

## Invite Other into Gospel Community

Gospel-Centered Living #2 - Pastor Jonathan Combs - March 16, 2025 - Acts 2:44-47

**INTRO:** Good morning church! We are continuing our series this morning called, Gospel-Centered Living. We recognize that priority number 1 is engaging our community with the Gospel and this begins with us individually and then corporately. It begins with where we started last week with Living with Gospel Intentionality and now this week inviting others into Gospel Community. As we heard last week:

“We need Christian communities who saturate ordinary life with the gospel. We want our life together to be gospel-saturated. We want to live and talk the gospel as part of our shared life.” - Chester and Timmis, *Total Church*.

**III: Maslow's Hierarchy Of Needs.** Every human being has the same needs, starting with basic needs, then psychological needs, then self-fulfillment needs. Once each level of need is fulfilled, the next level up is what motivates us, and so on. **Physiological needs:** Air, water, food, shelter, sleep, clothing, reproduction. **Safety needs:** Personal security, employment, resources, health, property.



**Love/belonging needs:** Friendship, intimacy, family, sense of connection. **Esteem needs:** Respect, self-esteem, status, recognition, strength, freedom. **Self-actualization needs:** Desire to become the most that one can be, person's potential, self-fulfillment, seeking personal growth, and peak experiences.

Everyone in the world has these needs in common, regardless of their race, culture, and socio-economic background, and God cares about their needs. Jesus had a practice of meeting people where they were at, meeting a need, then sharing the Gospel with them. He didn't just smack them with the truth; he loved them first. However, many of us are so focused on our own needs that we can't see past our own bubble and into the lives of others. We're too often triggered by the symptoms of the needs of our culture, but don't see to the heart of the issue like Jesus would. We only care enough to drop truth bombs, without caring enough to invite them into our lives.

**Need:** What are your greatest needs? Belonging? Purpose? I would wager that you are like every other human being that has ever existed, you want food, water, shelter yes, but you truly seek family, community and purpose. You were made that way. Do you pursue these deeper needs? Do you seek out Gospel community? Are you inviting people into this kind of community? Are you opening up your life as a conduit for God's grace to others?

**Trans:** Absolutely, we want to be a part of a church that satisfies our deepest needs. But, do we recognize that God builds His community in the lives, in the very homes, of His people? God's Word today will guide us to see how Gospel Community starts in us.

**BODY:** In the book of Acts, Luke recorded how the early church cultivated a culture of Gospel Community, and God added to their number daily. We can invite others into Gospel Community with an eager expectation that the Lord will grow His church. How do we invite others into Gospel Community? The text gives three ways to cultivate a culture that invites others into Gospel Community.

**Read text:** Acts 2:44-47 (ESV) <sup>44</sup> And all who believed were together and had all things in common. <sup>45</sup> And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. <sup>46</sup> And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, <sup>47</sup> praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

## We Can Invite Others into Gospel Community by Cultivating a Culture of:

### 1. Authenticity and Fellowship.

**EXP:** (v. 44-45) <sup>44</sup> And all who believed were together and had all things in common. <sup>45</sup> And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need.

**“Together” (44)** - Simply put, they were spending time together. Daily, in fact, seemed to be their pattern.

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**"All things in common" (44)** (κοινός, *koinos*) - common, shared by all or several, belonging to generality, root word for *koinonia* which is fellowship. Christian fellowship at its heart is shared faith and shared vision or purpose. They had in common the Gospel and their goal of meeting needs.

**"Need" (45)** (χρεία, *chreia*) - demand, requirement or destitution; business, lack, necessary(-ity), need(-ful), use, want. This speaks primarily to those physical needs, but the greater needs for community and purpose are being discovered in it.

**ARG:** We are called into community all the more as the Day approaches:

Hebrews 10:25 (NLT) And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.

**The Love of God is shown by the way we care for our brothers and sisters:**

1 John 3:17-18 (ESV) <sup>17</sup> But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? <sup>18</sup> Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.

John 13:35 (ESV) By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.

**ILL:** People are so hungry for true fellowship, for some authentic connection that they will endure incredible things to get it. Take the military for instance, people are willing to endure incredible physical pain in order to be a part of something important and a community that has a clear shared vision. The stakes are extremely high because they can be life and death.

Church, we are the this kind of community and more. The stakes are even higher and the commitment even more serious. The stakes are eternal and the commitment to Christ is lifelong. But I believe people truly want this! Call them into this high calling? Yes, Jesus wants to change every broken thing about you and leave nothing undone! Yes, your wallet, your calendar, your life are all His for you were bought with a price! Yes, your Christian brothers and sisters should rebuke your sin and hold you accountable! Yes, your commitment to Christ supersedes everything else! Stop sugar coating it!

**APP:** Will you join in this high stakes Gospel Community? Will you invite others into it with you? Will you invite people into your life in such a way that they might see Christ in you?

## 2. Joy and Generosity.

**EXP:** (v. 46) And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts ...

**"Attending the temple together" (46)** (ὁμοθυμαδόν, *homothumadon*) - with one mind, with one accord, with one passion. The way they went to church was quite desirable, they went with one passion in mind.

**"Breaking bread in their homes" (46)** (οἶκος, *oikos*) - house to house, in the homes. They were clearly bringing church home with them. Invite your friends to eating environments, its way less pressure and way more comfortable.

**"Glad" (46)** (ἀγαλλίασις, *agalliasis*) - exultation, extreme joy, gladness.

**"Generous" (46)** (ἀφελότης, *aphelotēs*) - simplicity, singleness, smoothness, generosity. Their giving was generous, it was sincere, it was from a heart of joy.

**ARG:** God loves the glad and generous:

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2 Corinthians 9:7 (ESV) Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

**Our generosity should be inspired by joy, inspired by love:**

1 Corinthians 13:3 (ESV) If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.

**ILL:** Are you intentionally inviting outsiders into your fellowship? Christ tells a story about this in Luke 14: "When you give a dinner or a banquet, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, lest they also invite you in return and you be repaid. But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you. For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the just."

**APP:** Invite others into lives for their sake and not for your own. For the joy of knowing that you get to represent Christ to a lost friend in deed and in word. Let the Spirit of Christ dwell in you so richly that you would experience the joy of serving and giving for the sake of the Gospel.

### 3. Worship and Witness.

**EXP:** (v. 47) praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

**"Praising God" (47)** (αἰνέω, *aineō*) - to praise, extol, to sing praises in honour to God. Their worship was evident not just in formal gatherings, but in how they lived out their faith, which led to evangelistic growth.

**"Having favor with all" (47)** (χάρις, *charis*) - grace: that which affords joy, pleasure, delight, sweetness, charm, loveliness: grace of speech; good will, loving-kindness, favor. The way they were living a life of fellowship and praise was attractive to the outside world. When we live lives of praise it impacts our witness. Do people hear you praise God? Do people know that you pray, that you worship, that your faith is genuine? Witness is a piece of your worship and an outpouring of your praise.

**"The Lord added" (47)** - When the people lived out their worship of Jesus and in genuine community, the Lord sent more. The KJV in fact translates this "the Lord added to the church," from its translation of the Greek word *ekklēsia*. It seems as if God trusts the communities of Believers who practice right worship and fellowship with more people.

"The purpose of a believer's life is to glorify God. We worship so that God can be eternally exalted among the nations. We bring people to Christ for the same reason. When we live surrendered, obedient lives that seek God's glory, we offer open invitations for others to become worshipers of our great God. Evangelism and worship are therefore uniquely related. Evangelism ignites a holistic lifestyle of worship, and worship of the one true God leads to evangelism." — Wheeler and Whaley, *Worship and Witness*, pg. 11.

**ARG:** **Proper witness is always connected to worship:**

Colossians 3:16-17 (ESV) <sup>16</sup> Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. <sup>17</sup> And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

**A life of worship bears witness to God so let your light shine:**

Matthew 5:16 (ESV) In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

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**ILL:** I saw a clip recently where a wife was trying to share a story with her husband while we was working in his shop, but all he was saying was, “uh-huh and yeah.” Then she said, “Wow, those wiels look great!” Then she couldn’t get him to stop talking about his wiels and the work he was doing. You see, we can’t help but talk about what we love.

If you mentioned the name Nicole in 05-06 then you would have been listening to me go on and on about her for hours. I was completely smitten. You see, we can’t help but talk about what we love.

**APP:** Do you love Christ enough to share? You naturally share what you love. Some of us need to fall in love with Christ today and some of us need to fan into flame that love. He is worthy to be praised and that praise should never leave our lips. You see, witness isn’t that complicated when you have a fresh encounter with the living God. You could never convince me to stop speaking with love and admiration for my wife, but Christ is better. Bring your worship home, bring it to work tomorrow, and see God add to His Kingdom.

**CONCLUSION:** You and I need real community. We long for it and so do our friends and family. God has designed His people to be that community that satisfies those deepest needs. Will you invite others into Gospel Community by cultivating a culture of:

- Authenticity and Fellowship
- Joy and Generosity
- Worship and Witness

Let’s Pray.