

Belonging to a local church

--- PART 2 ---

- Governance
- **Gatherings**
- Giving
- Growing
- Going

• ***Gatherings***

Hebrews 10:24-25 *24 And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, 25 not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.*

Acts 2:42-47 *42 And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. 43 And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. 44 And all who believed were together and had all things in common. 45 And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. 46 And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, 47 praising God and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.*

Mark 11:17-18 *17 And he was teaching them and saying to them, "Is it not written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations'? But you have made it a den of robbers." 18 And the chief priests and the scribes heard it and were seeking a way to destroy him, for they feared him, because all the crowd was astonished at his teaching.*

• **How do local churches meet?**

- Congregationally/publicly - Sunday morning (Thursday evening for Uptown) - celebration family meeting
- Equipping and prayer - Wednesday evening (changes in each of the sites) - prayer, fellowship and equipping
- Homes - Tuesday, Thursday, Friday or Sunday afternoon - Life Groups

• **What are we up against?**

- A wave of individualism
- A culture of convenience and consumerism
- Busyness - what gives? We will always default to (prioritise) that which defines our values.
- The constant battle of the weakness of the sinful nature! We battle with: -
 - Rebellion - we don't like being told what to do, even the perception of it!
 - Laziness and apathy

• **The communal nature of Christianity**

- God reveals Himself as our Father, and we are His children. Therefore, a family meets together!
- Psalm 68:6 *God places the lonely in family.*
 - NOTE: Family and not a club, movie house or theatre
 - Family counters the loneliness and harshness of life in the world
 - With family we have hope, help and challenge
 - No attendance registers, but people looking out for you, and you, hopefully looking out for others.

• **What do followers of Jesus do?**

- The value of the Gospel - my relationship with God, is my chief motivator. If I understand the need to grow in my faith, it happens in community.
- God's desire for every believer is to be INTEGRATED and FUNCTIONING, but first INTEGRATED
- In the various types of meetings, I receive, I mature, I'm equipped, I contribute and grow!

• **The core values that undergird our meetings**

- What we don't do
 - Meet for meeting's sake, to fill our week and calendar!
 - Justify having church paid leaders
- Why we meet like we meet?
 - Congregational meetings (Sunday, Thursday)
 - We celebrate together as we worship God
 - Our doors are open to our city
 - We hear from God together
 - We grow through the teaching and preaching of the word
 - We do family business (baptisms, news, offering)
 - Limited contribution
 - Ministry
 - Midweek prayer and equipping
 - Congregational prayer is essential
 - NOTE: Acts 2:42 the people prayed, then Acts 2:43 many signs and wonders were done by the apostles! Not the other way around!
 - Equipping courses
 - Fellowship around a meal - bonus!
 - Life Groups in homes and offices (Any day except Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday morning)
 - Develop relationships
 - Accountability
 - More discussion
 - Ministry
 - I can contribute more
 - Discipleship

- Dining room christianity is the format

• **How far do we go with our commitment?**

- All three ways in which we meet are essential!
- Leaders lead by example!
- Accountability. E.g. we let our leaders and friends know when we aren't there! We are not the final authority, we need leaders and friends to speak into our lives.
- Time off at times? Of course, but we communicate around this!
- Commitment and faithfulness are some of the core issues of discipleship. A casual reading through the Gospels will show Jesus raising His disciples around these core values!
- This all calls for faithful persistence on the part of the saints!!!