Acts 2:42-47
God’s Blueprint For His Church

I. Introduction

A. What is the church supposed to do with her time?

B. What place of importance should the church have in your life?

II. Acts 2:42 Blueprint for a healthy Church – 10 points

And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.

A. (1) They were an empowered church.

1. Acts 1

2. This has been the emphasis of the first two chapters, so as we outline how the early church functions, we will see how, therefore we should function.

B. They continued steadfastly.

proskartereo {pros-kar-ter-eh'-o} 2) to be steadfastly attentive unto, to give unremitting care to a thing, 3) to continue all the time in a place, 4) to persevere and not to faint.

1. The success of the early church was in their tenacity in these principles before us.

2. What things in your life keep you from continuing steadfastly?

   a) We want the New Testament experience of the early church, yet are we willing to live on the level that they did?

   b) The important truth to keep in mind is that they continued steadfastly because they wanted to, not because they were looking for a certain response.
C. (2) They were a Scripture-focused church – the Apostles’ doctrine. This protected them from being led astray into the myriad of false teachings that existed in the early church.

1. When the body of Christ gathers, the Apostles’ doctrine (New Testament teachings) should be the truth that is studied.
   a) This may seem obvious, yet a survey of the Church today will tell you that this isn’t.
   b) All claim to teach from the Bible, yet very few will teach through the Bible.

2. Preach the Scriptures.
   2 Timothy 4:2 2 Preach the word! …

3. Other New Testament passages speak of the importance of preaching the word.
   a) Peter was told to feed God’s people (John 21).

4. A pastor must understand that the most important task he has is to preach the word.
   a) Remember how Satan sought to drag the Apostles away from the Word of God and prayer with the problem of the Hellenist widows not getting enough of their daily allotment? Well, he will seek to do the same to you.

5. Satan would rather the Church of Jesus Christ grow and be successful without the Word than for the Church to be small with the Word.
   a) Every minister and every Pastor should be judged by what they do with this solemn charge: PREACH THE WORD.
6. Some churches don’t value the Word of God at all.
   
a) In many cases, the Word of God is simply a reference that is mentioned in the beginning of talks on good living.

b) Others use the pulpit to communicate the latest philosophies while others seek to use the pulpit as a means to motivate political change within our country.

7. As we consider the importance of preaching the word, I think it is a worthy detour to consider how one might do that.
   
a) Many teach topically, but there is a danger that one might only cover the topics they are interested in.

b) Many teach expositionally from one text to the next without any consideration to the whole book. The problem with this method is that people never learn the Bible as it was written.

c) Others teach expositionally book by book, and this is what we believe is both the best way to feed the body of Christ and also the Biblical way to feed the church.

   
   (1) Exposition means to set forth the meaning or purpose.

   (2) This is what Ezra did in the book of Nehemiah.

Nehemiah 8:8 So they read distinctly from the book, in the Law of God; and they gave the sense, and helped them to understand the reading.

   
d) There are times where topical and series teachings will be used to instruct the body, but this should not be the mainstay diet of the congregation.
8. Note that in Scripture, revivals had the teaching of the Word of God and a return to the Word of God as two of their main characteristics.

   a) Josiah

       (1) The scribes found the book of the law when rummaging through the temple.

       (2) Josiah tore his clothes and called for Israel to repent and obey.

   b) Nehemiah

       (1) Ezra read from the law and explained its meaning and gave its sense to the people.

D. (3) They were a fellowshipping Church

   And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.

1. Definition - this word in its most basic form means to share together. In the context of the Bible it speaks of sharing together the mutual relationship of Jesus Christ with other believers.

2. True fellowship can only happen when the two or more parties have something to share about Jesus.

   a) At times, that which we call fellowship is in reality nothing more than good, clean socializing. In other words, simply because a group of believers are together it doesn’t mean that their interaction with each other will be Christ governed and centered.

3. There are very few things sweeter and more beneficial to a relationship with Christ than interacting with the family of God about the things of God on a personal level.

   a) This experience isn’t fabricated, and it isn’t solely an intellectual exchange.
b) It is when I relate in words what God has taught me, showed me, worked in me. Then in response you begin to share about God’s work in your life.

4. Again, this is a practice that isn’t necessarily organized or structured. It doesn’t happen under the tyranny of time constraints, nor can one expect for true fellowship to happen if I am not first interacting with Christ on my own.

   a) Quickly we see that our society has evolved into an impersonal rush to beat the clock.

   b) If we are going to experience true fellowship on the level of which we are talking, we must be willing to make time to see it happen.

   

E. (4) They were a Christ-centered church – The breaking of bread

   

And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.

1. This simply is the practice of keeping the cross of Jesus in focus.

   a) When we lose sight of the cross, all things will become blurred and out of focus, but when the cross is in clear sight, our lives are blessed with clarity and focus.

2. Jesus told His disciples to remember His death when they came together in the communion service.

F. (5) They were a praying church.

   

And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.

1. Prayer is talking to God and laying our requests before Him.

   a) Prayer is the means by which the Lord has made it possible for us to confront the kingdom of darkness in His strength.
2. We are no match for the enemy or his tactics. If we seek to take on the Devil on a fleshly level, we will always lose. However, when we come to the Lord for these same issues, we enter into a spiritual battle that the Lord will fight for us.

   a) Let me say that we are easily drawn into the fleshly realm.

   b) Whenever we allow ourselves to be drawn into battle on this level, we lose. We are no match for spiritual issues on a fleshly level.

   2Cor 10:3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. 4 For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, 5 casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,….”

   (1) In Ephesians 6 Paul tells us that we do not wrestle with flesh and blood but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take the whole armor of God… He then goes on to instruct us to pray.

3. If we spent as much time praying as we do in scheming, planning and worrying, I believe we would see the Lord directing and intervening a lot more than we do. We have not because we ask not.

4. Of all the activity of a Christian, nothing is simpler or more easily accessible. At the same time, there is no activity that will draw more artillery fire from the enemy.

5. The real lack in the church today is prayer. Why? Because Satan puts up a fight so as to keep us from the one thing that will be his demise: PRAYER!

III. Acts 2:43-45 Fruit of a healthy church

   A. They were a reverent church- the fear of God

   43 Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles.
1. Holiness and purity marked their lives.

2. When a fear of God is present, then holy living will be present.

B. Miraculous wonders and signs were performed.

Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles.

1. When God’s plan is being followed, God’s people can expect God to manifest His presence in their midst.

2. Acts 2:19, 22, 43; 4:30; 5:12; 6:8; 7:36; 8:13; 14:3 all make mention of the signs and wonders that were performed by the Lord.

C. They were a loving church – they gave to meet needs.

Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need

1. The result of being a healthy church is that needs will be met in the lives of the members.

1 John 3:16-18 16 By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. 17 But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him? 18 My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.

IV. Acts 2:46-More on their blueprint

A. 2:46 (6) They were a consistent church --continuing daily.

So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, ...

1. Again we see that this was a group of people who viewed the Kingdom of God as the most important thing.

2. What in this life can you do well by only giving it inconsistent attention?
3. It is very common for many believers to have only four 
interactions with corporate worship and teaching a 
month. 
Hebrews 10:25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as 
is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more 
as you see the Day approaching.

4. Make time for church and worship.
   a) This is the model and exhortation of scripture.
   b) It will not be convenient, but it will be a blessing.

B. 2:46b (7) They were a unified church – in one accord.
46 So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from 
house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, …

1. This marked the church there in Jerusalem. This 
was the very thing that Jesus said would be a 
testimony to the world, that is, our love for one 
another.

2. Let me say that anytime a group of believers are 
continuing in the word, prayer, communion, and 
fellowship, they will become spiritually minded.
   a) Paul said in 1Corinthians that those who were 
in disunity were in reality manifesting their 
carnality.

3. They were not letting petty issues divide.

C. 2:46c (8) They were a simple church – they ate food with 
gladness and simplicity.
46 So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from 
house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart,…

This means with a sincere and pure heart. They were satisfied and 
thankful. They were not perplexed or anxious; nor were they solicitous 
for the luxurious living, or aspiring after the vain objects of the people 
of the world. (Albert Barnes)
1. Our problem is that we seek to be focused on many things.

2. This is the challenge of being a nation with plenty.

3. Do you need to simplify your life to make room for the importance of the church?

D. 2:47 (9) They were a praising church.

They were a praising church. praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.

1. This is one thing that I have been praying we would grow in as a fellowship.

2. I believe it was A.W. Tozer who said that worship is the missing jewel in the crown of the church today.

3. Praise is the barometer of the Christian’s relationship with Christ.
   
a) When a person or people have been in fellowship with their Lord, they will manifest this fellowship in their praise and worship of Him.

4. Those who will venture beyond the superficial realm of singing are those who will lay aside the fear of man and will say, “My Lord is worthy of the very best I have.”
   
a) For a long time in my Christian experience, praise was often missing, and when it was there, it was a jewel I didn’t want anyone to see.

   (1) To sing aloud, lift my hands, bow down, or close my eyes all seemed a little strange. Yet the Spirit of God was crying out to worship the Lord. Not to say that these things in and of themselves are worship, only a further expression of my worship.

   (2) Yet for me in my life, they have become meaningful ways of declaring God’s goodness.
(a) One Pastor once asked his congregation how many of them loved Jesus—if they loved Him, to raise up one hand and leave it up. He then asked how many wanted to worship the Lord to raise their other hand.

b) When these and other appropriate expressions are offered up to the Lord, they are like a sweet-smelling aroma.

E. 2:47 (10) They were an evangelizing Church.

1. The Lord added to the Church.

Ephesians 2:47 …praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.

2. Our job is to be a vessel that the Lord can work through.

3. A healthy church is a vessel for the Lord to work through.

1 Corinthians 3:6-7 6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. 7 So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase.

V. Conclusion

A. May the Lord help us to be the church He has called us to be.

B. Blueprint

1. Be empowered.
2. Be Scripture-focused.
3. Be fellowshiping.
4. Be Christ-centered.
5. Be praying
6. Be consistent.
7. Be unified.
8. Be simple.
10. Be evangelizing.