

Acts - Learning from the early church – study 7 – ‘What now?’.

Readings Acts 2: 42 – 47 and 1 Peter 4: 7 - 11

As we read the passage from Acts there’s a sense that the Apostles and new Christians take a pause for breath. So much has happened (as recorded in the first two chapters of Acts), Jesus’ ascension, giving of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, Peter’s address to the crowd, 3000 converts. Are they puzzling, “how do we understand what has taken place; how do we deal with or even organise what has happened”? “What now”?

This Sunday we also pause for breath as we reach the end of the current series of talks and notes. Let’s see if we can learn from what the young church did as they ‘paused’. Four actions are mentioned in verse 42. (What are they?). The result was (verse 47) - the church was seen as sufficiently different as to be attractive, and “enjoyed the favour of all the people”. Let’s see how what they did can apply to our current church situation as we discern God’s vision for the church’s future direction/ministry. ‘What now?’ The reading from 1 Peter helps put into context how we should approach this.

- 1. ‘Teaching’.** **1a.** The main vehicle for delivering teaching in our church is the sermon on Sunday morning and evening. How do individual members of the group try to retain and review what was taught as they inevitably become distracted during the busyness of the following days? Are there practical suggestions that can be shared?
1b. During group discussions, it is likely that hearing the views on the understanding of a Bible passage from fellow group members is helpful and forms part of our ongoing learning. Why do you think this is, and how important is it?
- 2. ‘Fellowship’.** **2a.** Fellowship can include many things. What do you think can be included within Christian fellowship?
2b. Of the things you have identified, what, if anything, is missing from our fellowship currently?
2c. Can you say what is different about Christian fellowship compared with secular fellowship?
- 3. ‘Breaking of Bread’.** **3a.** Reading all the Acts passage, what would you say was included within the description ‘breaking of bread’?
3b. Would all that the church (that’s us all) do now as ‘breaking the bread’ be attractive to new members? What more can we / should we be doing?
- 4. ‘Prayer’.** **4a.** We know that both praying individually and praying corporately are important. Would you say corporate (as a group or as a church) rather than individual prayer was more powerful? If so, why?
4b. In the passage from Peter (verse 7) we read ‘Therefore be clear minded and self-controlled so that you can pray’. What do you understand this to mean?