

GOD'S RADICAL PEOPLE

Week 8

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.



Read Acts 2:42-47

This is the eighth in our series of studies entitled *God's Radical People* from Acts 2:37-47 looking at the life and witness of New Testament Church. Here we find the principles that show us what sort of church God wants us to be. This week we see that Effective Evangelism was a major characteristic of this early Christian Community. We are told here that they 'enjoyed favour with all the people and the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved' (v.47). Whilst spiritual growth must always be our priority we cannot rule out the need for numerical growth. The Book of the Acts of the Apostles (particularly in its early chapters) makes a great deal about the numerical growth of the Church in those early days, repeatedly citing specific numbers ... 120 ... 3,000 ... 4,000 etc. But what were the 'secrets' behind this remarkable numerical growth of the Church? Do they remain relevant for us?

Questions and pointers for discussion/reflection

1. 'If you're going to talk the talk, you've got to walk the walk!' was an expression first used by an American Watch Company. What can we learn from this which is applicable to our life and witness as Christians, and as Church, today?
2. "We are not all called to be 'evangelists' (Ephesians 4:11), but we are all called to be 'witnesses'" (Acts 1:8). How true is this? Do we use it as an excuse to avoid directly challenging others about the claims of Jesus Christ on their lives?
3. Re-read Acts 2:37-47. What was it about the early church that made such a favourable impression on the people of Jerusalem? Which of these characteristics is true of us ... and which do we need to work on?
4. 'A Christian is someone who makes it easier for others to believe in Jesus!' Is this a good definition of a 'Christian'?
5. In what way, do we need to 're-imagine' church for today? If we had the chance to 'start again from scratch' what would we do differently for our church to 'scratch where people itch'? What do you think of the idea of our church becoming a 'Community Hub'? What would this concept involve? How could we best make it happen? Do we need to 're-locate' our church building?
6. Why is the 'First Commission' (Matthew 5:13-16) the most important of the 'Commissions' that Jesus gave us, compared to the 'Great Commission' (Matthew 28:19,20) and the 'Last Commission' (Luke 24:49)?
7. Is it true that 'the curse of much modern evangelism is the impression that it is all up to us'? Why is evangelism not like 'selling life assurance' or 'selling double-glazing'?
8. Luke tells us that it was 'the Lord [who] added to their number those who were being saved' (Acts 2:47). What does this mean?
9. What does it mean to have 'our names written in the Lamb's Book of Life' (Revelation 13:8)? When did (does) this happen?
10. Is the Church guilty of seeing people as 'conversion fodder' rather than seeing them as 'people'? What does it mean to be committed to 'holistic' or 'integral' mission? Here is a clue: we are 'mental, physical, emotional, social' as well as 'spiritual' beings.

Do you think that prayerfully asking God to lead you to others daily, and then being sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit, would work for you? [Well, give it a go then!]