

Multiply | Plant

Acts 1:6-8 | 2:37-47

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Blessed are You, O Lord, the God of Israel our father, forever and ever. Yours, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is Yours. Yours is the kingdom, O Lord, and You are exalted as head above all. Both riches and honor come from You, and You rule over all. In your hand are power and might, and in Your hand it is to make great and to give strength to all.

—1 Chronicles 29:10-12

I. Planting churches isn't a recent phenomenon; instead, it's always been one of God's primary strategy for making disciples. (Matthew 28:19-20)

A. The Great Commission calls us to plant churches. (Mt. 28:19-20)

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.

—Matthew 28:19-20

B. The Gospel compels us to plant churches. (Jn. 20:21)

For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.

—Luke 19:10

For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.

—Mark 10:45

As the Father has sent Me, even so I am sending you.

—John 20:21

- C. Stewarding God's gifts require we plant churches. (1 Cor. 12:12-31)
- D. The culture demands we plant churches.

II. The Early Church and Church Planting (Acts 1:6-8; 2:37-47; 8:1)

- A. God always empowers us to do what He commands us to do. (Acts 1:6-8)

And while staying with them He ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, He said, "you heard from Me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

—Acts 1:4-5

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

—Acts 1:8

- B. Expanding our Gospel influence has always been the strategy. (Acts 1:8; 8:1; see Gen. 9:1; 11:1-9)

And Saul approved of his execution. And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.

—Acts 8:1

And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation." So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds

to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

—Acts 2:40-47

C. New disciples were immediately integrated into new worshipping communities (Acts 2:37-47; Titus 1:5)

III. The Plan to Plant Churches

1. Identify the leader(s) and location. (Acts 16:6-10)

Now there were in the church at Antioch prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a lifelong friend of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off.

—Acts 13:1-3

2. Call everyone to pray about their participation. (Matt. 9:35-38)

"The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest."

—Matthew 9:37-38

3. Equip the Core Team (Eph. 4:11-12)

And He gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry

—Ephesians 4:11-12

4. Begin gathering and worshipping together (Acts 2:42-47)

5. Integrate into the community and build relationships (Matt. 9:9-13)

Study Questions:

1. What comes to mind when you think about church planting? Be specific. Discuss potential challenges for a church committed to planting other churches. Also, share some of the advantages to starting a new, worshipping community.
2. Read Acts 1:6-8. Why is it imperative for the Holy Spirit to come before the disciples go with the Gospel? Explain. Also, talk about the importance of Jesus naming specific places He wanted the disciples to be His witnesses. How do His words apply to us today? Finally, compare Acts 1:8 to Acts 8:1. Consider and discuss how the “great persecution” (8:1) helped early believers fulfill Jesus’s command (1:8).
3. Read Acts 2:41-47. Observe how new disciples were quickly integrated into new, worshipping communities (i.e. church). Also, consider the kind of community these early believers experienced (2:42-47). What might this teach us about the need to plant new, smaller churches close to those you are trying to reach with the Gospel? Explain.

Prayer Points:

- Sit quietly before the Lord and consider the role He might have you play in our planting of churches. Pray simply: Speak, for your servant hears. (1 Samuel 3:10)
- Ask the Lord to raise up the right leader(s) to lead our first church plant. Also, ask Him to begin stirring the hearts of those who will be sent.