

The Secret of Radical Fellowship

Acts 4:32-37

What was the early church like? Their growth and their fellowship?

I want Westminster to grow.

How will that happen? What is the secret to biblical church growth?

Four things from this text:

In sum, the church must be the church.

Being of One Heart, and One Soul

Have you tasted of it? Unity of heart and soul.

We do not need to be clones to have unity. 1 John 1:7

Preaching and Grace

The apostles did not have a secret message.

Resurrection power is the secret to gracious fellowship.

What was the evidence of this great grace?

There was not a needy person among them.

I have the solution to poverty to share with you today.

Giving and receiving help in the church.

Joseph the great encourager

Who was he? (Colossians 4:10; Acts 12:12; 11:24)

Why did they nickname him the *Son of Encouragement*?

What is the secret to church growth?

Love one another that others may know. John 13:34-35

Embrace the doctrine of Christ by living it out in radical love.

Christ centered unity

Christ centered preaching

Christ centered fellowship

Christ centered mutual care

It is a foretaste of the society of heaven; it begins here on earth.

Mutual Love in the Early Church

They Demonstrated Servanthood - Each willingly placed himself at the service of others. They realized that the church was about more than them getting their way. That's still true today! No person in this room has a right to have their way! We ought to want the Lord's will to be done in the house of God. By the way, that's where churches begin to get into trouble. When you get a few people who think they run the whole show and have the authority to call the shots, they will begin to try to tell the preachers how to preach. They will try to run the business and the affairs of the church. They will try to exert their will over everyone else. That is not God's will for any church! He never intended for any family or group to hold supreme power in His church! His desire is for the people of God to serve one another, as Christ served man when He came to die, **Mark 10:45. Ill. John 13:1-17.**

They Demonstrated Selflessness - These people also placed others ahead of themselves. They placed their brother's needs of their ahead of their own greeds! They demonstrated the spirit of Christ in that they were totally selfless in their love one for the other. Did you know that this is God's plan for the church? We must come to the place where we stop thinking about how things affect us personally, and where we start thinking about how things affect the church as a whole and our brothers and sisters as individuals. Everything in this church is not about me having my way! There may come a day when this church will be better off with someone else in this pulpit. When that day comes, may I have the grace the wisdom to step aside and let God have His way. May I think about what is best for the family of God more than I think about what is best for myself. That is God's desire for you too! Whether you are a Deacon, another position, or whether you are member of the church without a position, this thing is not about you having your way. We must learn to put self to death on the altar of sacrifice so that the Lord might have His way in the church. Self has to go! And, it will when we love the brethren and the Lord more than we love ourselves!

They Demonstrated Sacrifice - These people gave up things that were precious and important to them, so that they could meet the needs of their brothers in Christ! In other words, they were not just living for themselves, but they were living for the good of the flock.

What a lesson for us! May we be willing to sacrifice what we think is important for the good of the body of Christ. Whether it be our time, our talents, our tithes or some possession or the other, may we be willing to lay it down to help a brother in need. A sacrificial heart beat within the breast of our Savior! May that same heart guide us to love one another rightly and to show that love in a way that honors God and lifts our brothers.

~Alan Carr