

God's Vision for His Church

Acts 2:41-47

Introduction

Recap: I. Concept of Church

What is God's Vision for His Church? What are the distinguishing marks of a Spirit-filled Church?

And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers (v.42).

II. Characteristics of Christ's Church

A. A **Learning** Church

*They continued stedfastly in the **apostles' doctrine**.*

- 1) The Holy Spirit opened a school in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost.
- 2) The school teachers were the students.
- 3) There were 3,000 students in the kindergarten!
- 4) Wherever the Holy Spirit is at work, truth matters.
- 5) A disciple of Christ is a learner – see Matt. 28:19; 2 Pet. 3:18

Q: How well do you know your Bible? What steps are you taking to grow in the knowledge of the Scripture?

B. A **Caring** Church

*They continued stedfastly ... and **fellowship**.*

- 1) Fellowship is the well-known Greek word koinonia which expresses our common Christian life, what we share as believers.
- 2) It refers to both what we share in together, and what we share out together.
- 3) Jesus calls some of his disciples to total voluntary poverty (Mark 10:21). But not all his followers are called to this.
- 4) Nevertheless, we must not avoid the challenge of Acts 2:44-45; 4:32-37.
- 5) The principle of voluntary Christian sharing is a permanent one.

Q: In what ways do you care and support needy brothers & sisters?

C. A **Worshipping** Church

They continued stedfastly ... in breaking of bread, and in prayers (v.42).

- 1) Breaking of bread refers to the Lord's Supper or Holy Communion.
- 2) Prayers here refer not to private prayer, but prayer meetings.

- 3) The early church's worship was both formal (in the temple) and informal (from house to house) – see verse 46.
- 4) Their worship was both joyful and reverent (v. 46). The Greek word, *agallias*, means an exuberant expression of joy.
- 5) God has sent his Son into the world, and now he sent his Spirit into their hearts. How can they not be joyful?
- 6) The fruit of the Spirit is ... joy (Gal. 5:22), and sometimes a more uninhibited joy than our Presbyterian tradition will allow.
Q: Is our worship both reverent and joyful? Or is it more like a funeral service?

D. An **Evangelistic** Church

And the Lord added to the church daily such as are being saved (v. 47b).

- 1) The early church was also committed to mission.
- 2) What does verse 47 teach us about the early church's evangelism?
 - a. Who is doing the saving and the adding?
 - b. To what are these people (those who were being saved)?
 - c. How often was this happening?
- 3) The Lessons:
 - a. Only the Lord Jesus by his Holy Spirit can open the eyes of the blind and give life to spiritually dead souls, and so add people to the church.
 - b. Salvation and church membership went together. An unchurched believer was unheard of in the first century.
 - c. The early Christians did not regard evangelism as an occasional activity.

Challenge

How does NLBPC fare in each of God's vision for His Church above?

What do we need to do in order to become such a church?