



**We Do Hard Things:
Breaking Bread and Prayer**

**Acts 2:42-47
Feb 26th, 2023**

DAILY DEVOTION

Find a rhythm in God's word this week! Follow this 5 day plan on your own or with your group!

<https://my.bible.com/reading-plans/22186>

INSPIRATION

"The most powerful social media... it is not the internet, it is not Facebook
– it is food.

This connects all human beings."

– Alex Atala

"After a good dinner one can forgive anybody, even one's own relations."

– Oscar Wilde

ICE BREAKER

- a) Many of us have large family meals over the years at Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter, 4th of July etc. Give us a full picture of what those events are like for you, the most meaningful parts in your eyes.
- b) While our church is a bit big for this, some of you have come from churches that have regular meals together, pot lucks and dinners. From your perspective, what is it about these regular meals that draws people together?

DEEP DIVE

Read this out loud

An excerpt from the message this week:



“Of the four things Acts 2 tells us– the church– to be devoted to– today we have the privilege of looking at the Sharing of Meals– including the Lord’s Supper– and prayer. And as we do– let’s ask ourselves– are we devoted to these things? Annoyingly. Steadfast. Resistant to compromise. Persistent?”

Acts Chapter 2 takes place 50 days after the death of Christ on the cross. The apostles were gathered for a traditional holy day or a feast– they don’t know what’s about to happen. But there are all these extra people in Jerusalem during this time. So as the disciples celebrated with tens of thousands of other Jews from around the world, the Holy Spirit came down upon them where they heard in their own language that Jesus is Lord and Messiah (exclusive– hard statement). They asked – what do we do? -- and they were simply instructed to repent and be baptized– and they did. On that day the church grew from about 120 people to an additional 3000. Now, this special day is known as Pentecost and is remembered for the pouring out of the Holy Spirit and the beginnings of the Church.”

Read Acts 2:42-47 and then answer the following questions:

42 They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. 43 Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. 44 All the believers were together and had everything in common. 45 They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. 46 Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, 47 praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

This was a “startup experience” that formed the foundation for the church to come. These were people from many countries, all making long journeys to attend the Jewish Pentecost festival, and everyone was talking about this Jesus who had been killed but people said had risen from the dead. Then convinced by the message and miracles of the apostles, they had become Christians. But while there were lots of reasons to say, most were just on vacation, and at some point they had countries and homes to travel back to.

- 1) Startup experience for the church: Imagine you were one of the apostles together in a brainstorming session day 2 after Pentecost. What did they need to accomplish with these people in the brief time they all had together?

- 2) List how things you see in the passage would prepare them as the church would spread to the rest of the world.

- 3) Startup experience for a marriage: for those who met their spouse when they were young and poor, what was your startup experience like? What was your car like, your home? What did you eat? Where did you go when you went out on dates? -- How did those startup experiences help you grow, appreciate your later marriage?



Read this out loud

An excerpt from the message this week:

We're going to talk about the new gift Jesus gave which we now call The Lord's Supper– this was a new way to Remember Christ after his death. When we talk about the Lord's Supper there are many words to describe what we're talking about– you may have heard it called The Lord's Supper, or Communion and you may have heard it called the Eucharist but in essence what we are talking about this cup that you grabbed on your way in today and the practice of being devoted to remembering what it represents.

But, in order to really understand communion we have to rewind 50 days from today's text to the night before Jesus was killed on the cross. On his final night here on earth he participated in a Passover meal with his Disciples– and because it was also his last meal, it is known as The Last Supper. At this point, Jesus knows how the story ends. He knows that His death is planned, that he would be betrayed by Judas and that Peter would deny he knew Him. He knows that He will die on the cross and that He will raise from the dead. ...

Read Luke 22:14-20 and answer the following questions:

- 4) Jesus didn't have to ask us to start doing what we call communion. Since it's one of the few practices he asked for, what do you believe are reasons why?

- 5) Explain your understanding what the bread and the juice represent, and what we're supposed to be thinking about when we practice communion. Should we be focusing on our own sin or just being grateful for his forgiveness? Should we be visualizing his broken flesh being tortured and losing blood to emotionally realize what our sins cost Jesus, or is that too dark for the celebration that communion could be? Is our obedience in practicing it enough?

- 6) Since we practice communion each week, it can easily become a monotonous mindless routine. What can we do to make it more meaningful and pleasing to God as we do it from week to week?

Read this out loud

An excerpt from the message this week:

I don't know about you but prayer is a challenging topic for me. It's mysterious. Sometimes our conversation gets off track, our mind wanders. We wonder if anyone is listening, if



anyone hears us, if it matters. I don't want to bring my Top 10 list to God, and I don't want to ignore God. Do I stand or sit or kneel? Do I have to close my eyes? Is there a magic formula to make sure God hears our prayers and answers them?

If it helps, we are in good company. Because the disciples— Jesus's closest followers — his 12 closest people— also asked Jesus to help them learn to pray. Why? Because they noticed that Jesus was devoted to prayer— he modeled it in a way that made them think.

Luke 11:1 Once Jesus was in a certain place praying. As he finished, one of his disciples came to him and said, "Lord, teach us to pray..."

Read Luke 6:5-13 (The Lord's Prayer) and answer the following questions:

- 7) Since so many people repeat the Lord's prayer over and over for many centuries, do you think Jesus intended for us to do that? Why or why not?
- 8) If it is an outline, what areas from the prayer should become areas of our prayers?
- 9) The outline "ACTS" (like the Bible's book of Acts) was suggested for a prayer outline.

A: Adore
C: Confess
T: Thank
S: Seek Help

Suggest examples of what somebody could be praying about in each of those areas.

Additional Study

If you have time during your Small Group or you want to study more about the topic of communion and prayer, read and consider the following passages:

- I Corinthians 11:23-31 (Communion)
- John 17:13-19 (Jesus Prayer in the Garden)

NEXT STEPS

- 10) Prayer - What works for you? Share things you have found helpful to make prayer more meaningful and to pray more often.



PRAYER

In your group

- a) pray and thank God for giving us communion so we remember what he has done for us.
 - b) Thank God for the privilege to speak to him, that he listens and responds to our prayers.
-

SERVE YOUR COMMUNITY

Establish a regular rhythm of serving together! Below are some service opportunities.

- BENSON - Serve with us at ABIDE every 2nd Saturday.
- MILLARD - Serve with us at Heartland Hope every 4th Saturday.
- FREMONT - Serve with us at LifeHouse every 3rd Saturday.
- OMAHA - Serve with us at Open Door Mission every 4th Saturday.
- Or get to know your community, are there any needs/volunteer opportunities?