

Living Church

Created for Community

Scriptures: Rev. 3:1; Acts 2:42-47; John 1:12-13; 13:34-35; Rom. 12:5 (Message); 1 Cor. 12:12, 27; Eph. 1:5 NLT; 4:16; Eccles. 4:9-12; Gal. 6:1-2.

1. What is the most striking aspect of the early church in Jerusalem, shortly after the Day of Pentecost? Read Acts 2:42-47.

2. Do you think that Rick Warren describes the difference between a 'living' church and a 'dead' church when he writes:

"Authentic fellowship is not superficial, surface-level chit-chat. It is genuine, heart-to-heart, sometimes gut-level, sharing. It happens when people get honest about who they are and what is happening in their lives. They share their hurts, reveal their feelings, confess their failures, disclose their doubts, admit their fears, acknowledge their weaknesses, and ask for help and prayer."

"Authenticity is the exact opposite of what you find in some churches. Instead of an atmosphere of honesty and humility, there is pretending, role-playing, politicking, and superficial politeness but shallow conversation. People wear masks, keep their guard up, and act as if everything is rosy in their lives. These attitudes are the death of real fellowship."

3. "Whilst our relationship with God is personal, God never intended it to be private." Thoughts?

4. Read Eph. 1:5 NLT. What, if anything, do you find mind-blowing in this verse?

5. In which way does a human body act as a metaphor for the church? Read Rom. 12:5; 1 Cor. 12:12-27.

6. Rick Warren: "The person who says, 'I don't need the church,' is either arrogant or ignorant." Do you agree? Why might this be so?

7. Read 1 Cor. 12:26. What has been your experience of this verse being worked out in your life?

8. What was Steve's point when he said that we need more than the Bible and prayer to grow into spiritual maturity? In which way do deep relationships with other Christians help a believer to grow stronger in faith?

9. What are the pressures upon Christian people to live God-honouring, Christ-centred lives? In which way might our relationships with other Christians help us?

10. Read Gal. 6:1-2. In which way have you been 'your brother's keeper'? In which way has another Christian helped you back onto the right path?

11. Take some moments of quiet, asking the Holy Spirit to reveal how you might help a fellow Christian back onto the right path. Pray for each other, as appropriate.