

Introduction:

Good Morning!

- Had a great time at the youth retreat!
- Talked about David & Goliath and
- Thank you Paul for bringing the Word last week!
- Recap so far: Jesus taught // Rose in the air // met & prayed // HS came
- Now they are figuring out what to do

ME:

- When most people think of church, they think of a building, a service, or rules, but rarely of life-changing community.
- However, in Acts, the church wasn't a building or a program - it was people, gathered for a single purpose, living in ways impossible to ignore.
- Some of you are curious, checking out Christianity, wondering if this is real.
- Some of you have been here for years but your faith hasn't changed how you live or love.

Fellowship isn't something you attend — it's a life you share.

WE:

- We all crave belonging, being known, being cared for.
- Too often, church fellowship today feels optional, shallow, or just social.
- Busyness, fear, pride, or past hurts keep us from real connection.

- Acts shows fellowship is central — it transforms disciples, unites the church, and becomes a witness to the world.

To follow Jesus is to belong to His people

GOD:

ACTS Chapter 2:42-47

42 And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. 43 And awe[d] came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. 44 And all who believed were together and had all things in common. 45 And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. 46 And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.,

ACTS Chapter 2:42-47

32 Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common. 33 And with great power the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. 34 There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold 35 and laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need. 36 Thus Joseph, who was

also called by the apostles Barnabas (which means son of encouragement), a Levite, a native of Cyprus, 37 sold a field that belonged to him and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.

1. Devoted to fellowship (Acts 2:42)

- Early believers committed themselves fully to each other.
- Couple weeks ago, Jr High guys talking about setting priorities
 - We must make conscious choices about what we feel are most important in our lives.
Choosing to show up and be a part of community is a priority that has to be set.
- Fellowship takes intentionality — growth in Christ happens in community.
- I remember Rod Roy sharing with me early on, that discipleship is more than just taking kids out for coffee, but rather doing life with them and alongside them.

This is real church: not programs, not rules, rather life shared together.

2. Sharing life (Acts 2:44–46)

- They ate, prayed, and lived daily together.
- Discipleship and fellowship is woven into daily rhythms, not just Sunday mornings.

3. Radical generosity (Acts 2:45; 4:32–35)

- Possessions were held loosely; needs were met.
- I was curious if this is something to be practiced today. Should the church be proponents of capitalism or socialism? No. It wasn't socialism or communism; **it was generosity**. The early church didn't create a political system, they created a family. And in a family, you share so that no one goes without. That's still what God calls us to today.

- We also know this was descriptive of that moment in time, rather than prescriptive, because later we see that people still owned houses, and Paul gave instructions for the Church in Corinth, on how do give based on the size of their income.
- However – we learn that being that they were extremely generous

True fellowship costs us time, resources, comfort.

Cool story: A church in north Carolina, working with a group call RIP Medical debt, purchased \$3.3 million in medical debt affecting over 3300 families. They bought the debt for only \$15,000 and as a church, they raised the money together and were able to forgive all of that debt.

Always looking out for cool ways we can be helping each other

4. One heart and soul (Acts 4:32)

- Unity went beyond surface agreement; they were of one heart and soul. Meaning alignment relationally and spiritually.
- When done well, fellowship creates a countercultural family that reflects God's kingdom.
- The diversity of God's people align in a unique way because we all want God to move, we want the gospel to be shared, and we want to love others well.

5. Joyful, authentic witness (Acts 2:46–47)

- Their shared life overflowed in gladness, praise, and generosity. Outsiders noticed.
- A few years ago, a young adult came to the church – completely by accident. She had arranged a meeting with a pastor, but came to our church instead of where she had intended. She had been invited to an event and couldn't shake the question 'why do they love each other like that?'
 - She gave her life to Christ and later on emailed me and said her mom had also put her trust in Jesus.

- Love for one another becomes the most compelling testimony - **the church becomes impossible to ignore.**

When we love each other, the world can't help but notice.

Challenge: We are not made to be alone, and we shouldn't live as disembodied Christians.

- **So how do you build those connections? Start by reaching out and getting to know one another.**
- **Here is your big challenge this week: Invite someone for a meal or a coffee.**
- **Build more connections. Get to know one another. Learn about people and their needs. Be vulnerable and share your needs. But start by just connecting with someone outside of a Sunday morning.**
- **And don't be the one who waits for an invitation – be the one who asks!**

WE:

- The early church wasn't quiet. Their life together caused ripples. It was impossible to ignore.
- If you are checking out the church and are at the place of seeking in your faith journey, Jesus invites you into a family where you belong and your life can be transformed.
- And if you have attended church your whole life, and if your faith hasn't changed how you love, it's time to step into real fellowship with Christ and the believers.
- This kind of community only works when Jesus is at the center — He makes us family and fills us with life.
- **The love for one another in the church, is a the primary, dynamic test of whether or not we have understood the gospel and experienced it's power.**

Are you ready to step in, or just stand on the sidelines?

Gospel Call:

Jesus laid down His life so we could belong.

We all want to belong – but sin separates us

Jesus stepped into our brokenness, lived the life we couldn't, and died the death we deserved – and rose again! So that we could be forgiven and restored.

Through Jesus we are not only reconciled to God, but we become part of the Family of God.

The early church in Acts was living out a forgiven people becoming a new type of community!

The invitation is simple – turn from sin and trust in Jesus. Don't just watch from outside.

Let's pray.

Father, thank You for the picture of the early church. These people were so filled with Your Spirit that their love and fellowship were impossible to ignore. We want that too, Lord. Forgive us for the times we've settled for just attending instead of belonging.

Jesus, thank You for giving Your life so that we could be forgiven and welcomed into Your family. For anyone here today still searching, still unsure, or still far from You — would You draw them close right now?

Holy Spirit, knit us together in love, generosity, and boldness. Make SVBC so alive with Christ that the world can't help but take notice. Use us, Lord, to point people to Jesus.

Amen

Benediction

Colossians 3

12 Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, 13 bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. 14 And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. 15 And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. 16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. 17 And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.