

Theme: A thriving church is a true community, centered on Christ, awed by God's power, showing practical love, living life together, and experiencing God's favor.

I. Intro – Steve Jobs (1955-2011)

- A. Steve Jobs died this week
- B. Like many, I found out using one of devices he created
- C. Helped create many useful devices - I like a lot!
- D. But the digital age - the iWorld - can isolate
- E. Yet we long for community - made for community
- F. What does true church community look like?
- G. How is a true church community built?

II. The Early Church - A Thriving Community

- A. Note how Luke describes the church - community!
 - 1. Community terms - together, common, plurals
 - 2. Not individuals - community!
- B. Luke pictures the church as the ideal community
 - 1. This is what the ancient world longed to see
 - 2. This is what our world longs to see
 - 3. This is not individuals - me and Jesus
 - 4. This is community - Jesus and His church!

III. Snapshots of A Thriving Community

- A. A thriving community is centered on Christ

- 1. Acts 2:36-38 - Baptized into Christ - community!
- 2. A community created by Christ - not external factors
- 3. What binds the church together is Christ!
- 4. Acts 2:42 - Christ experienced through means of grace
- 5. Communal experience of Christ always this way

B. A thriving community is awed by God's power

- 1. Acts 2:43 - full of awe; seeing God's power
- 2. This awe is the fear of God
- 3. Church is community of those who fear God
- 4. Those who fear God see Him act in power!

C. A thriving community loves practically

- 1. Acts 2:44-45 - material help for one another
- 2. Acts 4:32,34-35 - sacrificial help for one another
- 3. This is not just a 'spiritual' unity - real love
- 4. This is not forced - real love, real actions

D. A thriving community lives life together

- 1. Acts 2:46 - corporate worship & small groups
- 2. Note they saw each other daily - not just Sundays
- 3. This is more than meetings - sharing life
- 4. Real community is not developed just in meetings

E. A thriving community experiences favor

1. They have favor with God - adding to them
2. They even have favor with outsiders
3. Real community is attractive! It draws people in!

IV. Applying the Word - Growing A Thriving Community

A. Am I part of a thriving local church community?

1. The Christian life was never meant to be lived alone
2. The church is not a building or a meeting
3. The church is community of Jesus and His followers
4. Note how believers added to community (Acts 2:41)
5. Note description of community - not individuals
6. Do I realize I am called to community?
7. Do I realize I need community?
8. Listening to sermons & music is not enough!

B. Do I actively seek to build community?

1. Community does not just happen! It takes work!
2. Seinfeld and Friends is not reality!!
3. We must proactively seek community!
4. Do I gather regularly (weekly) with the local church?
5. Beware the temptation to overestimate how often I gather!
6. Do I gather regularly in small groups?

7. Do I experience life with others in my local church?
8. Do I hang out, vacation, watch movies, take meals, etc?
9. If I am not doing these things, I am not part of local church

C. The joy of experiencing Christ in community

1. Deepest experiences if Christ happen in community
2. This is by God's design
3. He meets us as we gather with one another
4. He meets us as we serve one another in love
5. No joy like seeing Christ in His Church

D. Thomas Navis water baptism

A Thriving Community

Acts 2:42-47
 October 9, 2011
 Water Baptism
 Numbers 6:24-26

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. 43 Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. 44 All the believers were together and had everything in common. 45 Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. 46 Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, 47 praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Acts 2:42–47

“Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.” 37 When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?” 38 Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 2:36–38

All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had... 34 There were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales 35 and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone as he had need.

Acts 4:32–35