

CALVARY CHAPEL COSTA MESA

– COMMUNITY GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE –

Studies in the Book of Acts

“The Church in the Beginning” – Acts 2:42-47

FELLOWSHIP

Start-up companies typically begin with a vision to provide a product for a need that their idea can help. My sons and I like to watch the TV show Shark Tank. A reality show that gives small start-ups an opportunity to pitch their products and concepts to wealthy, entrepreneurial business owners. Its fun and fascinating to watch the panel of investors try to figure out if each presenter really has a viable product that meets real needs, shows potential growth, and of course will make lots of money. They drill the creators of the products and their business plans, looking for any kind weakness that would make them want to pass on the opportunity. Once they find something viable, the “sharks” usually become competitive with each other, trying to persuade the start-up to pick them for what they can bring as an investor. While they cast the concept of partnership, greed often shows its face as their desire to take this little start-up into their portfolio is threatened by the other “sharks.” What a contrast to the way the church had its beginnings. As a new start-up, they had identified with an outcast, went against the social norms, and had experienced public shame and persecution. Why would anyone rationally want to pledge their lives, and even all their belongings to this fringe group? But this is what people did, and in large numbers. Imagine the upside and opportunity if you had a solution to a problem that everyone on this planet faces. The pitch was a message to heal the soul. Everyone needs that. Scripture says, “All have sinned and are separated from God.” A commitment to Christ means becoming a partner member of an enterprise that offers humanity a way to God. Not driven by greed, but by grace and love, the *Owner* of this company promises to invest in you personally.

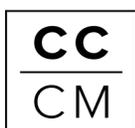
READ & DISCUSS

Read out loud together as a group Acts 2:42-47. Note those items we can learn about *God*, what we learn about *church* and *community*, what can help our *spiritual growth* and how it can be applied to real world *situations*. The final two verses record the outcome of following God’s start-up model, what were the means to this end?

So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved. Acts 2:46–47

- Acts 2:42 says that the church was, “Continuing steadfastly in the apostles’ *doctrine*.” *What does the word doctrine mean? What are the different sources of it? What areas of doctrine are non-negotiable? What areas are open to interpretation? Why is the word “apostles” important with regards to doctrine? How do we practice remaining steadfastly in doctrine today? What is the outcome if we do or don’t?*
- The early church seemed to eat a lot together. *Why would “breaking bread together” be one of the core components to a healthy church? What did sharing a meal together in their society mean to them? Do you know any “foodies?” Why is food so important to our culture? How could we use it to strengthen our church? How could we use it as an outreach? “Breaking bread together” also communicates another early church practice and memorial. What is it? Why would they do this every time they were together*
- While there in Jerusalem, the new group of believers took care of each other. *What does it mean they had all things in “common?” Why isn’t this Communism? How can we take care of each other’s needs today? What kinds of things should we have in common? How does this apply to our local church? How is it possible to have all things in common with the world-wide church?*

PRAY “They had favor with all the people.” Sharing our lives with other is still the best way to foster church growth. Pray that our neighbors see Jesus in us and that we take the initiative to talk about Him with them.



Community Group Discussion Guide

Based on Pastor Brian Brodersen’s message on October 22, 2017.

Watch: <https://cccm.com/teaching/the-spirit-the-church-and-the-world/video/the-church-in-the-beginning/>