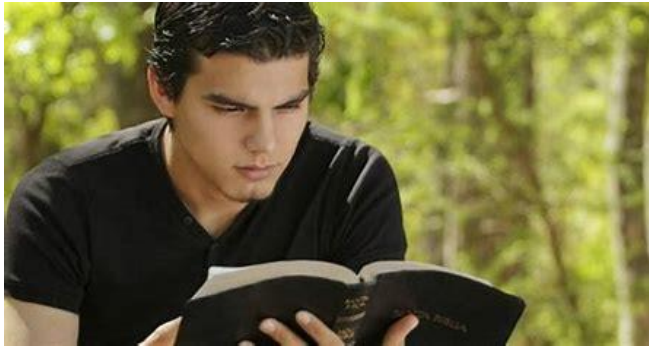


CHURCH OF HOPE 17 WEEK EVANGELISM AND MINISTRY TRAINING COURSE



STUDY GUIDE: WEEK TWELVE (POWERPOINTS)

**TOPIC TEN: ATTRIBUTES OF A HEALTHY
CHURCH / EXPERIENCING GOD'S POWER IN
OUR MEETINGS – PART ONE**

INTRODUCTION TO WEEK TWELVE – PART ONE:



- We are now beginning the part of this course that relates to the important role of local church fellowships.
- It is so important for all believers to be planted in a local bible based fellowship so that they can grow in their walk with the Lord and be encouraged to fulfil their God given destiny. **(Ephesians 2:10)**
- The bible makes it clear that being connected to other believers is crucial in our walk with the Lord and to bearing fruit in our life. **(Hebrews 10:23-25) (1 John 1:7) (Psalm 92:13-15)**

In the book of Hebrews we read,

“Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.” **(Hebrews 10:23-25)**



- In week twelve of this course we begin the section of this course relating to establishing healthy churches by looking at the attributes of a healthy church as well as the importance of experiencing God's power in our church meetings and in our own lives.



- As believers we have been given great power and authority in the name of Jesus Christ. **(Mark 16:17-18)**
- Local churches have the potential to bring transformation to their communities.
- There is power in the gospel message to transform lives.

- Churches full of outreach focused loving believers who are mature disciples have the potential to bring hope and transformation to their community.
- Having fellowship with other believers was a big focus in the early church which experienced rapid growth.



In Acts 2:42 we see four major features of the early church that contributed to its rapid growth,

“And they continued steadfastly in the **apostles’ doctrine** and **fellowship**, in the **breaking of bread**, and in **prayers**.”

In Acts 2:42 we see that in the early church believers;

- i. Continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine (the Word of God),
- ii. Had consistent fellowship with other believers,
- iii. Took communion together (breaking of bread) on a regular basis with other believers, and
- iv. Had a strong and committed prayer life



- When we look at the early church we can see that the followers of Christ, who had been baptised in the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost (**Acts 2:1-4**), devoted themselves both to communication and unity with God and with each other.



- In relationship to God, they “continued steadfastly” in the apostles’ doctrine (the Word of God) and in prayer. In relationship to one another, they devoted themselves to fellowship and to breaking bread with one another.
- Having fellowship with other believers was therefore an important part of the early church.

- In this week twelve study guide we will be looking at the importance of fellowshiping with other believers and the importance of being connected to the life of a healthy bible based local church or house group.
- Being part of a local church family helps us to be loved and nurtured in our walk with the Lord and to remain connected to the body of Christ.
- Being submitted and accountable to other believers and to those in spiritual authority helps Christians to remain strong in their faith. **(1 Peter 5:5) (Hebrews 13:17)**



In the book of Hebrews we read,

“Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct.” **(Hebrews 13:7)**

The Apostle Peter wrote, “Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for

“God resists the proud,

But gives grace to the humble.” **(1 Peter 5:5)**



- Fellowshiping with other believers is crucial if we are to remain strong in our walk with the Lord.



- The bible makes it clear that there is a very real enemy, the Devil who is out to destroy the faith of all believers.

The Apostle Peter wrote, “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.” (1 Peter 5:8-9)

- The Church in many ways resembles our natural family like the father as a priest ably assisted by his wife teaching the children the word of the Lord and how to live an overcoming Christian life.



- For some people their church family is the only family that they may have.
- Being connected with other believers helps us to grow in our walk with the Lord and to be nurtured and encouraged as we have fellowship with other believers.

- It is important for all believers to be connected with other Christians. We cannot do the Christian walk alone
- There is a corporate blessing that comes from meeting together with other believers.



Jesus Himself said,

“For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.” (Matthew 18:20)

- There are churches of all different sizes reaching out to different groups of people and in different cultures.



- God has a unique calling and plan for every church. No two churches are the same. As pastors and leaders we must simply allow the Lord to unfold His plan for our churches
- There are different models for church growth such as house group movements but the main focus needs to be always on helping all Christians to become mature disciples.
(Matthew 28:19-20) (Colossians 1:28) (2 Timothy 2:2)

Jesus Himself said to His disciples, “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen.”
(Matthew 28:19-20)



The Apostle Paul wrote, “Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.” **(Colossians 1:28)**

- In the next Study Guide for weeks thirteen and fourteen we will be focusing particularly on training up mature leaders and establishing multiplying small groups which are also a great vehicle through which people can be evangelised.
- **The important thing is that we allow the Lord to build our local church fellowships His way.**
- The early church experienced great unity (**Acts 2:46**) and growth (**Acts 5:14**) as the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved. (**Acts 2:47**)



In the book of Acts we read,

“So continuing daily with **one accord** in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.” (Acts 2:46-47)



- The early church also evidenced miracles on a continual basis (**Acts 5:16**)



In the book of Acts we read,

“And through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people. And they were all with one accord in Solomon’s Porch.” (**Acts 5:12**)

“Also a multitude gathered from the surrounding cities to Jerusalem, bringing sick people and those who were tormented by unclean spirits, and they were healed.” (**Acts 5:16**)

- The early church was characterized by UNITY, GENUINE LOVE AND GOD'S POWER BEING EXPERIENCED ON A CONSISTENT BASIS WITH MIRACLES OF HEALING BEING COMMON PLACE.



- So in many ways the early church needs to be our primary model for what is important in the life of a local church or house group fellowship and what constitutes a healthy church.

- The keys that I will be looking at in this teaching are relevant for both larger size churches as well as for small house group churches.

No matter what size church fellowship we have we need to focus on,

i. Winning souls to Christ,

ii. Making mature disciples,

iii. Equipping and releasing people into ministry, and



iv. Helping all those in our fellowship to feel connected and cared for. Jesus emphasised the importance of every single person to God in the parable of the lost sheep. **(Luke 15:4-7)**



Jesus Himself said, “What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders rejoicing.” **(Luke 15:4-5)**

- Being connected to smaller groups is a key to seeing the pastoral needs of believers met.



- Whilst corporate worship was important in the early church (They continued daily with one accord in the Temple), small house group meetings also enabled believers to have more intimate fellowship with other Christians as they broke bread from house to house. **(Acts 2:46)**
- Having small group fellowship is a great key to seeing Christians becoming strong in their faith

- We see that as those in the early church had intimate fellowship with God and with others “the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.” **(Acts 2:47)**
- We see here in the book of Acts that it was the Lord who added to the church daily those who were being saved so how important it is that we allow the Lord to direct us in all that we do in our churches. **(Proverbs 3:5-6) (Proverbs 16:3) (Proverbs 16:9) (Psalm 37:3-5)**



In the book of Proverbs we read,

“Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.” **(Proverbs 3:5-6)**

“Commit your works to the Lord, and your thoughts will be established.” **(Proverbs 16:3)**



- Because believers had a genuine love for both God and for other Christians in the early church, there was great unity.
- In the book of Acts we see how the believers were of one accord and had all things in common (**Acts 2:46**) (**Acts 4:32**)
- The bible makes it clear that where brethren dwell together in unity God commands a blessing. (**Psalm 133:1-3**)



King David wrote,

“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. It is like the precious oil upon the head, Running down on the beard, The beard of Aaron, Running down on the edge of his garments. It is like the dew of Hermon, Descending upon the mountains of Zion; For there the LORD commanded the blessing –Life forevermore.”

(Psalm 133:1-3)



- We will now look at a number of passages of scripture in the book of Acts that help to explain the growth of the early church to help set a good foundation for this week's topic.

In Acts 2:38-47 we read, “Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. “For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.” And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, “Be saved from this perverse generation. “Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them.” (Acts 2:38-41)



“And they continued steadfastly in the **apostles’ doctrine** and **fellowship**, in the **breaking of bread**, and in **prayers**. Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. **Now all who believed were together**, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from **house to house**, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, **praising God** and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.” (Acts 2:42-47)



In Acts 4:32-35 we read, “Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common. And with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all. Nor was there anyone among them who lacked; for all who were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of the things that were sold, and laid them at the apostles’ feet; and they distributed to each as anyone had need.”



In Acts 6:2-5 & 7 we read, “Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, “It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and **serve tables**. Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you **seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.** And the saying pleased the whole multitude...Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.”



In Acts 8:4-8 we read, “Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word.” Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ to them. And the multitudes with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. For unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of many who were possessed; and many who were paralyzed and lame were healed. And there was great joy in that city.”



- **FROM THE ABOVE PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE WE CAN SEE A NUMBER OF KEY PRINCIPLES THAT LED TO THE RAPID GROWTH OF THE EARLY CHURCH**

WHEN WE LOOK AT THE EARLY CHURCH WE SEE FROM THESE PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE:



1) That the preaching of the gospel with an emphasis on *true repentance* was the norm

- It is so important that as a church we are actively involved in the preaching of the gospel to the lost and that we have a focus on equipping all Christians to become soul winners.
- If we are to see God's Kingdom expanded here on earth we need to be fervent in our prayers, we must confront the demonic, we need to have an expectation of the miraculous and we need to have a burning heart for evangelism.

- It is so important that as a church we have outreaches into our community in which we preach and share the gospel with those who are not yet saved.



- Especially given the nearness of the rapture of all true believers, it is important that we make evangelism a key focus in the life of our churches. Truly the harvest is ripe but the labourers few

Jesus Himself said, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.” (Mark 16:15)

2) Water Baptisms were an important part of the early church as believers outwardly expressed their new found faith by going through the waters of baptism

- The bible makes it clear that water baptism is not an optional extra. Jesus Himself was baptized, even though He had no need to repent of sin. **(Mark 1:9)**
- Jesus commanded His disciples to baptize new believers. **(Matthew 28:19)** Water baptism is for all believers. **(Mark 16:16)**



- **Water Baptism is an outward expression of what has already taken place in the heart of a new believer.**



Jesus Himself said,

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,” (Matthew 28:19)

When we follow the Lord's command to be baptized, we identify with Him in this way.

- The water into which we are immersed is like a “grave” and indicates that we were buried with Christ.
- As we rise from the water we testify that we are now a new creation in Christ, rising to newness of life (resurrection power) in Christ Jesus. **(Romans 6:4)**



The Apostle Paul wrote, “buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with *Him* through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.” **(Colossians 2:12)**

- **DUE TO THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE “BELIEVERS BAPTISM” WE NEED TO AT LEAST MONTHLY OR EVERY TWO MONTHS GIVE ALL NEW BELIEVERS THE OPPORTUNITY OF BEING WATER BAPTISED.**



- Water Baptism helps to consolidate a new believer’s decision to come to Christ.
- Often during water baptisms people also experience God’s presence in a tangible way and come out of the waters of baptism set free from addictions and demonic oppression

3) That the ministry of the Word of God was a great priority in the early church. That they continued steadfastly in the Apostles Doctrine (The Word of God)

- Ministering the Word of God as a pastor and leader is crucial to seeing growth in the lives of those who attend our church. **(2 Timothy 4:1-3)**
- Jesus Himself emphasised to Peter the importance of feeding His sheep the Word of God and tending to His sheep. **(John 21:15-17)**



- During His time here on earth Jesus spent much time teaching the Word of God to multitudes of people.
(Matthew 9:35)



In the gospel of Mark we read, “And Jesus, when He came out, saw a great multitude and was moved with compassion for them, because they were like sheep not having a shepherd. So He began to teach them many things.” (Mark 6:34)

- So many people's minds have been tattooed with thoughts of negativity, defeat, wrong thinking, unbelief, fear and anxiety, which have prevented them from embracing all that God has planned for their life.
- As we minister the Word of God in the power of the Holy Spirit, wrong mindsets are broken and people are set free.

Jesus Himself said, “If you abide in My word you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” **(John 8:31-32)**

- There is life in the Word of God. **(Hebrews 4:12)**



In the book of Hebrews we read,

“For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” **(Hebrews 4:12)**



- Preaching and teaching the Word of God is a key to seeing people's minds being renewed, to people being set free from wrong attitudes and behaviours and for building up the faith of believers.



- The preaching of the Word also helps people to gain instruction and wisdom to lead an overcoming and victorious life and to be equipped for every good work.
(Romans 12:2) (John 8:31-32) (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
(Romans 10:17)

The Apostle Paul wrote,

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

(2 Timothy 3:16-17)



- It is so important that people coming to our churches are also encouraged to develop a private devotional life in studying the Word of God themselves, to help them to become established in their faith and to be prosperous and to have good success. **(Joshua 1:8) (Psalm 1:1-3)**



The LORD said to Joshua, “This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.” **(Joshua 1:8)**

- Having mid week bible studies and new believers classes are also important to help Christians to become strong in their walk with the Lord.



- It is very important though that we are always balanced in our walk with the Lord and that we are both filled with the Word of God and the Holy Spirit.
- One well know theological professor wrote, “Too much Word and you dry up and too much Spirit and you blow up but together you grow up”

- Church of Hope in Blacktown has Street Church meetings twice a week where they minister the Word of God to those in the community who would otherwise not come to church.



- A key focus in these meetings is on helping people to come to Christ and to then grow in their walk with the Lord as they share keys from the bible to leading an overcoming Christian life.
- From these Street Church meetings some of the people then begin attending their Sunday worship meeting at their centre.

In the book of Isaiah we read, “So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.” (Isaiah 55:11)



- There is power in the preached word and the gospel to bring transformation to our cities. **(Acts 8:4-8)**
- The Apostle Paul also emphasised the importance of those in church leadership spending much time in the Word of God to ensure that they are doctrinally sound in all of their teachings.

The Apostle Paul wrote, “Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership. Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all. Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and *those who hear you.*” (1 Timothy 4:12-16)



- Two important epistles for all pastors to read which were written by the Apostle Paul are 1 Corinthians, which was written to resolve Doctrinal and Practical Problems within the local church and 1 Timothy.



- 1 Timothy has been a handbook for pastors throughout the whole church age and was written to help guide the young pastor Timothy in fulfilling his responsibilities as a church leader.

4) That fellowship with other believers was an important focus - “Now all who believed were together, ...” (Acts 2:44)

- Given the lawless and ungodly times that we are now living in, **(2 Timothy 3:1-5) (Matthew 24:12-13)** more than ever before it is crucial for all believers to be encouraged to be connected to the life of a healthy bible based church.



The Apostle Paul wrote,

“But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!” (2 Timothy 3:1-5)



- Being connected to other believers helps Christians to be accountable to others and to receive encouragement in their walk with the Lord. **(Hebrews 10:23-25)**
- God's plan for our life will always be worked out in connection with other believers.
- We all need one another in the Body of Christ. **(1 Corinthians 12:12-28)**



In the book of Hebrews we read,

“Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.” **(Hebrews 10:23-25)**



5) That the taking of the Lord's supper (the breaking of bread), to remember what Christ had done on the cross for them was a regular practice



- The taking of communion on a regular basis helps to remind us of the significance of what Jesus Christ did on the cross for us at Calvary, and how we can now enjoy the freedom, forgiveness and fullness of life that comes from being in a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.
- Having communion on a regular basis helps us to remember Christ's sacrificial love for us on the cross.

(1 Corinthians 11:23-26)

The Apostle Paul wrote, “For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the *same* night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke *it* and said, “Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me.” In the same manner *He* also *took* the cup after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink *it*, in remembrance of Me.”

For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death till He comes.”

(1 Corinthians 11:23-26)



6) That prayer was a great priority in the early church (Acts 4:31)

- Prayer is a great key to seeing our church making a difference in our community.
- Prayerless people are powerless.
- As a church we need to be praying for our city and for our nation and for those in our church on a regular basis.
(2 Chronicles 7:14) (1 Timothy 2:1-3)



In 2 Chronicles we read,

“If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.” (2 Chronicles 7:14)



- Prayer needs to be an important part of all of our meetings
- We need also as church leaders and pastors to encourage all believers to have a lifestyle of prayer. **(Philippians 4:6-7)**
(1 Thessalonians 5:16-18) **(Proverbs 3:5-6)**

The Apostle Paul wrote,

“pray without ceasing,” (1 Thessalonians 5:17)



In the book of James we read, “If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.” (James 1:5)

In the book of Proverbs we read,

“Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.” (Proverbs 3:5-6)



7) That there was a reverential fear of God among those in the early church as they had an appreciation of the Holiness and greatness of God



In Chapter nine of the book of Acts we read, “Then the churches throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and were edified. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, they were multiplied.”
(Acts 9:31)

- Having a healthy fear of the Lord helps us to stay on track in our walk with the Lord and to make right choices in life, so that we see all that God has planned for our life come to pass.



In the book of Proverbs we read, “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, But fools despise wisdom and instruction.” (**Proverbs 1:7**)

“Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the LORD and depart from evil. It will be health to your flesh, And strength to your bones.” (**Proverbs 3:7-8**)

8) That praying for the sick and for miracles was a common thing in the early church. Miracles of healing are often a means by which people come to Christ



- Praying for the sick and for miracles needs to be an important part of our church's ministry.
- Miracles and healings are often the means by which people come to faith.
- When we look at the life of Jesus Christ, healing others was a significant part of His ministry. **(Matthew 9:35)**

In the gospel of Matthew we read,

**“Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.”
(Matthew 9:35)**



- When Jesus sent out His twelve disciples (**Luke 9:1-2**) and the seventy others (**Luke 10:1 & Luke 10:8-9**) part of their mandate was to heal the sick.
- When people are healed of sicknesses or injuries, their testimonies have the potential to help lead many to Christ. (**ACTS 9:32-35**) (**ACTS 9:36-42**)



In the gospel of Luke we read, Then He called His twelve disciples together and gave them power and authority over all demons, and to cure diseases. He sent them to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick.” (Luke 9:1-2)

In the book of Acts we read,

“Now it came to pass, as Peter went through all *parts of the country*, that he also came down to the saints who dwelt in Lydda. There he found a certain man named Aeneas, who had been bedridden eight years and was paralyzed. And Peter said to him, “Aeneas, Jesus the Christ heals you. Arise and make your bed.” Then he arose immediately. So all who dwelt at Lydda and Sharon saw him and turned to the Lord.”
(ACTS 9:32-35)



- Praying for healings, miracles and deliverances needs to also be a vital part of our church ministry. **(Mark 16:17-18)**
- We need to also encourage those in our church to pray for those who are sick and who have needs in their life.
- We need as a church to pray for and believe for the same miracles to happen in our church meetings as happened in the early church. **(Hebrews 13:8)**



In the book of Hebrews we read, “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.” (Hebrews 13:8)

9) That there was great unity in the church and genuine community



- Maintaining unity in our church meetings is crucial to seeing the power of God operating in our meetings.
- Where brethren dwell together in unity, God commands a blessing. **(Psalm 133:1-3)**
- Good leaders have the necessary discernment to keep strife out of their church meetings. It is important to deal quickly with any divisive attitudes that have the potential to bring disunity into our church fellowships. **(Titus 3:9-10)**

The Apostle Paul wrote, “But avoid foolish disputes, genealogies, contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and useless. Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition,” (Titus 3:9-10)



- Making mature disciples that learn to walk in love towards others is a great key to helping to see unity established in our churches.
- Jesus Himself prayed that all believers would be one (that there would be unity in the body of Christ) that the world would believe that the Father had sent Him. **(John 17:20-23)**

Jesus Himself said,

“And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me, that they may be perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.” **(John 17:20-23)**



10) That people had a genuine love for each other and helped out in practical ways as well



- Creating a culture of love and acceptance and serving others is important if a church is to make a great impact in its community.
- The world is now experiencing greater levels of strife and has become more and more impersonal.
- We are also now living in times when we are experiencing greater opposition for our Christian values

- **For this reason having a genuine love for one another is crucial in the lawless times that we are now living in**

Jesus Himself emphasised the importance of loving one another when He said, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”
(John 13:34-35)



- Both the Apostle John and James in their epistles also emphasised that our love and faith also needs to be practical. **(1 John 3:16-19) (James 2:14-18)**



The Apostle John wrote, “By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoever has this world’s goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him? My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.”
(1 John 3:16-18)

- As pastors and leaders of churches, it is important to both model **(1 Timothy 4:12)** and teach the importance of reaching out to and loving others, so that we have a church culture of love and acceptance in all of our church meetings.



The Apostle Paul wrote,

“Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.”
(Galatians 6:10)

11) That small group fellowships were a big key to seeing the growth of the early church (Breaking Bread from House to House) – IN THE NEXT STUDY GUIDE FOR WEEKS THIRTEEN AND FOURTEEN WE WILL FOCUS ON SMALL GROUPS



- Small groups are crucial for helping all believers to have their pastoral needs met, and to being encouraged in their walk with the Lord.
- In the next study guide we will be looking at the dynamics of a healthy small group model which can be implemented in any church.

- In fact the bigger a church grows the more important small groups become.
- In larger churches these small groups are often called life groups or connect groups.
- It is within the context of a small group that believers can be connected to the life of a church and encouraged to use their God given gifts. **(Ephesians 5:19)**



The Apostle Paul wrote, “speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord,” **(Ephesians 5:19)**

12) That the early church believers had a simple childlike faith (simplicity of heart)

- As pastors we need to help encourage all believers to grow in a simple childlike trust in the Lord by preaching bible based messages that help believers to grow in their understanding of God's Word.



- The bible is full of great promises for all believers that we can build our life on. **(2 Corinthians 1:20)**

The Apostle Paul wrote, “For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us.”

(2 Corinthians 1:20)



The Apostle Paul wrote, “So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.” (Romans 10:17)

- As a church we need to have a pioneer spirit and be prepared to launch out into new things as the Lord directs.
- We need to encourage all believers to be people of faith and vision

13) That worship and praising God was a big part of the fellowship meetings



- Praise and Worship is a great key to helping Christians to grow in their love for the Lord.
- King David was a worshipper and a man after God's own heart. **(Acts 13:22) (Psalm 63:1-3) (Psalm 138:1-2)**
- Many of the fastest growing churches have a great emphasis on worship and evangelism. Worship helps us to touch the heart of God and to get His compassion for others. **(Psalm 37:4)**

King David wrote,

“Delight yourself also in the Lord, And He shall give you the desires of your heart.” (Psalm 37:4)

- **Worship also helps to usher the presence of God into our meetings and circumstances. (Psalm 22:3)**
- **God inhabits the praises of His people**



King David wrote, “But You are holy, Enthroned in the praises of Israel.” (Psalm 22:3)

Jesus Himself said,

“But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”
(John 4:23-24)



14) That the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved. All new believers were immediately connected to the life of the church



- It is so important that when people come to faith in Christ that they are connected to the life of a healthy church.
- Without being grounded in their faith new believers can quickly fall away when persecution arises for the word's sake. **(Mark 4:16-17)**

Jesus Himself said in His explanation of the Parable of the Sower,



“The sower sows the word. And these are the ones by the wayside where the word is sown. When they hear, Satan comes immediately and takes away the word that was sown in their hearts. These likewise are the ones sown on stony ground who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with gladness; and they have no root in themselves, and so endure only for a time. Afterward, when tribulation or persecution arises for the word’s sake, immediately they stumble.” **(Mark 14:14-17)**

- All believers have an important part to play in the body of Christ so it is important that all new Christians are quickly planted in a local church fellowship, so that they can become fruitful in their walk with the Lord. **(Psalm 92:13-14)**



- Given the lawless and perilous times that we are now living in, **(2 Timothy 3:1-5) (Matthew 24:12-13)** it is so important that all believers, but especially new believers are connected to the life of a healthy Spirit filled, Bible based, local church fellowship. **(Hebrew 10:23-25)**

15) That the meeting of the practical needs of the widows and the poor was also a key focus

- The early church was naturally spiritual.
- Though the early church moved in great power and miracles were common place, there was also a great emphasis on meeting the practical needs of the marginalized and widows.
- There is a saying that people do not care how much we know, but they do want to know how much we care.



James in his epistle wrote what true spirituality meant, “Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.” (James 1:27)



- Meeting the practical needs of the poor and marginalized in our community is a great key to helping to see the hearts of people being opened to receive the message of the gospel.

In the book of Isaiah we read,

“Is this not the fast that I have chosen: To loose the bonds of wickedness, To undo the heavy burdens, To let the oppressed go free, And that you break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, And that you bring to your house the poor who are cast out; When you see the naked, that you cover him, And not hide yourself from your own flesh?
(Isaiah 58:6-7)

AND



16) That the Apostles delegated the Care Ministry responsibilities (serving of the tables) to seven men of good reputation who were full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom SO THAT THEY COULD FOCUS CONTINUALLY ON PRAYER AND THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD



- In the early church we see that when the church began to grow the apostles gave themselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word to help build up and strengthen the believers spiritually.

- The early church learned quickly that their prayer had to be continual because spiritual warfare is continual.
- As the church grew, circumstances required more of the apostles' time.
- In response to this they appointed seven men to serve as deacons to care for the church whilst they committed themselves to prayer and the ministry of the Word.



In the book of Acts we read, “Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, “It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word. And the saying pleased the whole multitude...Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.” (Acts 6:2-5 & 7)



- Although when starting a new church from scratch we often have to do many tasks, it is important that as pastors we focus on the all important areas of prayer and the ministry of the Word and freely delegate responsibilities to others as God raises up helpers and leaders to perform roles within the church.



- **It is crucial that we do not hold on to roles that others should be doing.**
- Feeding our own soul with the Word of God and ministering the Word of God to others needs to be our primary focus as pastors and teachers.

- This now concludes Part One of the teachings for week twelve of the Evangelism and Ministry Training Course
- In the PowerPoint teaching for Part Two of week Twelve of the 17 week Evangelism and Ministry Training Course we will be looking at the importance of experiencing God's power in our meetings before concluding briefly with some other keys to having healthy churches with some related scriptures for each key

