

1. Three Types of Meetings in Acts 2

In the book of Acts, we find that all of the major churches mentioned went through five stages of Biblical Church Development. Those five stages are illustrated very well in the churches of Galatia in Acts 14:21-23 and Acts 16:1-5. These five stages were developed in a progressive order in each of the major churches in the book of Acts. Those stages are:

1. Stage One: Initial contacts
Goal: Evangelism
2. Stage Two: Group Meetings
Goal: Stable Christians
3. Stage Three: Church Beginning & Leadership Development
Goal: Spiritual trained leadership
4. Stage Four: Church Organization
Goal: Independent churches
5. Stage Five: Church Extension
Goals: Sending churches (sending people to other cultures)
Sister churches (planting other churches in nearby communities)

The growth topics, so far, have related to reaching people for Christ and helping them grow to maturity. Today, we are going to begin a series on Biblical principles for group meetings given in the Word of God. As you can see, these topics will relate to stage two of Biblical church development. A healthy church will continue to practice all of the stages as they are developed. A healthy church plant will begin with stage one of reaching people for Christ and as people are reached it will become a church plant with stages one and two. As it develops, it will then have stages one, two and three. When it gets ready to organize it will be practicing the first four stages. Finally, if it is a healthy church all five stages will become a part of its life.

In Acts 2:41-47, we have three types of church meetings mentioned. These three are:

- Bible study and fellowship meetings – Acts 2:42
- Temple meetings – Acts 2:46
- House-to-house meetings – Acts 2:46

These three types of meetings were all very important to the early church and they are also very important today. However, each type of meeting has some different purposes. Over the next several topics, we will be learning more about each of these types of meetings and their purposes in the planting and development of a healthy church.

Today, we will just introduce the three types of meetings mentioned in Acts 2:41-47. In Acts 2:46, we see that it mentions that they were meeting from house-to-house. The only two places, the phrase “house-to-house” is mentioned in the book of Acts, are Acts 2:46 and Acts 20:20. The passage in Acts 20:20 shows that Paul took the leaders of the church at Ephesus and trained them by taking them with him as he taught both publicly and from house-to-house. We might call the house-to-house type of meeting a one-to-one meeting because we see that it involved going to the home of one individual or family to share the Word of God with that individual or family.

Acts 2:42 mentions a second type of meeting when it talks about Bible study and fellowship meetings. We might call this a small group meeting where the focus is on four things which help Christians to grow and build healthy relationships with one another. These four things are:

- * Bible study
- * Fellowship
- * Breaking of bread
- * Prayer

Small group meetings are places where people share their lives together as they help one another grow. In the physical family, we see that the extended family gets together and share their lives as families. In a similar way, every Christian needs to become a part of an extended spiritual family. A Bible study and fellowship group provides a spiritual family in which each Christian who is a part of it can grow and mature in their spiritual lives and in their relationships with other Christians.

Acts 2:46 also mentions a third type of meeting as it says they were continuing daily with one accord in the temple. We quickly notice two things in this verse about meetings in the temple. First, they were meeting in the temple daily. Second, they were meeting with one accord. These are two keys to understand about the early meetings in the temple.

In Mark 11:17, we see that Christ said, “Then He taught, saying to them, ‘Is it not written, “My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations”? But you have made it a “den of thieves.””” In this verse, we see that the purpose of the temple was to be a place of prayer. Then in Acts 3:1, we see that is exactly how the early Christians were using the temple, “Now Peter and John went up together to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth *hour*.” This causes us to realize that any church or church plant has to be a praying people if they are going to be an effective church. Prayer is often the first area that Christians begin to neglect.

In Acts 1:14, we see that, “These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.” Here, we see that one of the characteristics of the early church was that they were in one accord as they prayed. Christians will only be in one accord when Christ is the center rather than people wanting to be in the center. Groups of Christians will have times when the focus shifts to needs and then there will be complaining as we see in Acts 6:1 where we read, “Now in those days, when *the number of the disciples was multiplying*, there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution.” In the following verses, we see that the apostles immediately took action to correct the problem but were careful to make certain that they did not change their priorities.

As we think about the three types of meetings in Acts 2:41-47, we see that these same types of meetings are just as important today. We need meetings in the homes of people or in other places where we can meet together in one-to-one meetings or just a few people. Second, we need meetings where we gather together in small groups for Bible study and fellowship. Third, we need

meetings where we gather together to seek the will of God in prayer. May the Lord richly bless you as you focus on why we have meetings rather than just having meetings.