

# CALLED OUT

## To Be A New Kind Of Community

Matt Garvin

Every human idealized image that is brought into the Christian community is a hindrance to genuine community and must be broken up so that genuine community can survive. Those who love their dream of a Christian community more than the Christian community itself become destroyers of that Christian community even though their personal intentions may be ever so honest, earnest, and sacrificial.

~ Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Genesis 12:2-3 NIV

*I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.*

Exodus 19:4-6 NRSV

*You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. Now therefore, if you obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession out of all the peoples. Indeed, the whole earth is mine, but you shall be for me a priestly kingdom and a holy nation...*

Exodus 40:34-35 NIV

*Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. Moses could not enter the tent of meeting because the cloud had settled on it, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.*

2 Chronicles 7:1-3 NIV

*When Solomon finished praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the Lord filled the temple. The priests could not enter the temple of the Lord because the glory of the Lord filled it. When all the Israelites saw the fire coming down and the glory of the Lord above the temple, they knelt on the pavement with their faces to the ground, and they worshiped and gave thanks to the Lord, saying, "He is good; his love endures forever."*

**The temple was the place where \_\_\_\_\_ intersect. It was where you connected with God, the center of worship. It was also the center of teaching, and the center of fellowship.**

# CALLLED OUT

a journey through the book of ACTS

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## God's Glory is in Jesus

*For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ.*

2 Corinthians 4:6 NIV

## Jesus entrusts \_\_\_\_\_ to us

*My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one--- I in them and you in me---so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world. Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them. John 17:20-26 NIV*

*When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call. Acts 2:37-39 NIV*

But now, with Jesus joining heaven and earth together in his own person, the Holy Spirit, which anointed and equipped Jesus himself for his kingdom work, comes pouring out onto his followers, so that they become as it were an extension of that new Temple. Where they are, heaven and earth are joined together. Jesus is with them, his life is at work in and through them, and, whether in Jerusalem or out in the wider world, they are the place where the living God, the God who is reclaiming the world for his own, is alive and active and establishing his sovereign rule.

~ N.T. Wright

***They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.***  
**Acts 2:42 NIV**

## The Apostles Teaching: \_\_\_\_\_ Realignment

*With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And God's grace was so powerfully at work in them all... Acts 4:33 NIV*

## Fellowship: "One in \_\_\_\_\_"

*All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. Acts 2:44-46a NIV*

## The Breaking of Bread: \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ in the Home

*...They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people... Acts 2:46b-47a NIV*

## Prayer: \_\_\_\_\_

Only with prayer at the center will the work of the kingdom go forward. Once we are grasped by the good news, we must learn to be shaped by the good news. In prayer, we learn to become good news.

~ N.T Wright

## The Result

*...And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved: Acts 2:47 NIV*

*No one else dared join them, even though they were highly regarded by the people. Nevertheless, more and more men and women believed in the Lord and were added to their number. Acts 5:13-14 NIV*

*So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith. Acts 6:7 NIV*

## The Challenge

I am suggesting that the only answer, the only hermeneutic of the gospel, is a congregation of men and women who believe it and live by it. I am, of course, not denying the importance of the many activities by which we seek to challenge public life with the gospel—evangelistic campaigns, distribution of Bibles and Christian literature, conferences, and even books such as this one. But I am saying that these are all secondary, and that they have power to accomplish their purpose only as they are rooted in and lead back to a believing community.

~ Lesslie Newbigin

If today's church does not recapture the sacrificial spirit of the early church, it will lose its authenticity, forfeit the loyalty of millions, and be dismissed as an irrelevant social club with no meaning for the twentieth century.

~ Martin Luther King Jr.

# SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

## CALLED OUT: To Be A New Kind Of Community

Take time to do an evaluation of our church family along the 4 priorities that Pastor Matt unpacked from Acts 2:42. How are we doing as a church family in living out these same priorities? How could we be stronger?

- Devoted to the Apostle's Teaching (*Aligned with Reality*) Acts 4:33
- Devoted to Fellowship (*One in Heart and Mind*) Acts 2:44-46a
- Devoted to the Breaking of Bread (*Hospitality and Living Jesus in the Home*) Acts 2:46b-47a
- Devoted to Prayer (*the Center*) Acts 1:13-14

What kind of response do the following quotes stir up in you? What do you resonate with? What frustrates, confuses, or challenges you?

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Read through Jesus' prayer in John 17:20-26

- Take time to pray out of Jesus' prayer in John 17:20-26. Have each person in the group pick a phrase or two from Jesus' prayer and pray it in their own language for us as a church family.
- How does this prayer find fulfillment in the book of Acts?
- How does this prayer find fulfillment in our context?
- How is this prayer still unfulfilled in our context?