

Being Faithful
Acts 2:41-47

What did that early church look like? They were not a perfect fellowship. There is no such thing this side of heaven. However, they had walked and talked with Jesus. The apostles had been discipled by Jesus for a period of three years. You would certainly expect that they had their finger on the pulse of our Lord's intention better than many today. So, how did they conduct themselves both inside the church and out in the culture? That is what I want us to see today. What we see here are beliefs, character issues, and practices that make for a NT church.

1. THEY WERE A _____ CHURCH V. 41

The church is made up of the redeemed. *V.V. 38-40* says that Peter walked them through an appropriate response to the Gospel. We are told that 3000 received the message. This is the first thing we notice about the early church. It was made up of those who received the message of the Gospel, who repented and placed their faith in Christ. Then they consistently met and worshiped together. In His Sovereign Will, God has determined that believers are not to flounder on their own, but are to be an active part of a cooperative assembly.

2. THEY WERE A _____ CHURCH V. 42

A. TO THE APOSTLES TEACHING

First came doctrine. It always comes first. Precept comes before practice. Experience must always be tested by doctrine, and not doctrine by experience.

1 Tim. 4:13: Until I come, give attention to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation and teaching. NAS

1 Tim. 4:16: Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things; for as you do this you will insure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you. NAS

2 Tim. 1:13-14: 13 Retain the standard of sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. 14 Guard, through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, the treasure which has been entrusted to you. NAS

There is a body of truth that is the foundation for Christianity. This means that when you attend church, you should hear a distinct message that is Christian, that centers on Christ.

The basic, orthodox Christian doctrines have characteristically been:
The Inerrancy of Scripture; The Virgin Birth of Jesus Christ; The Substitutionary Atonement of Christ; The Resurrection of Christ; The Second Coming of Christ.

It is hard to see how a church can truly call itself Christian without at least those five basic, orthodox beliefs or affirmations.

For further study on doctrine and theology:

Theology: Theos (God) and logia (sayings) or the related word logos (word). Thus, theology is simply sayings or words about God, which should be of supreme interest to believers.

[Significant Protestant and Baptist Doctrinal Confessions over the past 400 years for further study, all of which can be accessed online:

Westminster Confession of Faith (1646)
Second London Baptist Confession (1689)
Philadelphia Baptist Confession (1742)
New Hampshire Confession (1833)
The Baptist Faith and Message (1925)
The Baptist Faith and Message (1963)
The Baptist Faith and Message (2000)]

Recommended works of Theology:

Systematic Theology by Dr. Wayne Grudem

Systematic Theology by Dr. Millard Erickson

A Theology for the Church, edited by Dr. Daniel Akin

CCEL.org website. Click on Browse tab and then browse by author. Choose authors with last name ending in "b." Find James P. Boyce, who was the first President of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary that is located today in Louisville, Kentucky. Choose his Abstract of Systematic Theology. Here you have his whole volume of systematic theology online without making any purchase. Can you say "free!" On this website, you will also find scores of other Christian writers and classic works, as well as other works of theology. Having trouble navigating the site? Ask Pastor Scott for help.

B. AND TO FELLOWSHIP

C. TO THE BREAKING OF BREAD

D. TO PRAYER

3. THEY WERE A _____ CHURCH **V.V. 44-46**

4. THEY WERE A _____ CHURCH **V. 47**

God was adding to His church. The world took great notice of this church. They saw what God was doing in this new group of people. They saw how they treated one another, how they lived, and how different they were from the world.