

The Church: A Community of Worship and Fellowship

Scripture: Acts 2:42-47

July 12, 2026 - Week 2 of Sermon Series: "Being the Church"

Key Sentence: *The church becomes alive when worship, fellowship, prayer, and care become the rhythm of God's people.*

Grace and peace to you in the name of God our Father, our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ, last Sunday we began our July sermon series by hearing that the church is God's household in Christ. We are no longer strangers and aliens, but members of God's household. Christ is our cornerstone, and the Holy Spirit is building us together.

Today, we continue with Acts 2:42-47.

If Ephesians tells us who we are, Acts tells us how we live.

Ephesians says the church is God's household.

Acts says this household has a rhythm of life.

Every household has a rhythm. In a family, there may be a time to wake up, a time to eat, a time to work, a time to rest, a time to talk, a time to pray, and a time to help one another. These simple rhythms shape the spirit of the household.

In the same way, the church also has a rhythm. The church is not only a building we enter. The church is not only a worship service we attend. The church is not only a committee, program, or calendar. The church is a community shaped by holy practices: worship, teaching, fellowship, breaking bread, prayer, generosity, and witness.

Acts 2 gives us one of the most beautiful pictures of the early church.

The Holy Spirit had come at Pentecost. Peter had preached the good news of Jesus Christ. Many people received the Word and were baptized. Then Luke tells us how this new Christian community lived:

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

This verse teaches us that the church is not alive only because people come to a building on Sunday. The church becomes alive when worship, fellowship, prayer, and care become the rhythm of God's people.

So today, I would like us to think together about three movements:

First, A Devoted Church - “They devoted themselves...”

Second, A Sharing Church - “They had all things in common...”

Third, A Witnessing Church - “The Lord added to their number...”

The key sentence for today is this:

The church becomes alive when worship, fellowship, prayer, and care become the rhythm of God’s people.

First, A Devoted Church - “They devoted themselves...”

Acts 2:42 says, “They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.”

The first word we should notice is devoted.

The early Christians did not treat faith as something occasional or casual. They continued in the Word, fellowship, breaking bread, and prayer. These practices became the rhythm of their life together.

They were devoted to the apostles’ teaching. They were devoted to fellowship.

They were devoted to the breaking of bread. They were devoted to the prayers.

This is the basic rhythm of Christian community.

In the Presbyterian tradition, we believe the church is formed by the Word of God, the Sacraments, prayer, and the life of discipleship. The PC(USA) Book of Order says the true church is marked where the Word of God is truly preached and heard, and where the Sacraments are rightly administered.

This means the church is not built only by activities. The church is built by devotion to Christ.

Let me give a simple example.

In many families, there are daily rhythms. Maybe the family eats dinner together. Maybe they pray before meals. Maybe they call one another every week. Maybe they sit together at the table and share what happened during the day. These small practices may not look dramatic, but over time they form the family. They create love, trust, memory, and belonging.

The same is true for the church.

Worship, Bible study, prayer, communion, coffee fellowship, and caring conversations may seem ordinary. But over time, God uses these ordinary practices to form us into the people of Christ.

A church becomes strong not only through one big event, but through faithful devotion again and again.

Every Sunday worship matters. Every prayer matters.

Every Bible study matters. Every communion table matters.

Every coffee conversation matters. Every greeting at the door matters.

Thomas G. Long, a Presbyterian minister and teacher of preaching and worship, reminds the church that faithful worship is not mainly about style or personal preference, but about meeting the living God and being formed as disciples.

That is important for us.

Sometimes people may ask, “What kind of worship do I like?” But the deeper question is, “How is God forming us through worship?”

Sometimes we may ask, “What do I receive from church?” But the deeper question is, “How is Christ shaping me to love God and love my neighbor?”

So the application for us is this: let us renew our devotion.

Let us come to worship not only as an obligation, but as people hungry for God.

Let us listen to Scripture not only for information, but for transformation.

Let us join fellowship not only to talk, but to build relationships in Christ.

Let us pray not only when there is a crisis, but as the breath of the church.

A devoted church is not perfect. But a devoted church keeps returning to Christ.

Second, A Sharing Church - “They had all things in common...”

Acts 2:44-45 says, “All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need.”

This is a powerful picture of generosity. The early Christians saw one another’s needs, and they responded with love.

This does not mean every church must copy the exact economic life of the Jerusalem church. But it does mean this: when the Holy Spirit fills the church, people begin to open their hands, their homes, their hearts, and their lives.

A Spirit-filled church is a caring church.

The PC(USA) Book of Order says one of the Great Ends of the Church is “the shelter, nurture, and spiritual fellowship of the children of God.”

This is very practical. The church is not only a place where we worship God with songs and prayers. The church is also a place where we care for real people with real needs.

Let me share a few simple examples.

Imagine someone in the church is sick, and another member brings soup. That is not just soup. That is fellowship. That is care. That is Acts 2.

Imagine someone loses a loved one, and the church prepares a funeral meal. That is not just food. That is comfort. That is love. That is Acts 2.

Imagine someone is lonely, and another member calls and says, “I just wanted to check on you.” That is not just a phone call. That is the body of Christ caring for one another. That is Acts 2.

Imagine a session meeting where leaders do not only talk about business, but also pray, listen, and ask, “How can we serve God’s people faithfully?” That is Acts 2.

Joseph D. Small reminds us that the church is a real human community. It is sometimes flawed, but God is faithful. That gives us hope. We do not have to be a perfect church to be a faithful church. We simply need to be a church that keeps loving, keeps sharing, keeps serving, and keeps trusting God.

For our shared ministry, this is especially important.

Shared ministry is not only about sharing a pastor. It is about sharing the life and love of Christ.

The pastor has a calling, but the pastor cannot be the whole church.

The session has a calling, but the session cannot be the whole church.

Every member has a calling.

Some people share by teaching. Some share by singing. Some share by praying.

Some share by visiting. Some share by giving. Some share by cooking.

Some share by encouraging. Some share by welcoming.

Some share by quietly noticing who needs care.

The application is this: ask God, “Lord, what have You given me that can bless someone else?”

Maybe it is time. Maybe it is prayer. Maybe it is a listening ear. Maybe it is hospitality.

Maybe it is wisdom. Maybe it is generosity. Maybe it is a simple word of encouragement.

A sharing church becomes alive when every member knows, “God has given me something to share.”

In Acts 2, generosity was not only about money. It was about life together. It was about noticing needs. It was about asking:

Who is hungry? Who is alone? Who needs encouragement? Who needs prayer?

Who needs help? Who needs to know they are not forgotten?

My brothers and sisters, a sharing church becomes a sign of the kingdom of God.

In a world that often teaches people to protect only themselves, the church says, “We belong to Christ, and we belong to one another.”

In a world where many people feel alone, the church says, “You do not carry your burden by yourself.”

In a world where people are often valued by what they own, the church says, “Every person is precious in the sight of God.”

That is the beauty of a sharing church.

Third, A Witnessing Church - “The Lord added to their number...”

Acts 2:46-47 says, “Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.”

The early church had both public worship and home fellowship. They gathered in the temple, and they broke bread in homes. They praised God, and they shared meals. They had glad and generous hearts, and their life became visible to the community around them.

Then Luke says something very important:

“The Lord added to their number.”

The church did not grow only because of human effort. The Lord added. Growth belongs to God. But God used the visible life of the church as a witness.

The PC(USA) Book of Order says, “The congregation is the church engaged in the mission of God in its particular context.”

That sentence is very important for us.

CPC Plainview is called to be Christ’s church in Plainview.

CPC Rochester is called to be Christ’s church in Rochester.

Each church has its own community, neighbors, history, and mission field. But both churches share the same Lord, the same gospel, and the same Spirit.

The church is not called to hide inside itself. The church is called to worship God and then become a visible witness of God’s love in the community.

Let me give a simple example.

Sometimes people may not first come to church because they understand all our theology. They may first notice how we live. They may notice kindness. They may notice joy. They may notice welcome. They may notice that when someone is hurting, the church shows up. They may notice that when the community needs help, the church cares.

Before some people listen to our sermon, they may first read our life.

Our life together is part of our witness.

If we worship with joy, people notice. If we welcome strangers warmly, people notice.

If we care for the sick and lonely, people notice. If we forgive one another, people notice.

If we serve the community, people notice. If we speak with grace instead of complaint, people notice.

This does not mean we perform for others. It means the life of Christ in us becomes visible.

A witnessing church is not a perfect church. But it is a church whose life points to Jesus.

The application is this: let us ask, “What do people see when they see us?”

*Do they see joy? Do they see prayer? Do they see welcome? Do they see generosity?
Do they see humility? Do they see Christ?*

This week, maybe each of us can practice one small witness.

Invite someone to coffee. Pray for a neighbor.

Encourage a young person. Call someone who has been absent.

Welcome someone you do not know well. Speak one word of hope. Serve one person quietly in the name of Christ.

These small acts may seem ordinary, but God can use them. In Acts 2, the Lord used ordinary practices - teaching, prayer, meals, fellowship, generosity, worship - to make the church a living witness.

And the Lord added to their number.

Conclusion

My brothers and sisters in Christ, Acts 2 gives us a beautiful picture of the church.

The church is a devoted community. The church is a sharing community.

The church is a witnessing community.

The early Christians devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. They shared what they had. They worshiped with glad and generous hearts. They cared for one another. And the Lord added to their number.

This is not only a story from long ago. This is God's invitation to us today.

The church becomes alive when worship, fellowship, prayer, and care become the rhythm of God's people.

So let us be devoted. Let us be sharing. Let us be witnessing.

Let us be devoted to the Word of God. Let us be devoted to worship.

Let us be devoted to fellowship. Let us be devoted to breaking bread.

Let us be devoted to prayer. Let us be devoted to generosity. Let us be devoted to witness.

May CPC Plainview and CPC Rochester become communities where people can see the life of Christ.

May our worship be joyful. May our fellowship be genuine.

May our prayers be faithful. May our care be generous.

May our witness be visible. And may the Lord add to His church according to His grace.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Reference Notes

1. Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Book of Order 2025-2027, F-1.0303, F-1.0304, G-1.0101.
2. Thomas G. Long, *Beyond the Worship Wars: Building Vital and Faithful Worship*. Alban Institute, 2001, pp. 1-20.
3. Joseph D. Small, *Flawed Church, Faithful God: A Reformed Ecclesiology for the Real World*. Eerdmans, 2018, pp. 1-15.
4. Beverly Roberts Gaventa, *The Acts of the Apostles*. Abingdon Press, 2003, commentary on Acts 2:42-47.
5. Martha L. Moore-Keish, *Christian Prayer for Today*. Westminster John Knox Press, 2009, pp. 1-13.