

God's Plan for Church Growth
Acts 2:41-47

Review:

1. Growing congregations are devoted to the means of grace: the Word, the sacraments, prayer
2. Growing congregations cultivate fellowship and unity, showing true hospitality to new believers and sharing with one another so that everyone has what they need
3. Growing congregations depend on God to soften hard hearts as well as to open blind eyes and deaf ears to the good news of Jesus Christ

Reflect:

1. In what ways do you as an individual and your congregation as a whole need to model the image of Christ more consistently? What steps can you take to increase your faithfulness in these ways?

Go further: Read Acts 4:32-5:5; 5:11-16; 6:7

1. How does 4:32 describe all the believers? How did they think about and use their possessions?
2. To what did the apostles bear witness?
3. How does 4:34-35 explain the fact that none of the believers lacked for anything?
4. What does 4:36-37 say that Barnabas' name means? What did Barnabas do with his land?
5. What does 5:1 say that Ananias and Sapphira did with one of their possessions?
6. What does 5:2 say that they did with the money they received?
7. In 5:3, what does Peter say that Satan has done to Ananias?
8. What does 5:4 make clear about Ananias' right to his own property? To Whom did Ananias lie?
9. What happened to Ananias in 5:5? How did the rest of the Church react to this?
10. How does 5:11 describe the reaction of those who heard about what happened to Ananias and Sapphira?
11. What does 5:12 say the apostles were doing among the people?
12. How does 5:12 describe the relationships within the early Church?
13. According to 5:13, what did none of the "rest" dare to do? Does what happened to Ananias and Sapphira explain why the "rest" might be hesitant to join the Church?
14. In spite of some people's unwillingness to become Christians, how does 5:13 describe the way they felt about members of the Church?
15. According to 5:14, how many people were joining the church?
16. According to 5:15-16, what sorts of miracles were many people desiring the apostles to do?
17. How does 6:7 describe the growth of the Church in Jerusalem? What group of new believers is specifically mentioned? Why would this be especially significant?

Summary and Application:

1. 4:33 says that "Great grace was upon them all." Why is that so important? What did God's grace enable them to do? In what part of your Christian life do you need more of God's grace?
2. How easy is it to share with those in need and to be in one accord with fellow believers? What is holding you back from doing these things?
3. Do you know anyone who is hesitant to join a congregation but is nevertheless attracted to Jesus? How can you help them reconcile these conflicting feelings?