

Group discussion *Each number below includes questions that relate to the scripture. I offer a few answers, but your perspective may be better. The point is to discuss, not to get 100% agreement. Rule of thumb: the fewer questions you ask, the better. Save time for “the big question.”*

1. Take a few minutes to discuss some of the meaningful highlights of the service this morning for you.

What points did Kevin make in his sermon that you found helpful and/or convicting? Why?

Were there any other moments during the worship service where you felt moved and/or convicted by God? Share with the group.

Read Acts 2:42-47 aloud. In fact, have a few individuals read this text aloud. Rereading familiar texts slowly and through a variety of voices is one helpful way to hear Scripture fresh.

2. Describe a time in your life when you saw the church at its best. In other words, when the church was truly being the church.

What did that church look like (what did they do) that makes you think of them?

What kind of impact did that have on your relationship with that church and with God?

3. In our text today Luke gives us a picture of the early church at its best. What are the first things he mentions about the church (42)?

Why do you think Luke included those things in his initial description of a faith community?

Is it comforting or troubling that Luke’s initial list is so simple and basic? Why or why not?

Which of these first descriptions have been (or are) most important to your faith development? Why?

4. Read the rest of the Luke’s description of the church (43-47).

What else does Luke mention about this early church? Make a list.

Which of these characteristics do you see College Hills continuing to live out? Give some examples.

From that list which characteristic do you think needs to be recovered most by the church in today’s world? Why?

What might it practically look like for you to help the church live out that characteristic better?

5. An interesting aspect of this passage concerns where it is placed in the structure of chapter 2. The picture of the church community (42-47) immediately follows the mention of a mass conversion of individuals (41).

What might Luke be saying about the life of faith by placing these two pieces next to each other in the text? In other words, why does Luke talk about community right after he talks about individual conversion?

What do we lose when we do not have a faith community in our lives?

What do we gain when we do have a faith community in our lives?

Is there a time in your life you can share where having a faith community made all the difference for you?

6. Luke concludes with an odd statement—“the Lord added to their number” (47). What should this teach us about the church?

What does this say to our efforts to “improve” church?

How can the church do better at remembering that God ultimately brings the growth?

† **The million-dollar question** *If you ask only one question, let this be it. Allow at least 20 minutes. Go around the circle and give each person an opportunity to answer. It’s okay if they pass, but at least they get a chance to respond.*

In what way can you do a better job of creating and/or being a part of a faith community in 2011?

Resources

Bible notes

Twice repeated in this passage, and used a total of six times in Luke-Acts, is the Greek phrase *epi to auto* (Luke 17:35; Acts 1:15; 2:1, 44, 47; 4:26). This phrase is often translated “together” (NIV), but it also communicates a sense of “at the same place,” “in the community,” “with one accord,” or “in harmony.”

It is significant to know that Luke uses this phrase in relation to disciples of Jesus four of the six times. He seems to be trying to say something about the posture of the Christian community. They are a community unified and together. The story of God is not only carried out through individuals alone, but through communities of people who are in communion and fellowship *together*.

Kid-friendly activity. *An activity designed to help kids and adults grow in faith together. Do this first, then dismiss the kids so the adults can talk.*

“Family Photo Album” Activity

Prep: Pull out a family photo album or find some pictures of family events. Get some paper and things kids can use to draw and color.

Delivery: Talk to the kids about family photo albums and/or pictures while showing them the ones you have collected. Ask them why they like pictures and the benefit of having pictures. (The point: pictures help us remember and remind us of who we are).

Read Acts 2:42-47. Tell them that in our passage what we read about is like a family photo album. Luke is showing us pictures of what the early church family looked like. Ask the kids to make a list of all the characteristics they find in this passage.

Then ask the kids to pick one of those descriptions and to draw a picture of it. Encourage them to hang the picture up where they will see it often. Or they can give it to a friend as a reminder of the family we share in God.

Pray: God, thank you for inviting us to be a part of your family. Thank you for the community we have around us to strengthen and encourage us on our journey of faith. Amen.

LIFE Group Guide

Acts 2:42-47 – Created for Community

By Wilson McCoy (wilson.mccoy@gmail.com)

The theme: Central to God’s vision for his people is that they exist as a community. The snapshot of the church at the beginning of Acts is one glimpse into this divine goal. The challenge today is to renew this emphasis on community. The hopeful promise, though, is that whenever we gather as God’s people in community we are fulfilling part of God’s intention.

This week Kevin reminded us that to grow as a disciple of Christ we need community. In fact, Scripture shows we are made for relationship. Ultimately, we cannot exist alone as isolated individuals on the journey of faith. We need others. We need community. We need a Body to give us life and support.

Special Announcement: Leaders, remember that this is the *last week* for meeting as a group before the new Life Group kickoff starts on February 6, 2011. Remember to encourage everyone to be a part of a group. For those groups who are staying together you might take some time to think about what you want 2011 to look like for your group (e.g., try meeting more times each month). For those who are reshuffling or saying goodbye to some members take time to express gratitude for your time together as well as sharing a time of blessing to each other as you depart. Help make this last meeting significant.

Relate *Use a few to introduce the theme, check everyone’s spiritual pulse, and “break the ice.” No right or wrong answers – maybe goofy but not wrong! Look for opportunities to affirm and encourage through these questions.*

- ❖ Last week was quite snowy. Share one unique memory from that experience (good or bad).
- ❖ During those times when snow traps you inside for the whole day what do you like to do to enjoy the down time?
- ❖ What is one of the best meals you have ever eaten? What did you eat? Who was with you? Why did you pick that meal?