

Behind the Curtain—Week 1

- What are some specific ways you have seen the church change from the time you were a child?

Then (Jesus) opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. He told them, "This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."

Luke 24:45-47 (NIV)

- How has your vision of the of the church changed? In what ways has it not changed?

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

Acts 2:42 (NIV)

- The church is composed of many different things. One of those is that the church is a community of believers. How has your life and your walk with Christ benefitted from being a part of the community of believers as described in Acts 2?

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations...

Matthew 28:19 (NIV)

- The church is called to be outwardly focused. In what ways are you and your group being outwardly focused?
- Why is being outwardly focused such a vital component of the church?

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

Hebrews 13:8 (NIV)

- The message of the church never changes, but its methods must change. What are some of the new methods the church is now using to reach people for Christ?

Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.

Romans 10:17 (NIV)

- One new tool being used to reach people for Christ are online Bibles like YouVersion.com. In what ways have you used tools like YouVersion.com in your own life or seen others using similar resources?

Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free

John 8:32 (NIV)

- Another new tool being utilized is giving away free messages online. How have you or others you know been blessed by free online messages? How do you see this tool revolutionizing the way the gospel is spread over the next several years?

For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them.

Matthew 18:20 (NIV)

- One of the most exciting new tools is Church Online. How have you seen online connectivity tools like Church Online impacting people? Describe your own experience with Church Online.
- Of all of these new tools being used to reach others for Christ, which one are you most excited about? Which one do you think might be a great resource for your personal ministry to others? Why?

Final thought: God's message through the church never changes, but the methods we use to bring that message to others must change with the times. With your group pray and ask God to show each of you how you can better utilize the new tools discussed in your group to reach others for Him. Commit to Him that each of you will use whatever tools necessary to minister to those who are in need or simply need to hear the gospel of Christ.

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For Further Study

To use this resource, simply select one or two questions from each category below that you think will help your group discussion. Alternatively, you can use these questions and scriptures in your own personal devotions during the week.

Open

- How would you describe your life-style: self-centered, family-centered or others-centered.

Explore

Read Acts 2:42-47

- What were the activities of the early church? (2:42)
- How did the new believers approach what they did? (2:42)
- What unusual deeds did the apostles do? (2:43)
- How did people respond to what was going on? (2:43)
- What life-style did the early believers adopt? (2:44-45)
- How often did the believers meet? (2:46)
- Where did the early believers meet? (2:46)
- How did the early Christians meet together? (2:46-47)
- What did the Christians do when they met together in homes? (2:46-47)
- What was the growth of the early church like? (2:47)

Reflect

- How do the activities of the early church compare with your activities?
- The spirit of the early church seemed to be joyful, victorious, and full of constant praise. How would you describe the spirit of the church in your experience?

Apply

- What can you do to help your ministry be more like that of the early church?

Here are some suggestions you may want to use for your time with God this week:

Day 1: Read Luke 24:45-47. During your prayer time, pray for the church. Pray that it will continue to reach others for Christ.

Day 2: Read Acts 2:42-47. Thank God in prayer for the fellowship of believers He has provided you through His church. Seek His guidance in how you can better serve that fellowship.

Day 3: Read Matthew 28:19. Pray and ask God to show who He wants you to minister to. Pray for those that you are currently ministering to.

Day 4: Read Hebrews 13:8. Thanks God for who He is in your life. Thank Him for all He has done and will continue to do in your life.

Day 5: Read Romans 10:17. Thank God for His Holy Spirit and for walking with you daily.