

GOD'S RADICAL PEOPLE

Week 3

These weekly studies are loosely based on the previous Sunday's sermon. If you missed it, you will find a recording on our website (www.knaphillbaptist.org.uk). They are designed for both Home Group discussion and/or personal reflection. Don't necessarily try to cover all the questions and discussion topics in your group at one sitting. You may like to think about them later in your own time.

TRUE DEVOTION



Read Acts 2:42

This is the third in our series of studies for the autumn entitled *God's Radical People* from Acts 2:37-47. God wants us to be a Radical People - getting to root of things... and our roots lie in the New Testament Church! In the first of these studies we thought about being People of Conviction (verse 37) where for us (as it was for those first believers) our commitment to Christ and his mission is not just life enhancing, it is life changing. Last week we looked at the need to be 'truly (or 'fully') converted (verses 38-41) where we explored the vital nature of Repentance from Sin, Faith in Jesus Christ, Believer's Baptism, Being Filled with the Holy Spirit and Active Membership of a Local Church. As we look more deeply into the life and witness of this first church of Jerusalem we read that they were believers characterised by their devotion to God (verse 42). The radical nature of their faith, their effectiveness, fruitfulness and the extraordinary influence they had on the people around them sprung from what and who they were devoted to: Christ, teaching, fellowship, communion, prayer meeting.

Questions and pointers for discussion/reflection

1. What are you truly devoted to? What takes up most of your time and energy? What do you spend most of your time thinking about? How would you really like to spend your time?
2. Stanley Hauerwas (the American theologian) wrote that *'The church is finally known by the character of the people who constitute it.'* Character is more important than gifting – discuss!
3. God is at work in his people moulding and shaping us into the likeness of Christ (see Romans 8:29; 2 Corinthians 3:18). How does God do this? Do you think you are becoming more like Jesus? In what ways can you see this is happening to you? What areas do you feel that God still has a lot more work to do?
4. We cannot really understand the Christian faith without an appreciation of 'paradox' (defined as a 'self-contradictory statement', such as Jesus being fully God and fully human). Now read 2 Peter 1:3-9. In what ways are we to 'make every effort'?
5. We are to clothe ourselves with Christ and the new nature (see Galatians 3:26,27, Romans 13:11-14) and starve the old nature (see Romans 8:12-14, Galatians 5:16-25). Are there areas of your life that need to be 'put to death' so you can break old, sinful, self-centred habits and embrace new, godly, Christ-centred ones? As the Message puts it *'So don't you see that we don't owe this old do-it-yourself life one red cent. There's nothing in it for us, nothing at all. The best thing to do is to give it a decent burial and get on with your new life. God's Spirit beckons. There are things to do and places to go'* (Romans 8:12-14).
6. The radical life of the NT church was founded on their devotion (defined as stickability, loyalty, firmness of heart and mind). They were first and foremost devoted to Jesus. Read Revelation 2:4 and Mark 12:28-34. Does Jesus really have first place in your life or is he actually quite far down in your list of priorities? Was there a time when you loved Jesus more than you do now? What caused this and what do you think you can do about it?
7. These first disciples worked out this devotion to Jesus by being devoted (loyal, firm, steadfast) to the Apostles teaching sessions, the fellowship of the church, the Communion services, and the prayer meetings. Are you devoted to these things in such a way that defines your character and promotes Christlikeness in every area of your life and witness? Is there room for improvement?