**Acts 2:41-47**

Shortly we’re going to be going through to the auditorium, where we’re going to be thinking a bit about what it means to be a member of a church, and especially a student member of the church here at Eden.

This evening we heard Mark preach from Acts chapter 2, up to verse 41, so I’m just going to read the passage following on from that. Peter, filled with the holy spirit, has just given an amazing presentation of the gospel, and many people hear and respond to it **[read Acts 2:41-47]**.

So we see many people making professions of faith, being baptised, **and then living out their profession as part of a Christian community**. The people are saved personally and individually, but they are saved so that they may join a community of people. And of course it’s worth noting that this is a divine community – orchestrated by the spirit. The holy spirit has just arrived, and is already at work.

There are three things which characterise the community of believers in acts 2 – these are devotion to the apostle’s teaching, devotion to fellowship, and devotion to prayer and praise.

So first, they are a community devoted to the apostle’s teaching. We’re told the people devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching. Peter has just addressed the people in the power of spirit, in the section which Mark unpacked for us in the sermon – what the apostles are teaching is the gospel of Christ, the truth of how we can be reconciled with the forgiving king. But this teaching did not originate with the apostles – no the apostles taught what they had received from Jesus, and are inspired to teach by the spirit. Living out the Christian life means joining a community committed to a right understanding of the gospel, and committed to guarding the truths of the gospel.

Next, the church in Acts 2 is a community devoted to fellowship. These people seem to spend *a lot* of time together – every day some of them are meeting in the temple courts, meeting in their homes, eating together. These people are committed to meeting face to face, spending time together. But their fellowship goes even further – being a Christian means giving over their entire lives to Christ, and this includes their possessions. They’re opening up their homes, they’re giving up possessions to support those in need. Living out the Christian life means joining a community of fellowship; a community committed to sharing life and the gospel task together.

Thirdly, they are a community devoted to prayer and praise. Now of course being devoted to learning, and devoted to fellowship are acts of praise, but there is a special place for the community to cultivate the vertical relationship there is with God – and we see that here in their commitment to praying and to praise.

There are 2 contexts where we see prayer and praise worked out, in their meetings in the temple courts, and in their homes. In the temple we see the formal meeting of God’s people. Now don’t get confused because this happened in the Temple – there’s nothing special about the building or location of the building, but by committing to prayer and praise when we gather as the local church on Sundays and in the whole church prayer meeting, we live out the vertical relationship to God as a community of believers.

But we also see the church meeting to pray and to praise in *their homes*. Matt. 18:20 Jesus tells us that where 2 or 3 gather in his name, there he will be also. God is present in a special way, when the individuals within the church gather in his name. Living out the Christian life means joining a community committed to prayer and praising God.

So there it is, living out the Christian profession of faith means joining a community devoted to the apostle’s teaching, fellowship, and prayer and praise. And people notice something different in these people – they enjoy the favour of all the people, and God is adding to their number!

We’re going to carry on thinking about this stuff now, so if you stack your plates to the end of your table and make your way through to the auditorium!