



Equipping Hour

Jerusalem: The First Church

Key Verse: Matthew 16:18

“I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it.”

Overview

If you were to go to a popular Christian bookstore website and search “church growth,” you will find over 5,000 books on that topic. Why are there so many resources related to church growth? Because pastors want to know what it takes to grow a church. Thankfully, we don’t need over 5,000 books on church growth because we have one book—the Bible—that tells us how God has designed His church and how He grows His church.

The book of Acts tells us how the first church was established and how it grew. It tells us about the different elements of church and what the people were like in that church. It gives us the first sermon ever preached in the church and the first account of church discipline. That first church is the Jerusalem church. If there was ever a church to model, the church at Jerusalem is it. This church gives us the best portrait of what Christ desired for His church to be.

Elements of the First Church

Declared the Word of God

1. Acts 2:15–16. What book of the Bible does Peter quote? _____
2. Acts 2:25. What book of the Bible does Peter quote? _____
3. Acts 2:34–35. What book of the Bible does Peter quote? _____
4. Acts 2:42. What did the people devote themselves to? _____
5. Acts 3:18. Who does Peter point the people to? _____
6. Acts 3:22. What book of the Bible does Peter quote? _____
7. Acts 3:25. What book of the Bible does Peter quote? _____
8. Acts 4:29. What was the prayer of the believers of the early church? _____
9. Acts 6:2–4. What did the apostles devote themselves to? _____

10. Acts 6:7. Why were the number of disciples increasing? _____

Depended on the Spirit

1. Acts 1:8. What did Jesus promise the apostles? _____

2. Acts 2:4. What happened on the Day of Pentecost? _____

3. Acts 4:8. Who controlled Peter's preaching? _____

4. Acts 4:31. What happened after the congregational prayer? _____

Devoted to Prayer

1. Acts 1:14. What were the 120 doing right before the church began? _____

2. Acts 2:42. What were the believers doing after the church began? _____

3. Acts 4:24. What did the church do after hearing of Peter and John's release from prison? _____

4. Acts 6:4. What were the leaders of the church devoted to? _____

5. Acts 12:5. Who began to pray for Peter at his arrest? _____

Delivered the Gospel

1. Acts 2:38. What did Peter preach in his first sermon? _____

2. Acts 3:18–19. What did Peter preach in his second sermon? _____

3. Acts 4:19–20. What did Peter and John continue to do? _____

Dedicated to One Another

1. Acts 2:41–42. What were the 3,000 plus believers doing? _____

2. Acts 2:44–47. How are the believers described? _____

3. Acts 4:32. How are the believers described? _____

4. Acts 5:11, 13. How was the church viewed by outsiders? _____

Diligent Leadership

1. Acts 5:27–29. How did Peter and the apostles respond when told to stop preaching Christ? _____

2. Acts 6:1–6. Why did the leaders choose the seven servants? _____

“Jerusalem represents the prototype for all subsequent churches. The effect of salvation was fresh for everyone; the work of the Holy Spirit in salvation was powerful; and the desire of the congregation to glorify God in every aspect of their lives set the standard for all future churches to follow.” —Dr. Richard Mayhue

Application

1. Why do you think churches have strayed from the Jerusalem model?

2. What can you learn from the Jerusalem church and apply to your life?