these 4 things with my spiritual family at church and at home?

Attitude of a great Jesus family [Acts 2:44-45]

1. The right heart attitude: Sacrificial love
 - a. Anyone can go through the motions of these 4 practices; Pharisees did.
 - i. Many of us go through the motions, but do not experience real community/connection in Christ.
 - ii. The difference: It's not simply the external behaviors, but requires an internal attitude from Jesus.

- b. [44] All the believers in the family of Christ had all in common (Greek: *koinos*; root of *koinonia*).
 - i. [45] They would take their stuff & sell it to share & care for each other's needs.
 - c. Attitude: Sacrificial love gives people what they need, not just on our terms of what we can spare/afford.
 - i. Sacrificial love isn't giving extra, leftovers, or out of convenience.
 - ii. It asks: "What do you really need?" (cf. Jas 2:15-16)
2. Motivation: The sacrificial love of Christ
- a. Jesus didn't give us what was convenient, leftover, or easy for Him, or irrelevant to us.
 - i. He saw our need for rescue from self-destructive sin & death, and gave Himself up to give us eternal life, joy, peace, and restored relationship with Him & each other.
 - ii. His sacrificial love is costly and meets our needs.
 - b. His great sacrificial love transforms our attitude to likewise sacrificially love & meet each other's needs.
 - i. Quote: "Christians sacrifice because they are recipients of sacrifice..."
3. Obstacles to sacrificial love:
- a. Lack of receiving it for yourself
 - i. You cannot give what you do not have. Receive grace, acceptance & love from Jesus & others.
 - b. Lack of convenience
 - i. "I don't want to deal with your baggage; I have enough of my own."
 - ii. We give out of our extra, excess, leftovers, convenience.
 - c. Lack of awareness of others' needs
 - i. It's easy to be sacrificial or generous in irrelevant ways.
 - ii. We give according to our own terms, but not actually what others need.
 - iii. We need to ask for wisdom & power from the Holy Spirit to discern & meet others' needs.
 - d. Application: Do I love others in the family of Christ on my own terms, or give them what they need?

Impact of a great Jesus family [Acts 2:46-47]

1. When these practices & attitude are lived out, there's a tangible impact on the world around them.
- a. [46] Daily acts of worship & fellowship together.
 - i. The Temple is the only place in the city with a courtyard large enough to hold all 3000.
 - ii. They go there daily to worship, study, pray & live out the apostles' teachings together.
 - iii. They disperse into various homes & over dinner, worship Jesus through communion, eat, laugh, share, encourage and support each other.
 - iv. They receive God's blessing joyfully & share with each other generously.
 - b. [47] Not only does praise flow upward to God, & sacrificial love bless inward to the family of Christ; there's also an impact outward.
 - i. All those far from God in the city like these Christians; many of them receive Christ & join as well.
 - ii. Jesus kept using the Christian community's experience of His love, power, provision & sacrificial love to win them over (cf. John 13:34-35).
2. Illustration: "The All in Life" by Marc Owings & David Terry (pp. 28-31).
- a. Application: Have you experienced that level of commitment to sharing life in common in the family of Christ?
 - b. Application: More importantly, have you ever given that to someone in the family of Christ?