

## Devoted To Worship

Franklin Church of Christ  
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AM Worship

### Introduction:

Many churches begin in someone's home with a few members. Then they grew like gangbusters, hired a preacher, appointed elders and constructed a building all the while bringing more people to Christ. Each year they had more members. But some time they stop growing. The church continued to baptize new people, but never got any larger. **Ephesians 4:15-16** explains why this happens. Jesus provides the growth of the body, but He does so through "that which every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each part." In other words, the church will grow to the limit of the combined strength of its membership. For instance, a church may be made up of 100 people and the combination of those 100 people, due to their individual strengths, can only do so much work. The church can only do so much evangelism. It can only provide so much care for the spiritual needs of its membership. Thus, 10 people may be baptized in the year, but the congregation's ability to maintain the souls of its membership won't allow much more than 100. Regrettably, when that is the case someone is going to slip through the cracks and the church will remain at about 100 people. There is really only one way to break this barrier. Since the church is going to grow to the level of the combined strength of its members, each of the members must grow individually. Here, at the Franklin Church of Christ, we are obviously able to manage, maintain and support around 125-150 members. We must make sure this does not become a growth ceiling for us. Each of us must examine our roles in the congregation and determine how we can grow individually to supply more strength to the group. You may recall the eight keys to the success of the Jerusalem church. These will provide a good outline for where our personal growth needs to begin. For this congregation to grow each of us must improve our devotion to worship (**Acts 2:42**). **Acts 2:43-47** explains the Jerusalem Christians' devotion.

### Discussion:

- I. The Jerusalem Christians were devoted to worship because they feared God (**Acts 2:43**).
  - A. This same term for "fear" is used four other times in **Acts: Acts 5:5, 11; 9:31; 19:17**. Despite some translations, Luke is not speaking just of "awe". Was the fear in **Acts 5:5, 11** simply awe?
  - B. What were these Christians afraid of?
    1. While they were afraid of the apostles (**Acts 2:43; 5:13**), this was more than a fear of men. When the apostles performed great works, the people were always pointed toward God. God can destroy people over sin, aren't you afraid of Him?
    2. Consider another sense of fear. Have you ever had a close call? Perhaps you pulled out onto the street only to hear screeching tires and see a truck barely miss you. The danger has past and you are safe, but your palms are sweaty, your heart is pounding and you are filled with fear. How do you drive for the rest of this trip? With great care. In **Acts 2:37**, these people realized they were a heart's beat away from eternal damnation. They had killed the Messiah. Despite their relief that they were now saved, the fear of that close call was still heavy and they proceeded with great care.
  - C. This fear prompted daily praise to God (**Acts 2:47**), a constant devotion to worship. Do you want to improve your devotion to worship? Focus on the power of God. Remember your soul's close call with eternal damnation. When it is time for our congregational worship or our Bible classes, remember the judgment of God. As you listen to the teaching, remember the power of the One from whom this teaching originates. When you bow your head in prayer, think about your soul's destiny. As you eat the bread and drink the fruit of the vine, remember the Lord's great mercy. As you purpose in your heart and put the money in the collection, remember to Whom this is given and what He has done for you.
- II. The Jerusalem Christians were devoted to worship because they desired to serve others (**Acts 2:44-45**).
  - A. Worship is humbling ourselves before the power of God, but it is also a great means to serve brethren.
    1. Our participation in worship encourages one another (**Hebrews 10:25**). You may not realize it, but the brethren around you were attacked by Satan this week. They need to know that there are others on their side and are there to support and help them get to heaven. Your participation provides that.
    2. Our singing is done to praise God but also to edify and speak to one another (**Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16**). It is edifying because we, in one accord, are lifting our voices demonstrating our combined strength. Through singing, we all participate equally in the edification.
    3. When we pray, we are performing the most powerful service we can, because we are soliciting the help of the All-Powerful to aid our brethren as we intercede on their behalf (**Ephesians 6:18**).
    4. Obviously the contribution is service (**1 Corinthians 16:1-2**). The funds we collect serve the needy saints among us. They serve preachers locally, across our nation and abroad. And every single bit of the money we collect in contribution serves others by supporting the proclamation of the Gospel. It pays for this facility. It pays for materials. It pays for outreach. All of it is used to strengthen you and those around you and to save the lost on the streets.

5. When we take the Lord's Supper, we are making a proclamation to all of our faith in the death of Jesus and also offering comfort as we look forward to the day of the Lord's return (**I Corinthians 11:26**). As with singing each of us has an equal participation in this service. When you eat that bread and drink the cup, you are telling your brethren there is no need to fear the atheists, the pagans, and the pseudo-intellectuals who persecute us. Jesus is the Son of God. He died and rose again for us.
  6. As we study and teach the Gospel, we are serving one another through the strengthening word of Jesus Christ. Even though you are not preaching right now, your attentiveness to the word of God strengthens those around you to give attention. When you are teaching, whether from this pulpit or in our Bible classes, you have become a servant to help others draw closer to God.
- B. Our worship not only serves Christians but also non-Christians as our active participation will be like the worship of those in **I Corinthians 14:24-25**: worship which convicts the unbeliever. Your participation in worship speaks volumes to our guests, perhaps even more than the sermons I preach. Increase your desire and capacity to serve others and your devotion to worship will increase.
- III. The Jerusalem Christians were devoted to worship because they were filled with gladness (**Acts 2:46**).
- A. This exceeding joy speaks of all the activities of this verse. Not only did they take their meals with gladness, but they were also daily meeting in the temple with gladness.
  - B. Like the Ethiopian Eunuch of **Acts 8:39**, these Jews were glad because their sins were forgiven. They had been brought up under a law that could never bring about forgiveness by itself. They had been brought up under a yoke that none had been able to bear (**Acts 15:10**). Now they had been told grace was available. God sent His Son to be the sacrifice for their sins. They could have all their sins removed and have an advocate with the Father (**I John 1:9-2:1**). No wonder they rejoiced exceedingly.
  - C. These Christians were not punching a card or striving to meet some regulation about a particular number of worship services. They were filled with joy over what God had done for them and in them.
  - D. Perhaps this was the true beginning of their devotion. Worship was not a burden or a requirement for these early Christians. It was a joy and a privilege. So must it be for us, if our devotion to it will improve.
- IV. The Jerusalem Christians were devoted to worship because they had singleness of heart (**Acts 2:46**).
- A. **The Complete Word Study Dictionary** defines "singleness" as "without a stone, level, simple, without guile or duplicity. Simplicity, sincerity, purity of intention." In other words, "What you see is what you get." There was no duplicity. There were no underlying motives behind their worship. They were not there to make social contacts with the influential in society. They were not there as a status symbol. They were not there in order to sell a product. They were not there in order to promote themselves. They were not trying to buy God off or earn salvation with worship. They were not living however they wanted and using worship to make up for their sins. They worshipped because of their pure intentions to serve the Lord and serve Him faithfully. They were worshipping because the church was assembled and there was no place they would rather be than with the Lord and their brethren.
  - B. Because of their single-hearted desire to serve the Lord and their brethren, the Jerusalem Christians were not distracted by the cares of this world. To improve our worship, we too must have that single-hearted, undistracted desire to serve God and our brethren.
- V. The Jerusalem Christians were devoted to worship because they didn't keep it "at church" (**Acts 2:46-47**).
- A. As discussed earlier, the gladness and sincerity of heart modifies all the activities of **Acts 2:46**, including those activities separate from congregational worship. These people allowed worship to affect their lives. The teaching in worship was not a sermon, but a life-changing message to be applied outside the temple.
  - B. Additionally, praising God in prayer, song and teaching was not just for congregational worship, it was part of their personal lives. The praising of God mentioned in **Acts 2:47** explains what they did not only congregationally, but also as they met house to house.
  - C. Worship was a part of their lives, not just their Sundays. To grow in worship, we must not compartmentalize it into the assembly or Bible classes. Have your own daily personal worship time. Pray, study, teach, sing on your own, with your family and when you spend time with your brethren.

### Conclusion:

Barriers must not stop this church. But we will only grow if we each strengthen ourselves, becoming more devoted to worship. We all have room to grow. You are an integral part of this church, supplying strength to the collective. Grow your devotion to worship and watch it bring about growth within this body.