

(Acts) the Basis of the Christian Life

by Brian Brodersen

Brian Brodersen emphasizes the foundational practices of the early church as essential for a vibrant Christian life and community.

Duration: 40:37

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Acts 2:42, Hebrews 10:23-25

Topics: "Church Fellowship", "Christian Discipleship"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of four foundational elements for the church: continuing steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayer. These four things are essential for experiencing the blessing of God individually and collectively as a church. The speaker highlights the danger of churches trying to be trendy and relevant by neglecting these foundational principles. He encourages believers to not only engage in teaching but also to spend time together, building relationships, and praying for one another. The sermon concludes with a preview of the outcomes that follow when a church faithfully practices these four foundational elements.

Transcript

Acts chapter 2, and we're going to pick up this evening in verse 42. So in the second chapter of Acts, where we picked up last week, we picked up there with the account of the Spirit of God being poured out on the day of Pentecost. You remember there the day of Pentecost had fully come and that was that time of the harvest.

And all the Jews were there from all over the world celebrating because it was mandatory that every male Jew over the age of 20 be there for the celebration. And so there were people from all over the world. And it was at that time that the promise of the Father came down upon the disciples and they were baptized in the Spirit.

They were empowered by the Spirit and they began to speak in tongues. And this, of course, drew the attention of the people because they heard them praising God in their own languages, knowing that these people were Galileans and couldn't have naturally spoken these other languages. So this really aroused their curiosity and they said, what does this mean? And so Peter took advantage of the opportunity.

He stood up and he preached the first gospel message. And as he proclaimed to them Jesus Christ and his death for them and his resurrection, it says that they were pricked in their hearts and they said, what do

we need to do? And then Peter went on to tell them that they needed to repent and to be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus for the remission of sins. And so that day on the day of Pentecost, the day where they were celebrating the harvest, three thousand souls were added to them that very day.

But, you know, I'm sure that there were many others that although they did not perhaps respond on that particular day, I'm sure there were many others in that crowd who, after some time having gone back to their own countries and so forth, they probably thought a lot about what happened on that day of Pentecost. They probably thought a lot about Peter's message and who knows, but what someone else might have come along and followed up on it. And of course, the spirit of God would be dealing with their hearts.

And I would imagine that even though three thousand responded that day, and that's a tremendous response, I would imagine that out of all the thousands that probably heard the apostle, that there were many others that in a process of time did come to know Jesus as their Messiah as well. And, you know, I say that because a lot of times I think we get discouraged when we're sharing the Lord with people and we're not seeing any immediate result. We're not seeing, you know, the fruit of our labors.

We're not seeing people come to faith. And sometimes we're tempted to think, well, you know, maybe something's wrong. God doesn't seem to be working or whatever.

But we have to realize that the Lord is working in people's lives. And as we just get the word out to them. We trust the Holy Spirit to take his word and to then work on their hearts, and sometimes it's a process of time.

When we used to do our street outreach evangelism, our preaching in London when I was living there, I never, ever felt any sort of great burden to give an invitation on the streets or to do anything like that. I really felt strongly that we were out there scattering seed and on those occasions when God would make it clear that here was a person who was ripe and ready to receive Christ. Of course, we wanted to capitalize on that, but the Lord really impressed on our hearts that we were we were just out there as sowers, as Jesus talked about in the parable of the sower.

Behold, a sower went forth to sow seed. And so sometimes that's what we're doing. We're just sowing seed.

We're just casting seed out. We're throwing out the word of God and then we're trusting the spirit of God to take his word and to prick people's hearts through it. And so I'm sure that many that heard that day the message, but didn't respond on that occasion later on, did come to the Lord.

But that day three thousand souls were added to the church. So here is the beginning of the age of harvest. And as I mentioned in our last study, we are living in the age of the harvest.

The church age is an age of harvest. It's a time of harvest. It's a time of sowing and it's a time of reaping.

And that's what we have been doing for the past two thousand years. And that's what we're going to keep on doing until the Lord comes back. But there to begin the age of harvest, this great crop of three thousand souls are added.

And now it tells us what they did. Following the conversion of this large number of people and in telling us what they did, it really lays out for us a pattern of what church life is to be about. And I think this is really

the model.

It's it's sort of. You know, a very basic model, but it's the prototype from which we are to base our church life and experience. And so let's read what it says that they did and they continued steadfastly in the apostles doctrine and fellowship and in the breaking of bread and in prayers.

That's what they did. That was the practice of the first Christians, and those are the fundamentals of what church life are really all about. And, you know, it's interesting we're living in a time when there's a lot of frustration in the churches and people are wondering, you know, how can we impact our world in a greater way? And, you know, people are buying into all kinds of wacky ideas.

You know, I think I shared with you a few weeks ago about one of the advertisements I had seen where they had the three beer cans on the front with the bitter church face and then on the back, the smiling guys with the better church face and they promised Starbucks and Krispy Kremes and in and out burger, you know, to get the people over. And then a few weeks later, I was out in that same area and I I came across another advertisement for a church. And this one was a little more biblically oriented because they were they were emphasizing feasting on the word.

But the pastor was on the front with a big plate of food in front of him and making this crazy face as he was, you know, diving into it and all of this appeal to get people to come in. And I remember when I was pastoring down in Vista for years, we would get little things in the mail, you know, the new churches coming into town. And I'll never forget one that we got.

And I'll tell you, it was really it was embarrassing. The moment I saw it, this poor pastor who had come out from the Midwest and some of these church growth people got a hold of them. And they you know, they said, man, we we're going to make you relate to the community.

And this you know, this is a beach community and there's surfers here. And also they did up an ad where they took this guy from Kansas or somewhere and they put him in surf gear and they took a photo of him. But the problem was they they had him on a boogie board.

And I mean, immediately you knew that this was fraudulent. This this wasn't, you know, the real deal. And but but all in an effort to, you know, we're going to relate, we're going to show people we're cool and hip and trendy and we're going to get the people to come out and know that church isn't boring and all of that sort of thing.

And as as people are groping in the church world. For a way to relate and a way to get people to come to church because they just don't want to come anymore. They're overlooking the biblical pattern and model.

They're overlooking the simple, basic foundational things that God has laid out in his word. But here's the amazing thing. When people take and just do these four things right here, continue steadfastly in the apostles doctrine, fellowship, breaking of bread and prayer.

Guess what? God blesses. He blesses abundantly. That's what's happened here.

And that's what's happened all over the country through the ministry of Calvary Chapel and other ministries that have done the same sort of thing, just getting back to the Bible when we went to London. Oh, all of the naysayers, you know, oh, you know, England's post-Christian and all London is too hard and you'll never make it. And what do you mean you're going to just go teach the Bible? They're not going to

listen to that.

That's boring. But we went with this deep conviction that if we took Acts 242. And just began to carry it out.

That God would work that he would bless and he did and he continues to do that to this very day. And so let's look at these things in a little bit more detail and they continued steadfastly. Let's look at that first of all, they continued steadfastly.

It means that these were the things that they were committed to. There was a commitment there. There was devotion.

These were things that they basically immersed themselves in. You know, church has become a weird thing over the years, a weird thing in in that it's it's not what it used to be in so many cases. In so many cases, churches that, you know, it's a building.

It's a building where you go to sit and do your duty of whatever sort it might be. And then when the duty is done, you get up and you head out. But you see, when the church began, it wasn't like that at all.

And the church actually originally meant that group of people that were called out from the world. That's the actual meaning of the word church. Those who are called out.

It in the Greek language and in the Greek culture, it referred to any group of people that had set themselves apart from, you know, just sort of the normal thing that was going on in society for whatever reason. But it was a label that was immediately taken up, tagged on to and taken up by the Christians because they were, of course, the ones who were really called out. They were living in the world, but they were called to now be separate from the world.

And the church was the group of people. The place they met was irrelevant. In this case, originally they were meeting in part of the temple in Jerusalem, but they were also meeting in houses all over Jerusalem.

And in the early days of the Christian church, much of the church met in homes and in rented buildings throughout the Roman Empire in different places, school halls and things like that, much like we've gotten back to today. And so but it was something that they were they were committed to as a lifestyle. It wasn't we visit there every Sunday as part of our tradition or part of some sort of religious duty, but it was their lifestyle.

It was this was their thing. This was the thing that they did. And that's what it means when it says they continued steadfastly in it.

This was the thing that they all were committed to and the thing that they all looked forward to as often as they possibly could. It was a community situation. So they continued steadfastly, first of all, in the apostles doctrine.

The apostles doctrine is what we have here in our New Testament. We have written down for us the apostles doctrine. They, of course, had the apostles themselves.

They were the ones who were teaching them. They were teaching them the things that had not yet been written. They were verbally communicating to them the things that Jesus had taught them, the things the Holy Spirit was revealing to them as they were going on.

But they spent much of their time as they would gather together. Much of their time was spent contemplating, studying, educating themselves in the apostles doctrine. They were learning about the Lord.

And that is a key to successful Christian living. It's a key to the church being what God wants it to be. We've got to know the Lord.

We've got to know him personally. We get to know him through his word. We've got to know about him so we can tell other people about him.

And they spent their time there in the same kind of thing that we're doing. They spent their time there in Bible study. And we are just following in their footsteps, we're just doing the same thing that they were doing back then.

We are gathering together regularly as often as we can. We have, as you know, so many different opportunities for people. But what are we doing when we come together? We are studying the apostles doctrine.

And through it, we're getting to know the Lord. We're getting to know him better personally so we can communicate his love and his truth to other people. And that's what the church is to be all about.

The church is really to be a learning center. And that's one of the wonderful things about this church. And for so many years, it's been a place of learning.

I'll confess to you right now, when I came to this church 20 something years ago, I didn't know anything. I didn't know anything about anything. You know, frankly, I didn't care about anything.

So I wasn't really, you know, too interested in studying a whole lot of things. You know, growing up here in the surf culture, I cared about the surf report that was, you know, the tides, the wind, those kinds of things. I was sort of my own meteorologist.

You know, I had my ways to determine when the swells are going to be good and stuff. But, you know, there weren't many subjects that I was really interested in as a non-Christian. But I'll tell you, when I got saved and I came into this church and I sat down and I began to listen to Pastor Chuck, all of a sudden I thought, man, I want to know this stuff.

I want to know what he's talking about. And as I began to open the Bible and read it, there just developed in me this insatiable appetite to know these things. And thank God that there was a place and there is a place and now there are many more places where this kind of thing is going on, where the apostles doctrine is being taught and people are able to come and they're able to learn about God.

There's so much misinformation out there about God, isn't there? You know, you listen to people talk about God and there is so much confusion. And we. Have a responsibility to know the Lord.

Not only for our own benefit, and of course, it's going to benefit us tremendously, but we have a responsibility to know the Lord so we can impart a true knowledge of God to other people as well. So we can stand up and say, you know, I know these people say they're serving God, these people that are blowing people up all over the world. But you know what? That that isn't really accurate.

And let me tell you why. Let me tell you about the true God. Let me tell you about the God of the Bible.

Let me tell you about his son, Jesus Christ. And to be able to give an answer to every man for the reason, for the hope that is in us, that's our responsibility as Christians. Sometimes I think Christian people leave that up to the pastors.

Oh, that's the pastor job. That's what he gets paid for. He gets paid to study that stuff.

You know, I got to go to work and make a living and I've got to go out and enjoy myself and have my leisure time and all of that. But you know, we're all called to be students of the word. We're all called to know the Lord through his word, to know his word so we can talk to people and we can tell them the truth about God.

And that's what happens when you continue steadfastly in the apostles doctrine. The early church was a learning church and every church ought to be a learning church, every church ought to be a learning center, learning primarily about the Lord. But, you know, I found that when you start learning about the Lord, you start learning about a lot of other things as well, because he's the God of creation.

So inevitably, you start learning a little bit about his creation. He's the God of history. So you start learning a little bit about history.

He's the God who created the world. So you get an interest in geography. He's a God who created people, so you get a sociological interest in things like that.

And I found for me that just getting to know the Lord and getting to know his word has expanded my knowledge in so many different areas, but it's really rooted right back here in the scriptures. That's what God wants to do for us. He wants to give us an understanding of himself and of the things that pertain to him, which are most things, everything really apart from the sinful things in the world.

So that's what they did. They continued in the apostles doctrine, and that's what we're doing here tonight. And that's what I want to encourage you to be doing yourself on your own, on a on a daily basis, being in the word and studying the word.

And isn't it true that we waste so much time on things that are not profitable, things that aren't really helping us to know the Lord better or to help others to know him or, you know, so much time wasted when we have this precious volume of the word of God that God has left us to study, to meditate on, to get to know. That's what they were doing. And then it says they continued steadfastly in fellowship.

This is the Greek word koinonia. You've probably heard that word before. And it's translated fellowship, but it's also translated a few times communion.

It's translated communicate, it's translated partake. And there are a variety of English translations because it's a difficult word to describe with one English word. It means all of those things together.

And what it really is describing is a communion that takes place between people, an intimate encounter, a spiritually intimate encounter, not a physically intimate encounter, a spiritually intimate encounter where we are connecting deeply with one another. But our connection. Is centered in the person of Jesus Christ.

You know, the world is divided up by all kinds of different things. It's divided up racially. It's divided up, you know, based on social status.

It's divided up based upon your economical situation. The world has all kinds of divisions. And.

People usually come together around the things that they have in common. That's how people connect with each other because they have something in common. Well, you see, in the church, our common denominator is Jesus Christ.

He is what we have in common. He is the common denominator that overrules everything else. You know, before I was a Christian, I really, truly only wanted to associate with certain people, certain people that I thought were worthy of my association, people that liked what I like, did what I did related to who I was and my thing.

And really, truly, if you were outside of my social group, I had no interest in even knowing you. I just didn't care. I wasn't a very good person, but I just I think back on that and I think about the contrast from where I used to be and what God has done in my life.

But I think about the rich blessing as well, because I think of how limited my life experience would have been had I gone on in that kind of a condition and never met the Lord and never had this broadening of my understanding and this experiencing of people from all different kinds of walks of life that I never, ever would have met or cared to me or have any connection with prior to Christ. But because we have Jesus as the common denominator, the relationship developed, I think, boy, these are some of the greatest people in the world and I never would have known them because of my limited, narrow, little view that I had about what was cool and what wasn't. And, you know, all of those ridiculous kinds of things.

And I say that because of this, when we come into the church of Jesus Christ, all of those things that previously divided us, they're to be set aside. And this is something we do have to guard against in the church, because sometimes you can come into the church and just do the same thing you were doing in the world. You gravitate right toward the same kind of people and you develop a little click here and a little group over there.

And boy, that's ugly when it's in the church. No, the Lord wants us to be one big family. Doesn't matter what our race, doesn't matter what our socioeconomic background is.

It doesn't matter, you know, any of those things. Those aren't the issue. Jesus, he's the common denominator.

And so they had come together with Christ Jesus as the center of their lives, and they spent their time fellowshiping with one another. In our day, and a lot of times this does happen, and I'm sure it's happened in previous generations as well, but a lot of times fellowship is reduced to socializing. Now, fellowship definitely has a social aspect to it.

There's no question about it. But I think sometimes what happens is we sort of get robbed of real fellowship and we substitute real fellowship with socializing. And we're all Christians.

We get together in the same place and we sit down and watch a football game or we go out to, you know, some sort of an entertainment event together or something like that. And that's OK. We can do that.

But as we do that, sometimes we forget to bring Jesus along with us in a very practical sense. We don't really talk about him. We don't really pray.

We don't really, you know, connect with one another on the deeper spiritual level. It's all up here just sort of on the social thing. And sometimes in churches, that kind of thing can happen.

People come to church and, you know, it's a great place to meet people. It's a good place to connect with people so you can go out to lunch afterwards. And it's all social and there's relationships and so forth.

But Christ isn't in the center of the thing. And that's when we're actually missing out on what fellowship is, because fellowship is primarily about Jesus and us connecting with one another around the person of Jesus. Now, I'm not saying that every time we get together, it has to be some deep, you know, somber spiritual encounter.

But what I am saying is this. Why not when we get together, just make sure we're inviting the Lord along when we're going out socializing, just having that sense that, Lord, we want you to be with us. So in the course of our socializing tonight, maybe you want us to pray.

Maybe you're going to lead us to somebody that you want us to talk to about you. Maybe you're going to use this in some way. So, Lord, we want to just bring you right into everything that we're doing so we don't miss a thing.

When I go out to do my relaxation or my, you know, whatever you want to call it, my hobby, my sport, the thing that that I like to go out and do, that's fine. Get together with some friends, go out and do that. But let's bring the Lord right into the middle of it.

You see, that's what fellowship is all about. We put Jesus right in the center of what we're doing. And when we come here, we come here not to merely sit and listen to somebody talk and to say, well, that was interesting or that was helpful or whatever we say, or that was really boring.

And I don't know why I can't whatever you're whatever you say about it. I don't know what you say. Hopefully the former, not the latter.

But, you know, whatever is it's not merely for that. It's so that we can connect with each other as well. And that we can spend time with each other.

You know, a church can be never should be, but it can be one of the loneliest places in the world. You walk in, you don't know anybody, nobody greets you, nobody says, you know, even that's an eye at you. You just come in and you go out and boy, you feel just as lonely as you did when you came in.

That's not the way it should be. We need to spend time together. And as I've said many times in the past, what we're doing right now.

The teaching, this is part of the overall thing of what we're doing here tonight, but we want to be fellowshiping as well. That's why I encourage you don't just get up and bolt out the door. The moment we're finished with the last song, spend some time here, stick around with people, talk to them, get to know them, ask them what's going on in their life.

Ask them if you can pray for them. You'd be amazed at the beautiful relationships that God might want to develop right here with people around you that you never knew you could have such a great friendship with. And so that's what they were doing.

They were involved in fellowship. They were coming together and they were encouraging one another in the faith. They were praying for each other.

Sometimes people are going through the worst things in their life and they'll come and talk to me and they'll tell me what's going on. And I'll ask them, do you know, do you have anybody praying for you? Well, no, not really. Why not? Well, I don't really know that many people.

You see, we've got to get to know each other. We're part. We're a we're a family and we've got to share with each other.

I'll tell you, I could not survive if I didn't have the confidence people are praying for me. I need people praying for me all the time. I call people up on the phone, say, pray for me about this.

When I'm going to do something and I was going to do that memorial service today, I called people and said, pray for me. This is a heavy thing. I need God's help.

I need to know that that the Lord's with me. And and, you know, as I was sharing today and looking out at this crowd of hundreds of people, I saw Christians here and there, just sort of, you know, little. Little faces of encouragement right out there, and I thought, OK, Lord, I know those guys are praying for me right now that that's what we're to be doing with each other.

So they were doing that. They were in fellowship. There's a good definition.

I'm going to move on from this in a second, but there's a good definition of fellowship in. What is it? I think it's Hebrews 10. Let me just read it to you real quickly.

Here's a great definition of what it is that. That were to be doing when we come together. He says.

In verse twenty five of Hebrews 10. He says not forsaking. Well, let me back it up a little bit.

It says in verse twenty three, let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering, for he is faithful that promised. And listen and let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another. And so much the more as you see the day approaching.

So you notice that they're considering one another, provoking one another to love and good works and exhorting one another. And he says in so much the more as we see the day approaching, how many people are backsliding today? How many people are drifting away from the Lord? If we would step in and encourage and provoke, perhaps we would have fewer people falling away than we have today. We need to take fellowship seriously.

And then it says and in the breaking of bread and a literal translation would be and in the breaking of the bread, which would signify, I think, that they were partaking of the Lord's Supper on a regular basis. That was something that they were doing. That was something that they did regularly.

You know, there is no instruction in the scripture on how often or how often we are to partake of the Lord's Supper. It is simply this as often as you do this, Jesus said, do it in remembrance of me. So we as a church body, we do it, of course, once a month.

But, you know, we can do it in our homes and a lot of the smaller fellowships that meet together throughout the week. A lot of them will have their time for communion as well. I know Pastor John and his church up in Applegate.

I know that they had a daily communion opportunity for the people every morning, first thing in the morning, the church was opened and there was the communion opportunity for the body to come and just spend some time with the Lord and partake of the bread in the cup. And I know John has it on his heart to see us develop that here and perhaps that will come. But.

There's something to this that I think we often overlook, and I think maybe in some ways, especially those of us that come from a Catholic background, it might be a reaction to the excessive sort of superstitious perspective that the Catholic Church has had upon communion, you know, where they take it to be literally the body of Christ and literally the blood of Christ and this is how you're energized and empowered as a Christian and you've got to have this daily or at least weekly to keep that sanctifying grace in your life and so forth. And sometimes I think when we come out of that and we get the biblical perspective on it, we almost react to the other extreme of not seeing the importance of it or the deep significance of it.

And so we have to be on our guard against that. This is something they were regularly doing. This is part of that foundational thing that was going on in the church.

This was one of the key ingredients in what was happening there in that apostolic church. They were regularly partaking together of the bread. They were remembering the Lord.

They were gathering together. And what I would say is as we look at this, this is a picture of the worship in the early church. Of course, communion really is an act of worship, isn't it? I think it is one of the great acts of worship, because what we're doing is we're remembering what Jesus did.

We're focusing in on him where we're putting all of our attention upon the cross and upon his sacrifice for us. And we're reflecting on his mercy toward us and we're embracing his forgiveness and we're rejoicing in our salvation. It's really a glorious act of worship.

Communion is. And as I look at this, I would say that the early church was a learning church. They were a worshiping church as well.

And looking at the fellowship thing, I would say that they were a loving church. They loved each other and they connected and encouraged one another. And then it says they continued also in the prayers, literally.

Again, the article is there, the definite article, the prayers. And I think what that's referring to is that there was the prayer meeting going on. Now, of course, all of the believers were praying.

And they were praying individually, they were probably praying within their homes, no doubt, and praying with one another. But when it says the prayer, I think the point here is that they were committed to prayer meetings, they were committed to praying together collectively with the other members of the body of Christ. And that's such an important thing for us again to do together as God's people, to be praying together.

And I really want to encourage the prayer meeting, whichever one you want to go to, it doesn't matter. We've got tons of them. You can start more if you want to just open up your house and invite people over.

But the prayer meeting. Is a place where you really get down and do business in prayer with the Lord, you know, sometimes with prayer, I know for myself, if I'm not involved in a prayer meeting at all, sometimes my prayer life, it really drags. You know, I get distracted by myself sometimes so easily, I get forgetful, I don't have that motivation.

But I find when I get together with other Christians and I pray with them, all of that's gone. There's there's a sense of the Lord moving and we're encouraging one another in our prayers. And, you know, there's something happening there.

And maybe you can relate to that. Maybe you can identify with times of just sort of struggling through prayer on your own and feel like you're just sort of limping along in your prayer life. If that's the case, get into the prayer meeting, a prayer meeting, any prayer meeting.

Like I said, whether it be here or at home or at a friend's house or over at the beach or in a parking lot, you know, we've got people that come here to drop their kids off for school in the morning and then they gather together out in the parking lot and they pray for the school. I think that's so wonderful. And they've been doing it for years.

There's a few of the mothers in the church that have committed themselves to praying for our youth ministries, in particular, their high school ministry. And I'll tell you what God's answering. There's a revival going on our high school ministry.

It's glorious. Hundreds of kids are coming out and not coming out to be entertained. They're coming out to hear the word of God and their lives are getting transformed.

But I really attribute it to the prayer that's going on there. And those in the high school ministry are saying the same thing. They really sense that it's that prayer.

That's at the the bottom of the work that's going on, and so that's what they were doing, these four things, and these are the four things that the church is built upon. And as we take these four things and individually and collectively. As God's people individually and as God's church collectively, as we take these things and as we make them part of our lives.

We will find the blessing of God, and as we go on in this chapter, that's really what's being described is the blessing of God resulting from their commitment to these four things. And I want to save the remainder of the chapter for the next time, because there's some really key things I think that are that are still here in this chapter that we really need to spend some time considering more time than we have this evening. So I want to hold off until then.

But what just a little preview is that as we follow on through the remainder of the second chapter here, what we see really is the outcome of them continuing steadfastly in these four things. And what we'll see is when a church does these things, there are certain things that follow and those are powerful things that lead to a great work of God in a community. And so we'll consider that the next time.

But again, next Saturday night, we won't have a service. If you can't join the youth outreach over there, then please be in prayer for that. I'm thinking that's going to be just a dynamite time next week and looking forward to what the Lord's going to do through it.

So let's pray together. Father, we thank you that. Lord.

We have been brought into your family and Lord, we thank you that you've brought us to a place where the apostles doctrine is being proclaimed faithfully. We thank you, Lord, for the wonderful opportunities of fellowship that are around us. We thank you, Lord, for the breaking of the bread.

And Lord, we pray that we might. Understand that and appreciate that even more, and we thank you, Lord, for the privilege of prayer, that we can talk to you, the living God, the eternal God, the maker of heaven and earth, that we don't need an appointment. We don't have to wait in line for a couple of months, but Lord, we can go directly to you and we can come together collectively in the prayer meeting.

And Lord, we can petition you. And you delight to answer our prayers. So, Lord, we pray now that these four foundational things, these basic things, these simple things would be the mark of our lives individually and continue to be the mark of our lives collectively as a church and that you could do all that's in your heart to do in us and through us.

We pray this in the name of Jesus. Our Lord. Amen.

Amen.

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