

## **DiscipleSHIFT** – Chapter 7

### **Acts 2** – The History of the Church's Purpose (42-47)

Objective: To discuss the shifting of the church from **program** to **purpose**

- I. **Purpose** of the church is to share the Word/Witness of God in a way that looks to (1) save the sinner, (2) strengthen the saint, and (2) promote Solidarity (sameness, harmony) with the Savior
  - a. Matthew 28:19, 20
  - b. Acts 2 – Book of Acts gives a history of the New Testament Church
- II. **Programs** – things that we do as the church that has little to do in promoting God's purpose for the church. In essence,
  - a. programs are things that have more to do with our ideas than God's directive.
  - b. If we'd be honest, a lot of what we've called church isn't God's idea of church, it's been us carrying out our agendas under the guise Jesus' name.
  - c. Note: this is not an accusation against our church or any church for that matter, or a statement implying hypocrisy.
  - d. Religion is what we can call it – attempt to promote our thoughts, our agendas, our presentation, using God's name.

So, let's take an honest look at what's going in our world. As much as we may miss the normal of what we call church, could it be that God is reshaping our idea of what church is? We're sharing in Worship, Fellowship & Discipleship without a lot of our normal religious routines.

God has broken us all the way down to the core of the church – no building, no Sunday's best, no choir, no musicians, no order of service, no bulletin. For the most part, all across the world and county, we're at a barebones version of what we know as church – yet souls are still requesting salvation, are folks are still tuning in to hear a Word from the Lord, the church is still active (not necessarily our facility, but the church), and people are still reaching out to one another in alignment with the purpose of the church.

Thought: If what we are doing is the new normal, would it work? Is it all that bad? Is it possible that God is calling for a redefining of what we've called 'church,' SHIFTING us from *our programming* to **God's purpose**? For those who come to bible study at Messiah, this is not a new teaching more than it is an extension of what we've been calling a **shift in culture**.

The authors of the text suggest that this SHIFTing from a program center to a purpose center should begin with one of Jesus' main methods of teaching, the promotion of interpersonal relationships (pp134-136). Relationships should remain:

- (1) Bible-centered
- (2) Have a goal of spiritual maturity
- (3) Discuss what it means to follow Christ

Although Jesus did speak with crowds, He never neglected the importance of personal relationships with people. Regardless of how large a gathering may be, there's nothing like having someone to talk to on a one-on-one basis.

### **Lesson Response**

Messiah, our ministry directive right now is to continue promoting the Kingdom of God in a manner that maximizes God's purpose and minimizes church programming. We do this by cultivating relational environments for those connected with Messiah – electronic fellowship, phone calls, group prayer, committing to contacting at least 10 people per week encouraging them in the Lord. As we remain in contact, let three things prevail in our engagement

- (1) The Importance of the Word of God – Matthew 4:4
- (2) The Importance of the Spirit of God – Acts 1:8, but ye shall receive power
- (3) The Importance of the People of God – Acts 2:44-47

Please Read Acts Chapter 2 in its entirety, and let's be Disciples Making Disciples!