



# Sermon Series Notes

## “God’s Pattern for the Church” (Acts 2:42-47)

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### Acts 2:42-47

V.42- P. Danny’s favorite. God’s Pattern and vision for the church. Each of the 4 areas can be done privately, but the context is believers gathered together in Fellowship.

**Result of v.42= v. 43-47-** A number of things automatically happen.

proskartereō to be devoted or constant to one, to be in constant readiness. Idea of purposeful readiness.

4 primary things they were devoted to

2008- Willow creek study called Reveal- The study shows that while Willow has been successfully meeting the spiritual needs of those who describe themselves as "exploring Christianity" or "growing in Christ," it has been less successful at doing so with those who self-report as being "close to Christ" or "Christ-centered."

### 1. The apostles doctrine/teaching. The word, our cornerstone

Psalms 1- *Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. His delight is on the law of the Lord and on his law he meditates...*

Joshua. 1:7,8; Deut. 8:1,6,10, 19

Those who don’t apply the word- Heb. 5:12 – *You are slow to learn. You ought to be teachers, but you need to be taught again. You are drinking milk, not solid food. V. 14 But solid food is for the mature who by CONSTANT use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.*

**2. Devoted to: Fellowship-** First of 20 uses of the Greek word: Koinania. *Fellowship, identification with, interacting with and sharing in common. Solidarity. 1 John 1:6-7 If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth.<sup>7</sup> But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.-*  
Author Joshua Harris- discusses church-daters: *Here’s a quick profile. Do you see one or more of these characteristics in yourself? First, our attitude toward church tends to be me-centered. We go for what we can get—social interaction, programs, or activities. The driving question is, “What can church do for me?” A second sign of a church-dater is being independent. We go to church because that’s what Christians are supposed to do—but we’re careful to avoid getting involved too much, especially with people. We don’t pay much attention to God’s larger purpose for us as a vital part in a specific church family. So we go through the motions without really investing ourselves. Most essentially, a church-dater tends to be critical. We are short on allegiance and quick to find fault in our church. We treat church with a consumer*

mentality— looking for the best product for the price of our Sunday morning. As a result, we're fickle and not invested for the long-term, like a lover with a wandering eye, always on the hunt for something better. The church is earth's single best place—God's specially designed place— to start over, to grow and to change for the glory of God. That's why I tell people that when they get serious about the church, they're not just adding another item to a long spiritual to-do list. Instead, they're finally getting started on experiencing all the other blessings that Jesus promised to His followers as the fruits of the truly abundant life.

**VIDEO: Ron Geer**

John MacArthur- *the Christian life can never be lived to its fullest apart from a genuine passion for the church*

Why? What's so great about the church and the fellowship in it?

- a. **Accountability-** Iron Sharpens iron- Prov. 27:17
  - a. Hebs 3:14 - But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called "Today," so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness (subtle).
  - b. Mighty Men- 2 Sam. 23- 37 men. – Don't be independent
  - c. Early African converts to Christianity were earnest and regular in private devotions. Each one reportedly had a separate spot in the thicket where he would pour out his heart to God. Over time the paths to these places became well worn. As a result, if one of these believers began to neglect prayer, it was soon apparent to the others. They would kindly remind the negligent one, "Brother, the grass grows on your path.
- b. **Mutual Encouragement-** Hebs. 10:24, 25- According to a Group/Gallup study done back in 2004, people who attend churches without deep friendships and ministry opportunities tended to express much higher dissatisfaction in both their church and their relationship with God.
- c. **Pattern** we see laid out in the word and in Jesus' example- L uke 4:16 He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. Acts 20:7 And on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together ...; 1 Cor. 5:4, etc. Paul's missionary practice was immediately to put converts into fellowship and appoint leaders. Even in Acts 2:47- it says – and the Lord added to the church daily.
- d. **God's design-** 1 Cor. 12, Romans 12- Church is described as the body. It is not effective if each part operates independently. Eph. 1:23 And the church is his body; it is made full and complete by Christ, who fills all things everywhere with himself.
- e. God's tool for changing the world. **Local church:**
- f. **Personal Growth:** (Eph. 4:12–13).the church is where each one is given a gift "so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God *and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ*" For Paul, solid spiritual growth cannot be found "beyond the church," but only in its midst.
  - a. Constant reminder of God and his goodness through his word. Remembrance! We are forgetful. Ps. 73- Asaph- *Surely God is good, as for me, my feet had almost slipped. I envied the wicked. Till I entered the sanctuary of God, then I understood their final destiny.* Gets our eyes back on the prize.

- b. Opportunity for living selflessly through service. (study after study show that the road to happiness is in living for others)
  - c. Changes you personally
  - d. Cultivates a place of personal praise- Ps. 27:4 *One thing I ask from the LORD, this only do I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze on the beauty of the LORD and to seek him in his temple.*
- g. **Other benefits:** Multiple studies show that church goers live longer. (100% mortality though!) *“Those who go to church more than once a week enjoy even better health than those who attend only once a week. Overall, the reduction in mortality attributable to churchgoing is twenty-five percent – a huge amount in studies.”* Once again, researchers thought that, perhaps this was simply due to having strong supportive relationships. But, non-church-centered groups didn’t experience the same effect. Nor did people of worldviews other than Judeo-Christian.
- Significantly Lower Risk of Depression:** Researchers at the University of Saskatchewan found that the incidence of clinical depression was 22% lower among those who attended religious services at least once a month compared with those who never attend. At first they suspected this was merely a result of socially supportive relationships. However, their research showed that there are indeed protective factors that are exclusive to church services. People who attend church have better ability to manage time and achieve their goals (Freeman 1985). Perhaps its because we follow a God who calls us to “redeem the time” (Eph 5). Also, church attendance has a direct effect on reducing deviant behavior, such as drug use, violence, and delinquency among at risk youth (Fagan 2006).

What Devoted to the fellowship is not: Internet, podcasting, etc. Good tools . not koinania.

**3. Devoted to: Breaking of bread-** Context. V.46 refers to sharing a meal.

**4. Devoted to: Prayer -** proskartereo used 11 times, almost always in conjunction with prayer. Eg. Acts 6:4- But we will give ourselves **continually** to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.

It is the work that extends the arm of God. **Read Pg. 43 Cymbala-** *When we work, we work, when we pray, God works.* Andrew Bonar- *Prayer wasn't to help the work, Prayer is the work.*

- My house shall be called a house of prayer. Another reason to come to fellowship! **Pg. 133 Cymbala**