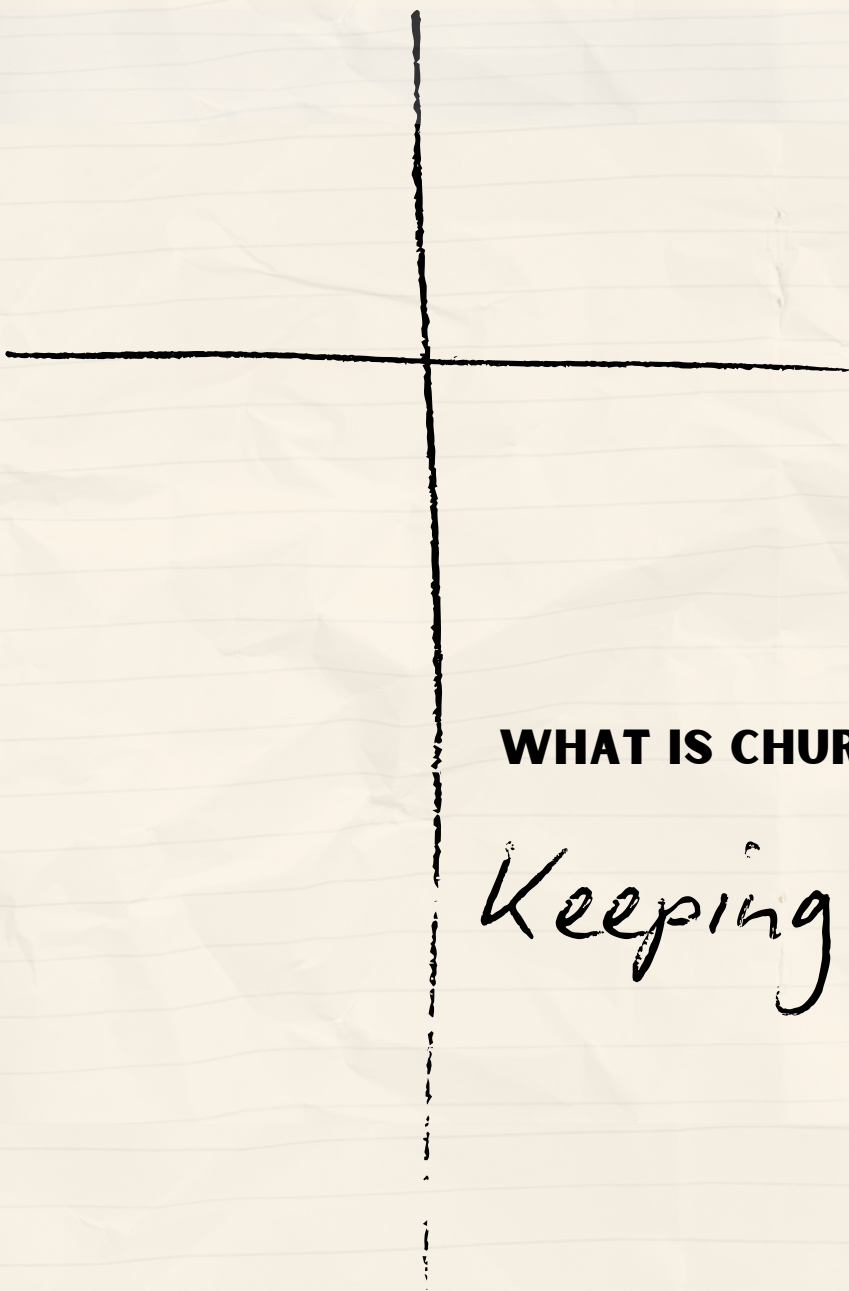




WHAT IS CHURCH?

Keeping it simple.

Seek the Kingdom of God
above all else, and live
righteously, and he will give
you everything you need.

📖 Matthew 6:33

WHAT IS CHURCH?

Week One: Discipleship

John 17:4: The “other” mission of Jesus besides the cross.

Matthew 28:18-20: Disciples and not Converts

Basic definition of discipleship (1 Corinthians 4:15; 1 Timothy 4:14; 2 Timothy 1:6): *Discipleship is one-on-one mentorship where, through an honest and vulnerable relationship, impartation of knowledge and experiences gets passed down for an individual to go even further than the mentor. This can also happen in small group settings.*

- Matthew 20:25-27: The upside-down Kingdom and why many of our Western methods work against discipleship.

Understanding the 5-Fold Ministry as context for Discipleship Communities (Ephesians 4:11-12).

- 2 Timothy 2:2: The ultimate test for our ministries as to whether we are truly making disciples or not.

3 levels of discipleship that should be active in all of our lives:

People who are discipling you, peers who are at the same place and level that you can walk together with, and those whom you are investing in.

Discussion Questions:

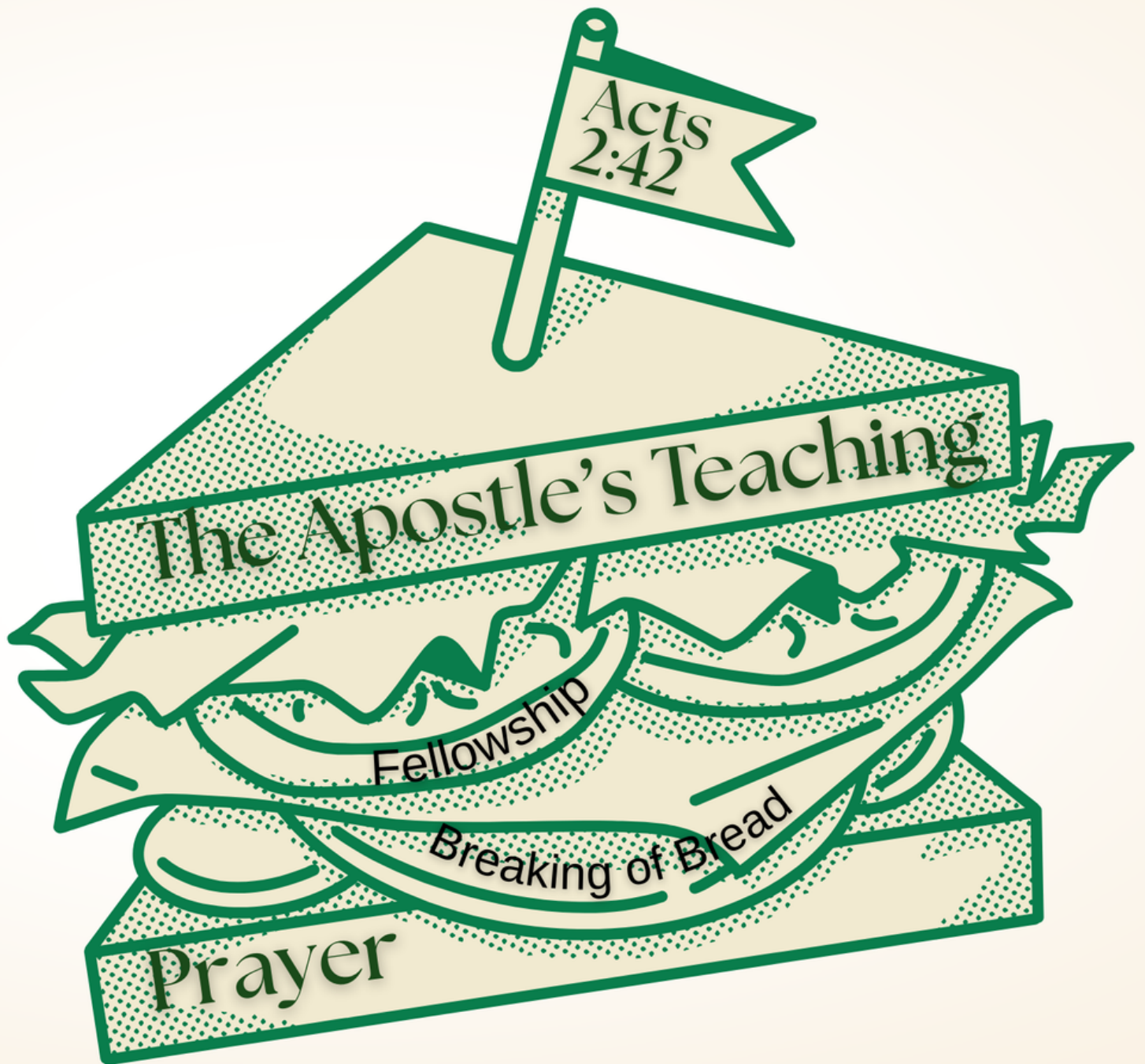
Is there anyone who is doing one-on-one discipleship/mentoring right now and can you tell us your experience with that?

Journaling Questions:

Assess the 3 levels of discipleship in your life. Who are you pouring into? Who are you walking together with? Who is pouring into you? This is the Lifestyle as a Christian.

CHURCH

The Simple Sandwich



WHAT IS CHURCH?

Week Two: Gathering

Read Scripture: Acts 2:42

1. Apostle's Teaching (Doctrine)

- The term apostle presents us with the necessary role of healthy leadership that brings government and structure to any church model.
- The purpose of leadership is to serve, reflect God's purposes, guide people toward spiritual growth & transformation, and protect the flock from wolves that would seek to come in and divide & conquer the Body.
- In Acts 15, we are given an example of team leadership where one leader (James, the brother of Jesus) serves the purpose of bringing the team to a proper conclusion and direction.
- Paul raised up eldership teams in such a manner in the churches that he planted and continued to speak into them as a spiritual father.
- There is no Biblical evidence that the apostles, or any other church leadership, dictated a fixed and complete vision for any of the churches. Instead, we see a structure that allowed for a more organic approach, allowing for the Holy Spirit to lead through mutual submission one to another.
- Leadership served a purpose, and commissioned workers but let the Holy Spirit lead (e.g. - Paul & Barnabas were sent out to do their ministry by church in Antioch; 7 deacons picked to help serve widows by the people; Stephen served tables but also had his own preaching ministry with signs & wonders; Philip, also one of the 7, traveled freely as an evangelist; Apollos was a traveling minister who went to speak in Ephesus - later with recommendation from Aquila & Pricilla, but with no original connection with Paul or through his own recommendation).

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- 2 Timothy 3:16: God's number one method for discipleship is through the application of His Word.
- 1 Corinthians 3:10-11: Paul describes himself as a "wise master builder" who has laid the foundation for the church, with Jesus Christ as that firm and unchangeable foundation.
- Galatians 1:8: The gospel of Righteousness through Christ (Ephesians 2:8-9).

2. Fellowship (Greek word Koinonia)

- Partnership
- Participation (literally)
- Social Interaction
- Financial Benefaction

3. Breaking of Bread

- Jude 1:12: The church gathered for "Love Feasts"
- 1 Corinthians 11: Correction for disunity and how, when they would gather to share meals, and the proper heart in receiving communion.

4. Prayers

- Ephesians 6:18: "praying all kinds of prayers"
- Adoration (praising God)
- Thanksgiving (expressing gratitude)
- Confession (healing & restoration through forgiveness)
- Supplication/Petition (asking God for one's own needs)
- Intercession (asking God on behalf of others)
- Declaration (speaking out loud the promises of God)

Journaling Questions:

What excites you about the "early church model"? What aspects seem forgotten in the modern church? What relational aspects interest you?

WHAT IS CHURCH?

Week Three: Supernatural, Communion, Generosity

Opening Question: What excites you about the early church model?

1. The Supernatural (Acts 2:43)

- Signs & Wonders
- Not just the apostles: Just as the apostles first watched Jesus before “doing” His works, it started with the apostles but was not meant to end there (e.g. - Stephen; Philip; Paul; All Elders [James 5:14-15]; All believers [2 Peter 1:1]).
- Matthew 10:7-8
- Mark 16:15-18
- No Scriptural evidence or verse that states the “gifts” are not for today or that the Baptism of the Holy Spirit is no longer for today.
- 1 Corinthians 13:8-12: The Main passage people use to say gifts have passed away.
- Jesus told disciples not to minister without the Baptism of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4-5).
- The apostles found it necessary when Samaritans became converted to follow up and lay hands on them for the Baptism of the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:14-15).

2. Communion (Acts 2:46)

The Body: 1 Corinthians 11

James 5 - confess sins and be healed Mark 11:25

Judging: (1 Corinthians 2:11-16; Matthew 7:1)

- We are to judge people’s “actions” if they are in alignment with the Word of God, but we are not to judge people’s “hearts” (James 4:12).

- Judgement under the law brings condemnation, and condemnation demands justice (punishment).
- Romans 8:1 tells us that there is no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus. The blood of Jesus satisfies the death sentence associated with sin (Romans 6:23).
- Much sickness exists because of condemnation...the condemnation and judgment we have on others, which is often rooted in the condemnation we place on ourselves.
- For many, not all, once the condemnation (of self and others) is dealt with, then the reality of “by His stripes we have been healed” (1 Peter 1:24) can become a reality.

The Blood:

- Everything that we have and flows through us, as Christians, is because of Christ's Righteousness.
- James 1:21-25:
 - (v. 21) Implanted word that saves our soul (spirit, soul, body).
 - (v. 25) Law of Liberty; Law of Freedom - We experience Freedom through our continual viewing in the mirror our Righteousness in Christ.
- John 16:7-10: Convincing the Believer of their Righteousness.

3. Generosity (Acts 2:44-45)

- (v. 44) “in common”: considering their possessions to belong to the group as a whole.
- The Biblical Principle of Stewardship: The responsibility and careful management of something entrusted to one's care.
- The Biblical Principle of Sacrificial Living.
- The Biblical Principle of Interdependence versus Independence.
- Matthew 6:19-21: We put our money where our treasure is.

Journaling Questions:

So far, in this course, what has been most challenging for you? Journal to the Lord any blind spots that are being exposed and ask for an increase in desire, confidence, or boldness in all we've discussed this week.

WHAT IS CHURCH?

Week Four: The Temple, House to House, Simplicity of Heart

Acts 2:46: “continuing daily in one accord”

- What we can learn from the concept of daily:
- **One Accord:** In the Greek language, translated into one in purpose or mind.

1. The Temple:

- The Temple (and synagogue) after the resurrection were primarily places connected with Teaching (Acts 5:17-21)
- Examples of Paul teaching in context of the Synagogue: Acts 9:20 (after Paul’s conversion); Acts 13:14-52 (Antioch Pisidia); Acts 17:2-3 (Thessalonica); Acts 18:4 (Corinth); Acts 19:8 (Ephesus).

2. House to House

- House to House was the primary place of worship, fellowship, the breaking of bread, discipleship, and also teaching.
- Examples of Paul teaching in context of homes: Acts 16 (Philippians Jailer); Acts 18 (House of Priscilla and Aquila); Acts 20:20 (Intensive teaching in House Churches); Acts 28:30-31 (Rented House in Rome)
- One of the greatest “gifts” God has given to the church that needs to be reemphasized is the “gift of hospitality.”
- Maturity and Growth is developed in the context of Relationships and Relational Communities.

3. Simplicity of Heart

- Definitions of Simplicity:
 - The quality or condition of being easy to understand or do.
 - The quality or condition of being plain or uncomplicated in form or design.

- Luke 10:41: “Many things” - causes anxiety and worry and can translate into a lifestyle and culture of busyness that makes the simplicity of sitting at Jesus’ feet difficult and rare occasions.
- Proverbs 4:23: It is our responsibility to keep our hearts in check.

Journaling Questions:

Am I able to make myself THIS available to a community of believers where we do life together consistently? Talk with the Lord on all the different aspects of this answer.

WHAT IS CHURCH?

Week Five: Starting a House Church & Church Planting Movements

1. Five Common Denominators of Church Planting Movements:

- They usually meet in small groups in homes for mutual accountability & discipleship.
- Nearly every saint is involved in the work of ministry.
- Those in leadership are often average, common people, who know that they have a big God living inside of them.
- Emphasis on Prayer.
- Use of roving Preachers/Teachers who went from town to town and from house to house. These “circuit riders” kept the revival fire alive. (Adapted from “Starting a House Church” by Larry Kreider & Floyd McClung)

2. Being a Spiritual Father or Mother

- Healthy Spiritual Parents earn the right to speak into their spiritual children’s lives, always building an atmosphere of trust (Biblical authority is never taken —its offered).
- Desire to help spiritual sons and daughters to hear God for themselves, creating dependence upon God and not on them.
- Create an environment of encouragement and support where people can be “real” and still find acceptance.
- Create an atmosphere where people can discover spiritual gifts while providing a healthy environment for experimentation and learning and stepping out (Ephesians 4:11-12).
- Create Community (Fellowship) where character is developed through mutual accountability relationships (Proverbs 27:17).

3. Starting a House Church or Micro Church:

- Pray first.
- Know who you are called to reach.
- Create a new definition and culture of church for those you are gathering—
Genuine Community and Radical Commission.
- Guide through Teaching (2 Timothy 2:4).
- Manage Church Resources and Direct Decisions.
- Guard & Protect the People and the Vision.
- Make sure there is an outward focus to the group.
- Common Table.

Journaling Questions: What do you specifically want me to understand, Lord? In this hour, what are you saying to ME through all of this understanding of the Early Church Standards?