



## WEEKLY STUDY

### ***The Marks of a Movement - Week One***

Once the Holy Spirit lit the flame at the start of the church, the world began to see what this movement was made of. In Acts 2.42-47, we have the first snapshot of how these recent converts lived out their faith. It was more than large gatherings...they met in homes to share their lives in a counter-cultural way that continues today! May you feel the invitation into the “small way” of discipleship.

Please note our prayer focus for the week in the box below. Join us in seeing what God will do as we unite in prayer.

Peace of Christ,  
Pastor Mark Youngman

If you are studying with your Providence Small Group or Discipleship Group, you can share from your own daily reflections and consider the Group Discussion questions below. If you would like to get connected visit [prov.church/smallgroups](http://prov.church/smallgroups).

Prayer Focus:

- Pray for encouragement and guidance for strong spiritual fathers. May we see a movement of men who strive first for the Kingdom of God!

## DAILY STUDY

### MONDAY: ACTS 2.22-24 (NIV)

*They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.<sup>43</sup> Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles.<sup>44</sup> All the believers were together and had everything in common.<sup>45</sup> They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need.<sup>46</sup> Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts,<sup>47</sup> praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.*

- The pillars of the early church gatherings are found in this description. Devotion to teaching, fellowship, the breaking of bread, and prayer. This week we will focus on these marks of the community. Who do you study with? Who do you have deep fellowship with? Who do you break bread with? Who do you pray with? Consider where these pillars are present or maybe lacking in your life.

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- **Prayer Prompt: Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective. (James 5.16)**
- *God, I pray for increasingly deep Christian community. I don't want to be isolated from the world, but to be inspired and empowered to make a difference in the world for the sake of the Gospel. Amen.*

### TUESDAY: LUKE 13.18-19 (NIV)

*"What is the kingdom of God like? What shall I compare it to?"<sup>19</sup> It is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his garden. It grew and became a tree, and the birds perched in its branches."*

- What is the kingdom of God like? It is small before it is big! Jesus was constantly pointing to the nearness of the Kingdom of God. To make it small makes it accessible because many of us see ourselves as relatively small and maybe somewhat insignificant in the scheme of things. Yet God uses us in the building of the Kingdom. When we focus on faithfulness in our small gatherings, God works in big ways! How are you investing in the community around you? Are you ever tempted to look past your daily relationships and routines?

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- **Prayer Prompt: “Anyone who wants to be first must be the very last, and the servant of all.” (Mark 9.35)**
- *Holy God, kindle in me a passion for the expansion of your Kingdom on earth, but let me also be aware of the small ways you are bringing it about! Amen.*

### **WEDNESDAY: 1 TIMOTHY 4.13-16(NIV)**

*Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching.<sup>14</sup> Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through prophecy when the body of elders laid their hands on you.*

<sup>15</sup> *Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress.<sup>16</sup> Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.*

- The first Christian believers were devoted to the teaching of the apostles. We have an indication of how important this was when we read warnings against false teaching in the New Testament epistles (see [2 Timothy 4.3-4](#)). It was and is important for the church to hold the teachings they receive today up to the light of the teachings of the apostles. We have inherited a faith that holds up in each age. How are you studying and discerning the teaching of the apostles?

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- **Prayer Prompt: Your statutes are wonderful; therefore I obey them.**  
<sup>130</sup> **The unfolding of your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple. (Psalm 119.129-130)**
- *Graceful God, deepen my love for your Word today. May your truth ring louder in a world of competing and false teaching. Amen.*

### **THURSDAY: 1 JOHN 1.5-7 (NIV)**

*If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth.<sup>7</sup> But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.*

- The fellowship practiced by the early church was not simply friends hanging out. It was a sign of the new community. Fellowship was how they remained focused on Jesus and the purifying gift of his life for them. The Greek word for fellowship is koinonia. It has a rich meaning that includes the collective gifts of the community for those in need. Fellowship and generosity are therefore deeply linked. Where do you see generosity on display in your community?

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- **Prayer Prompt: And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, <sup>25</sup> not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching. (Hebrews 10.24-25)**
  - *God, I want to live in the light with my brothers and sisters in Christ. Help me to hold space for them. Help me to invest deeply in the community you have brought me into. Amen.*

#### **FRIDAY: 1 CORINTHIANS 11.23-26 (NIV)**

*The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, <sup>24</sup> and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, “This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.” <sup>25</sup> In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.” <sup>26</sup> For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.*

- The early church’s life together, even the breaking of bread, was all meant to point one another to the return of Jesus and his Kingdom. Their meals often included lingering and storytelling. The table was a place where life was shared. How do you (or could you) create more space around your meals shared with others? Can you imagine how your dinner on Tuesday might point to the hope we share in Jesus?
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- **Prayer Prompt: Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ? (1 Corinthians 10.16)**
- *God, I long to slow down to notice your presence in the breaking of bread. Be present in every gathering around a table this week. Amen.*

#### **SATURDAY: 1 TIMOTHY 2.1-4 (NIV)**

*I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people—<sup>2</sup> for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. <sup>3</sup> This is good, and pleases God our Savior, <sup>4</sup> who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.*

- The early church was a praying church. The prayer that was present among the disciples when waiting for the Holy Spirit carried on and was magnified in the formation of Christian community. They knew and believed that their prayers connected them to the Pentecost power that had given birth to the church. What role does prayer play in your personal walk with Jesus? How is prayer a part of your gatherings with other believers?
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- **Prayer Prompt: For this reason I kneel before the Father, <sup>15</sup> from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. <sup>16</sup> I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, <sup>17</sup> so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, <sup>18</sup> may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, <sup>19</sup> and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.. (Ephesians 3.14-19)**
  - *God, I give thanks for all of the prayers that have carried me through times of doubt and struggle. Through them, I have received power to grasp how great your love is for me! Amen.*

## GROUP DISCUSSION

Pay attention to the Pillars of the early church described in Acts 2.42-47. Where is each present or lacking in your life? How could your group engage more deeply in one or more of these?

- Devotion to the Apostles' teaching
- Fellowship
- The breaking of bread
- Prayer
- Generosity