

The Development of the Early Church

by

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Introduction

The Development of the Early Church Gives Us a Pattern for the Development of Churches Today

The early church was an obedient church

Acts 8:4

“Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word.”

The early church was a church that shared the Gospel

Acts 4:29-31

“Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word, by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus.’ And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.”

The early church was a church that made disciples

Acts 6:7

“Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.”

The early church was a church that trained leaders by example

Acts 20:20-21

“How I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house, testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.”

The early church was used by Christ to develop churches

Acts 16:5

“So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and increased in number daily.”

The early church was used by Christ to multiply churches

Acts 9:31

“Then the churches throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and were edified. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, they were multiplied.”

What Lessons Can You Learn For Your Own Life From The Early Church?

I. Christ built a team to develop the church

A. Christ said He would build the church

Christ told Peter and the other disciples He would build the church

Matthew 16:17-18

“Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock **I will build My church**, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.’”

B. Christ developed a team of disciples to develop the church

1. Christ developed a larger group of disciples

The larger group included the seventy

Luke 10:1-2

“After these things the Lord appointed seventy others also, and sent them two by two before His face into every city and place where He Himself was about to go. Then He said to them, ‘The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.’”

The larger group included many women

Luke 8:2-3

“And certain women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities--Mary called Magdalene, out of whom had come seven demons, and Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others who provided for Him from their substance.”

The larger group included the hundred and twenty

Acts 1:15

“And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples (altogether the number of names was about a hundred and twenty)...”

The larger group may have included the five hundred

1 Corinthians 15:6-8

“After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time.”

**2. Christ developed the Twelve from the larger group of disciples
Mark 3:13-15**

“And He went up on the mountain and called to Him those He Himself wanted. And they came to Him. Then He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach, and to have power to heal sicknesses and to cast out demons:...”

The Twelve would become the Leadership Team

**The twelve were chosen to be with Him
The twelve were chosen so He could send them out to preach
The twelve were chosen to heal sicknesses and to cast out demons**

The Twelve were divided into three smaller teams

All of the lists of the twelve have Peter first followed by:

James

John

Andrew

All of the lists of the twelve have Philip fifth followed by:

Bartholomew

Matthew

Thomas

All of the lists of the twelve have James, the son of Alphaeus ninth followed by:

Thaddaeus (Judas the son of James)

Simon the Canaanite (Zealot)

Judas Iscariot (replaced by Matthias - Acts 1:26)

Christ sometimes taught these teams as smaller teams

Mark 13:3

“Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked Him privately...”

Christ always trained the disciples as teams

Mark 6:7

“And He called the twelve to Himself, and began to send them out **two by two**, and gave them power over unclean spirits.”

Luke 10:1

“After these things the Lord appointed seventy others also, and sent them **two by two** before His face into every city and place where He Himself was about to go.”

**C. Christ built the team that He would use to lay the foundation
(Christ gave them Four Calls and a Commission)**

Make Disciples Matthew 28:19-20

Call One

**Come and See
John 1:39**

Goal: Evangelism and follow-up (birth)
meet Christ and learn who He is
Christ called the disciples to put their trust in Him
Vision shared with them
lift up your eyes and look on the fields - John 4:35
see the needs of others around you
relatives - John 1:40-42, friends - John 1:43-46,
co-workers - Mark 2:13-17, others - John 4:32-35

Call Two

**Come and Grow
Mark 1:16-20**

Goal: Edification
Go with Christ and grow in the knowledge of Him
Christ called the disciples to grow in their knowledge of Him
Vision shared with them
let us go into the next towns - Mark 1:38-39
learned to make contacts in their Jerusalem and Judea

Call Three

**Come and Serve
(Come be with Me)
Mark 3:13-15**

Goal: Equipping for Ministry
Go with Christ and learn to serve with Him
Christ called the disciples to follow His example
Vision shared with them
sent them forth to minister - Matthew 9:36-10:8; Luke 10:1-3
share the good news in their Jerusalem and Judea
minister to the hurting in their Jerusalem and Judea

Call Four

**Come and Shepherd
John 21:15-17**

Goal: Expansion of Leadership
Serve with Christ and love as He loved
Christ called the disciples to love Him
Vision shared with them
Luke 22:32, John 21:15-17; Ezekiel 34:1-16
take the responsibility for part of the flock

Commission

**As you are going,
MAKE DISCIPLES
Matthew 28:19-20**

Goal: Extension (reproduction)
obedience to the Great Commission - Matthew 28:19-20
obedience to the New Commandment - John 13:34-35
Vision shared with them
reproduce yourselves in the lives of others
Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:47-48;
John 20:21; Acts 1:8

Call One: Come and See John 1:39

Goal: Evangelism and follow-up (birth)

Meet Christ and learn who He is
Christ called the disciples to put their trust in Him

Vision shared with them:

lift up your eyes and look on the fields - John 4:35

see the needs of others around you

relatives - John 1:40-42

friends - John 1:43-46

co-workers - Mark 2:13-17

others - John 4:32-35

In response to a question asking where He was staying, Christ said in John 1:39, “‘Come and see.’ They came and saw where He was staying, and remained with Him that day (now it was about the tenth hour).” This began a period of about one year during which Christ wanted the disciples to learn who He was. Throughout this period, Christ was inviting the various disciples to put their trust in Him.

The goal of Christ during this period was spiritual birth and initial follow-up (evangelism and follow-up). One of the key things to notice about this period was that Christ met and talked to people where they lived, worked, met friends and spent their leisure time. He did not expect people to come to Him. Instead, He went to meet them in their normal activities. The disciples spent some time with Christ and even traveled with Him some during this period.

Christ also began to share His vision with the disciples. In John 4:35, He told them to lift up their eyes and look on the fields. He wanted them to begin to see the needs of other people. This included relatives (John 1:40-42), friends (John 1:43-46), co-workers (Mark 2:13-17) and others (John 4:32-35).

Lessons for Today

Today, we also want to help people become acquainted with who Christ is so that they can put their trust in Him. Once people put their trust in Christ, we want to begin follow-up to help them in their spiritual growth. We also want them to see the spiritual needs of their relatives, friends, co-workers and others.

1. Christ invited them to “Come and See”

Christ invited two to “Come and See” when He first met them

John 1:37-40

“The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. Then Jesus turned, and seeing them following, said to them, ‘What do you seek?’ They said to Him, ‘Rabbi’ (which is to say, when translated, Teacher), ‘where are You staying?’ He said to them, ‘**Come and see.**’ They came and saw where He was staying, and remained with Him that day (now it was about the tenth hour). One of the two who heard John speak, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.”

Christ continued to invite others to spend time with Him

John 1:43

“The following day Jesus wanted to go to Galilee, and He found Philip and said to him, ‘Follow Me.’”

Christ took His disciples with Him to social events

John 2:1-2

“On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Now both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding.”

Christ took His disciples with Him when He went to the Passover

John 2:17

“Then His disciples remembered that it was written, ‘Zeal for Your house has eaten Me up.’”

Christ spent time with His disciples in Judea

John 3:22

“After these things Jesus and His disciples came into the land of Judea, and there He remained with them and baptized.”

Christ had His disciples with Him as He traveled through Samaria

John 4:33-35

“Therefore the disciples said to one another, ‘Has anyone brought Him anything to eat?’ Jesus said to them, ‘My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work. Do you not say, “There are still four months and then comes the harvest”? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!’”

**This period lasted for about a year!
Christ was showing the disciples - I do (lead by love) while you observe.**

Call Two: Come and Grow **Mark 1:16-20**

Goal: Edification

Go with Christ and grow in the knowledge of Him
Christ called the disciples to grow in their knowledge of Him

Vision shared with them:

let us go into the next towns - Mark 1:38-39
learned to make contacts in their Jerusalem and Judea

Approximately one year after Christ met the men mentioned in John 1, Christ gave those same men a second call. In Mark 1:17, Christ said, “Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men.” (KJV) This was an invitation to come and grow and begin to learn to serve Christ. The disciples went with Christ and continued to grow in their knowledge of Him. They also learned from the example of Christ as He showed them the way to live and how to serve.

Christ invited the disciples to go with Him so that they could learn from Him. However, he had a second reason that was equally important for taking the disciples with Him. Christ wanted them to see from His example that He loved them. The only way they could experience His love was to spend time with Him. He also wanted them to see that He had this same love and compassion for others.

During this period, Christ continued to expand the vision of the disciples. In Mark 1:38, Christ said, “Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also, because for this purpose I have come forth.” Christ wanted to give the disciples a vision of the needs in other areas. He also wanted to show them by His example how to make contacts in their Jerusalem and Judea.

Lessons for Today

Today, we live in a world which has no understanding of real love. One of the great needs of Christians is to spend time in one-to-one and small group fellowship with younger Christians. This way they can grow both in knowledge and in their understanding of the love of Christ for them as they see that love in a more mature Christian. If we take younger Christians with us as we serve the Lord, they will also be learning from our example how to become fishers of men as they see us sharing the Gospel with others. Love and compassion for the lost are caught rather than taught.

2. Christ invited them to “Come and Grow”

Christ invited the disciples to grow and learn

Mark 1:17

“Then Jesus said to them, ‘Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men.’”



Christ continued to expand the vision of the disciples

Mark 1:38

“But He said to them, ‘Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also, because for this purpose I have come forth.’”

Christ showed the disciples what to say

Mark 1:39

“And He was **preaching** in their synagogues **throughout all Galilee**, and casting out demons.”

Christ showed them His purpose was to forgive sins even when He healed

Mark 2:3-5

“Then they came to Him, bringing a paralytic who was carried by four men. And when they could not come near Him because of the crowd, they uncovered the roof where He was. So when they had broken through, they let down the bed on which the paralytic was lying. When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, ‘**Son, your sins are forgiven you.**’”

Christ showed them His plan was to reach all

Mark 2:15-17

“Now it happened, as He was dining in Levi's house, that many tax collectors and sinners also sat together with Jesus and His disciples; for there were many, and they followed Him. And when the scribes and Pharisees saw Him eating with the tax collectors and sinners, they said to His disciples, ‘How is it that He eats and drinks with tax collectors and sinners?’ When Jesus heard it, He said to them, ‘Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.’”

**This period lasted for about nine months!
Christ was showing the disciples - I minister in love while you participate.**

**Call Three: Come and Serve
(Come and Be With Me)
Mark 3:13-15**

Goal: Equipping for Ministry

Go with Christ and learn to serve with Him
Christ called the disciples to follow His example

Vision shared with them:

Matthew 9:36-10:8; Luke 10:1-3

sent them forth to minister

share the good news in their Jerusalem and Judea
minister to the hurting in their Jerusalem and Judea

About twenty-one months after Christ first met those disciples, He gave them a third call. Mark 3:13-15 tells us that Christ called the twelve to be with Him and that He might send them forth to preach and to minister to the physical and spiritual needs of people. First, Christ wanted the disciples to observe His example even more closely so that they could learn how much He loved them. Second, He wanted them to begin to serve Him by sharing the Gospel and ministering to the hurting in their Jerusalem and Judea.

During this period, Christ expanded the vision of the disciples in several ways. According to Matthew 9:36-10:10, Christ showed what it meant to have compassion for people. He also helped the disciples see that there was a great harvest but few laborers. Then, Christ told the disciples how they could get involved and serve. First, they could pray for laborers. Second, they could be laborers. Third, He would provide their needs as they were serving Him.

Lessons for Today

Today, in order to help people learn to serve Christ, we need to give them the opportunity to observe us as we serve Christ. This happens best as we take individuals with us as we minister. We also need to begin giving others the opportunity to share the Gospel and minister to the needs of people around them. Many people feel that they are unqualified for such service. Our ministry is to help them become qualified.

At the same time, we also need to help them develop a vision for ministry. This vision is best developed as they see our love and compassion for others. This will happen as we encourage people to pray for laborers, help them realize that Christ wants to use them as laborers, and help them realize that Christ is their source of strength as they minister.

3. Christ invited them to “Come and Serve”

Christ chose the twelve to train to become servant-leaders

Mark 3:13-15

“And He went up on the mountain and called to Him those He Himself wanted. And they came to Him. Then He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach, and to have power to heal sicknesses and to cast out demons...”

Christ sent out the twelve to learn to trust Him and for on-the-job training

Mark 6:7-9

“And He called the twelve to Himself, and began to send them out two by two, and gave them power over unclean spirits. He commanded them to take nothing for the journey except a staff--no bag, no bread, no copper in their money belts--but to wear sandals, and not to put on two tunics.”

Christ had the twelve report what they had done and what they had taught

Mark 6:30-31

“Then the apostles gathered to Jesus and told Him all things, both what they had done and what they had taught. And He said to them, ‘Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while.’ For there were many coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat.”

Christ sent them out again as a part of the seventy

Luke 10:1

“After these things the Lord appointed seventy others also, and sent them two by two before His face into every city and place where He Himself was about to go.”

Christ taught the absolute importance of being servant-leaders

Mark 10:42-45

“But Jesus called them to Himself and said to them, ‘You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.’”

**This period lasted for about twenty-one months!
Christ was showing the disciples - You do while I observe and encourage.
You learn the importance of becoming servant-leaders.**

Call Four: Come and Shepherd John 21:15-17

Goal: Expansion of leadership

Serve with Christ and love as He loved
Christ called the disciples to love Him

Vision shared with them:

Luke 22:32; John 21:15-17; Ezekiel 34:1-16
take the responsibility for a part of the flock

Approximately three and a half years after Christ first met the disciples, He gave Peter and the other disciples a fourth call in John 21:15-17. He called them to shepherd His sheep. However, before this call, He asked one question. In John 21:15-17, Christ asked Peter three times, “Simon, son of Jonah, do you love me?” Christ knew that the only way that the disciples could shepherd others with love was if they loved Christ most of all. Christ called them to shepherd with Him and love as He loved.

We see that Christ expanded the vision of the disciples to help them realize that He trusted them to shepherd and take responsibility for a part of the flock. Christ had taught them many things about the way that a shepherd leads a flock. Now, He was giving them the awesome privilege of leading a part of His flock.

According to Ezekiel 34:1-16, the shepherds of Israel had failed to shepherd Israel because they had tried to shepherd for their own benefit. As a result, Christ showed the disciples how to shepherd a flock by the way He had led them. Only when they had experienced His love and care for them did Christ ask them to shepherd others in the same way. They knew what it meant to love others because they knew that they were greatly loved.

Lessons for Today

Today, there is a great need for many more spiritual leaders who will lead Christ's sheep and love them as Christ loves them. As spiritual leaders, one of our greatest ministries is to spend time with a small group so they can experience the love of Christ through us.

As we take others with us as we minister, they will experience the love of Christ if the love of Christ is controlling our lives. Then, as we see that love developing in their lives, we need to give them the privilege and responsibility of shepherding a small part of Christ's flock. Those who have responded to each of these four calls will be most effective in carrying out Christ's commission.

4. Christ invited them to “Come and Shepherd”

Christ finished His work of making disciples before He went to the cross

John 17:4

“I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do.”

Christ gave further instructions to the disciples after His resurrection

Luke 24:44-49

“Then He said to them, ‘These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.’ And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. Then He said to them, ‘Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And you are witnesses of these things. Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.’”

**Christ showed that servant-leaders become equipped to be a team of:
fishers of men, shepherds and teachers**

John 21:15-17

“So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, ‘Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?’ He said to Him, ‘Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.’ He said to him, ‘Feed My lambs.’ He said to him again a second time, ‘Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?’ He said to Him, ‘Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.’ He said to him, ‘Tend My sheep.’ He said to him the third time, ‘Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?’ Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, ‘Do you love Me?’ And he said to Him, ‘Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Feed My sheep.’”

Christ showed that Godly servant-leadership can involve suffering or death

John 21:18-19

“‘Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish.’ This He spoke, signifying by what death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, ‘Follow Me.’”

**This period is to last until Christ comes again!
Christ gives us His power to serve in His strength.**

**Christ's Commission: As you are going Make Disciples!
Matthew 28:19-20**

Goal: Extension to the ends of the earth

Serve in obedience to Christ

Vision shared with them:

Carry this message to the ends of the earth - Acts 1:8

In order to carry out these two commands, Christ assured the disciples that they could not do it in their own power. In Luke 24:49, Christ said, “Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.” Christ knew that we could not carry out these commands in our own strength. As a result, He gives every Christian the Holy Spirit at the moment of salvation and the Holy Spirit gives us the power to carry out these commands.

Christ also shared His vision with the disciples as He prepared to return to heaven. Each of the four Gospels include a part of that vision as well as Acts 1:8, “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

Lessons for Today

The vision that Christ had for the twelve is the same vision that Christ has for each Christian today. We are to reproduce ourselves in the lives of others in our Jerusalem (cross the barrier of our own fear of sharing the Gospel), in our Judea, (cross the barrier of learning to make contacts), in our Samaria (cross the barrier of sharing the Gospel and making disciples with those of another culture and religion) and to the end of our earth (we may have to cross the barrier of learning to make disciples in another language).

In order to be obedient to our commission to Make Disciples, we begin by responding to each of the four calls in our own lives. Then, we obey by taking other individuals through the same four stages of development that Christ took His disciples through. In order to be obedient to Christ, we must depend on the power that He supplies and not try to do it in our own strength.

It is the desire of Christ for every Christian to be equipped for an effective ministry of making disciples. In 2 Timothy 2:21, we read, “Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work.”

5. Christ said “As you are going, Make Disciples”

a. The definition of a disciple is given in Matthew 13:52:

“Then He said to them, ‘Therefore every scribe instructed concerning the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out of his treasure *things* new and old.’”

A disciple has become the head of a spiritual household
this means that a disciple has become a spiritual parent
1 John 2:12-14; 1 Thessalonians 2:7-12; 1 Corinthians 4:15-17

A disciple has a treasure
this means that a disciple knows and obeys the Word of God
Joshua 1:8; Psalm 1:1-3; Matthew 7:24-27; John 15:14-17

A disciple brings out of that treasure new things
this means that a disciple is continuing to learn new things
2 Peter 3:18; 2 Timothy 2:15

A disciple brings out of that treasure old things
this means that a disciple is sharing the basics with others
this sharing occurs through example
Acts 20:20, 1 Timothy 4:12
this sharing occurs through teaching
2 Timothy 2:2; 1 Timothy 4:16

b. The making of a disciple is illustrated

Matthew 27:57

“Now when evening had come, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who himself had also become a disciple of Jesus.”

c. The making of disciples is commanded

Matthew 28:19-20

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’ Amen.”

d. The making of disciples was continually practiced

Acts 14:21-22

“And when they had preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, ‘We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.’”

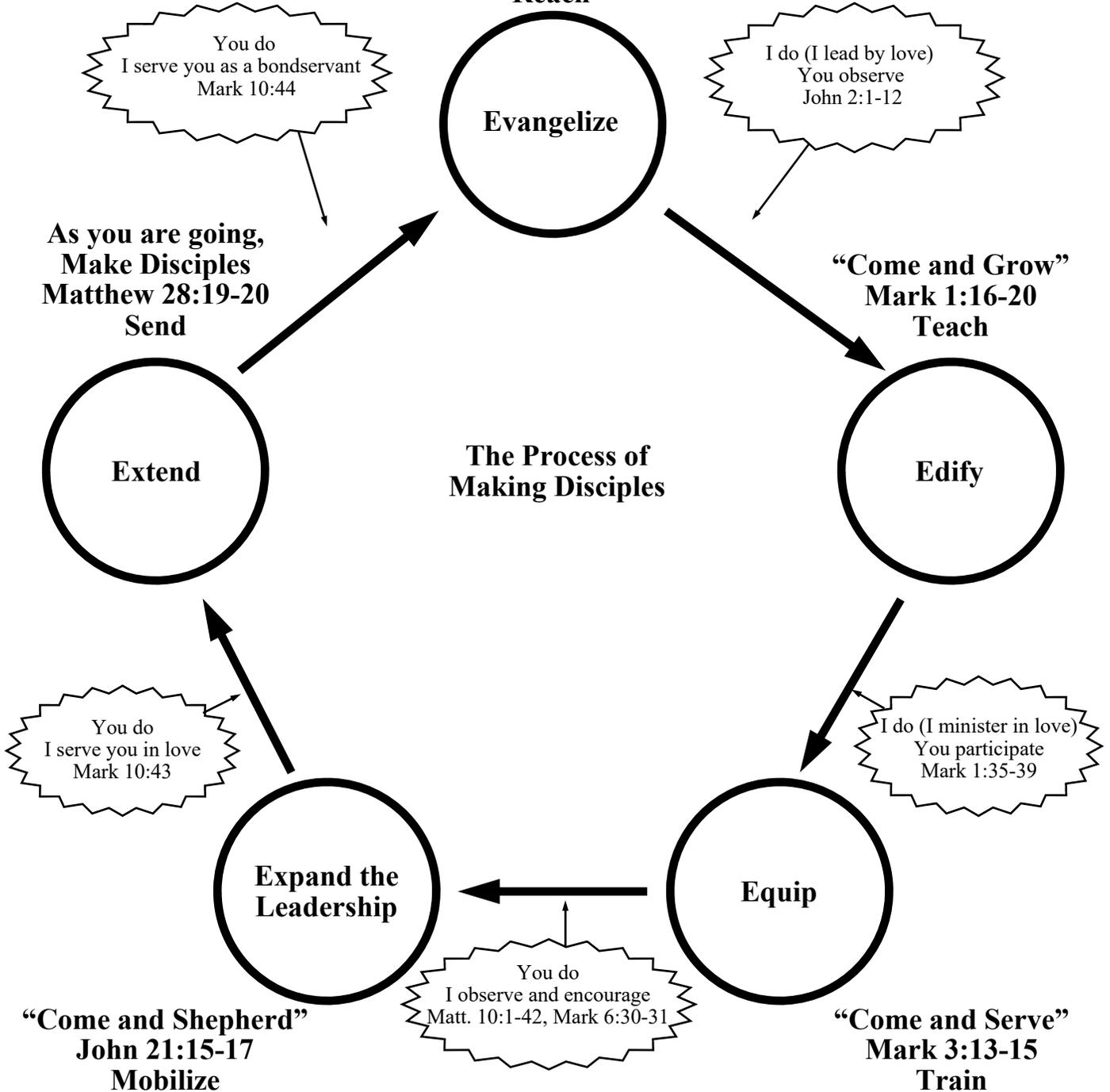
6. The Process of Making Disciples Illustrated

Four Calls and A Commission

“Come and See”

John 1:39-46, Matthew 9:9-10, Mark 1:30-33

Reach



World Model (Greek Model) - Develop by Telling
Biblical Model (Hebrew Model) - Develop by Showing

Four Calls and A Commission (page 1 of 1) Updated: March 2017
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II. The early church began in every place with evangelism

A. The foundation for evangelism was laid through prayer

Christ told the disciples to wait and pray until they received the Holy Spirit

Luke 24:49

“Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.”

The disciples obeyed and spent ten days in prayer

Acts 1:14

“These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.”

The new believers were immediately shown the importance of prayer

Acts 2:42

“And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.”

The early church gathered daily for prayer

Acts 3:1

“Now Peter and John went up together to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour.”

The early church handled opposition by prayer

Acts 4:29-31

“Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word, by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus.’ And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.”

The early church recognized new leadership through prayer

Acts 6:4-6

“But we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.” And the saying pleased the whole multitude. And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch, whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid hands on them.”

Pray without ceasing - 1 Thessalonians 5:17

B. Seeking - building relationships with people that are not yet Christians

Christ taught the importance of seeking the lost until they are found

Luke 15:4

“What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost until he finds it?”

The early church shared the Gospel in homes to reach extended families

Acts 2:46-47

“So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.”

The early church shared the Gospel wherever people gathered

Acts 3:11-12

“Now as the lame man who was healed held on to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them in the porch which is called Solomon's, greatly amazed. So when Peter saw it, he responded to the people: ‘Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this? Or why look so intently at us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk? ’”

The early church filled Jerusalem with the Gospel

Acts 5:28

“Saying, ‘Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this Man's blood on us!’”

The early church reached a large number of priests

Acts 6:7

“Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.”

The early church went everywhere preaching the Word

Acts 8:4

“Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word.”

The early church spread the Gospel throughout the region

Acts 9:31

“Then the churches throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and were edified. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, they were multiplied.”

C. Finding - leading people to repentance and faith

Christ opened the understanding of the disciples to the message to preach

Luke 24:45-47

“And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. Then He said to them, ‘Thus it is written, and thus it was **necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead** the third day, and that **repentance and remission of sins** should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.’”

1. They were to teach about the sufferings and death of Christ

The sufferings and death of Christ were taught in Peter’s first message

Acts 2:23

“Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, **you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death...**”

The sufferings and death of Christ were continually taught by Peter

Acts 3:14-15

“But you denied the Holy One and the Just, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, and **killed the Prince of life**, whom God raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses.”

Acts 4:8-10

“Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, ‘Rulers of the people and elders of Israel: If we this day are judged for a good deed done to a helpless man, by what means he has been made well, let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, **whom you crucified**, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole.’”

The sufferings and death of Christ were taught by Stephen

Acts 7:52-53

“Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One, **of whom you now have become the betrayers and murderers**, who have received the law by the direction of angels and have not kept it.”

The sufferings and death of Christ are called the message of first importance

1 Corinthians 15:1-3

“Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you--unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that **Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures...**”

2. They were to teach about the resurrection of Christ

The resurrection of Christ was taught in Peter's first message

Acts 2:24

“Whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it.”

Acts 2:30-32

“Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne, he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption. **This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses.”**

The death and resurrection was the theme of the early church

Acts 2:42

“And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.” (The apostles' doctrine was the teaching of the death and resurrection of Christ.)

Acts 2:46-47

“So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.”

The resurrection of Christ was taught in Peter's second message

Acts 3:26-4:2

“To you first, God, **having raised up His Servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities.’** Now as they spoke to the people, the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees came upon them, being greatly disturbed that they taught the people and **preached in Jesus the resurrection from the dead.**”

Peter and John taught the resurrection when they were arrested

Acts 4:10

“Let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, **whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole.”**

Paul (Saul) immediately preached Christ when he believed

Acts 9:20

“Immediately he preached the Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God.”

3. They were to teach the necessity of repentance

The need for repentance was taught in Peter's first message

Acts 2:38

“Then Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’”

The need for repentance was taught in Peter's second message

Acts 3:19

“**Repent** therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord...”

The apostles taught the need for repentance to the religious leaders

Acts 5:29-31

“But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: ‘We ought to obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom you murdered by hanging on a tree. Him God has exalted to His right hand to be Prince and Savior, **to give repentance to Israel** and forgiveness of sins.’”

The early church rejoiced that repentance came to the Gentiles

Acts 11:18

“When they heard these things they became silent; and they glorified God, saying, ‘Then **God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life.**’”

Paul told the men of Athens that they needed to repent

Acts 17:30

“Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but **now commands all men everywhere to repent...**”

Paul told the elders at Ephesus that he taught them to share repentance

Acts 20:20-21

“How I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house, testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, **repentance toward God** and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.”

The new Christians in Thessalonica taught repentance

1 Thessalonians 1:8-9

“For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place. Your faith toward God has gone out, so that we do not need to say anything. For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how **you turned to God from idols** to serve the living and true God...”

4. They were to teach the remission (forgiveness) of sins

The promise of remission of sins was taught in Peter's first message

Acts 2:38

“Then Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ **for the remission of sins**; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’”

The apostles told the religious leaders the promise of remission of sins

Acts 5:31

“Him God has exalted to His right hand to be Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and **forgiveness of sins**.”

Peter shared the promise of remission of sins at the house of Cornelius

Acts 10:43

“To Him all the prophets witness that, through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive **remission of sins**.”

Paul shared the promise of remission of sins to the Gentiles

Acts 13:38

“Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through this Man is preached to you **the forgiveness of sins**...”

Paul said he shared the message of forgiveness of sins everywhere he went

Acts 26:15-20

“So I said, ‘Who are You, Lord?’ And He said, ‘I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. But rise and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness both of the things which you have seen and of the things which I will yet reveal to you. I will deliver you from the Jewish people, as well as from the Gentiles, to whom I now send you, to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, **that they may receive forgiveness of sins** and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.’” Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, but declared first to those in Damascus and in Jerusalem, and throughout all the region of Judea, and *then* to the Gentiles, that they should repent, turn to God, and do works befitting repentance.”

The writer of Hebrews said there is no forgiveness without shedding of blood

Hebrews 9:22

“And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission.”

Forgiveness of sins is also the need of people today!

D. Bringing - building the new Christians to the body

The early church helped new Christians learn to function in the body

Acts 2:42-47

“And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.”

They gathered them in groups for the apostles' doctrine

the focus was the teachings that Christ had taught (the New Testament)
these teachings were often illustrated from the Old Testament - Acts 17:11

They gathered them in groups for fellowship

fellowship is essential to practice the new commandment - John 13:34-35
fellowship is both with God and with other Christians - 1 John 1:3-4, 7

They gathered them in groups for the breaking of bread (communion)

they had communion as a part of their Bible study and fellowship
this provided a regular reminder of the death and resurrection

They gathered them in groups for prayer

Christ had continually modeled prayer for His disciples
prayer was continually modeled to new believers

They provided an example of sharing with those in need

there was a great concern for the needs of one another

They met in groups daily in the temple

the Jews gathered at the morning and evening sacrifice for prayer - Luke 1:10
this provided the early church with a key time for evangelism - Acts 3:1

They met daily in groups from house to house

Christ was recognized when He broke the bread at Emmaus - Luke 24:30-31
communion was usually combined with a meal - 1 Corinthians 11:33
communion in homes can provide a key time to reach extended families

E. Rejoicing - celebrating this new life in Christ

The early church was filled with joy as people became Christians

Acts 2:46-47

“So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.”

The word that is translated “gladness” means *extreme joy*

other uses of the word

Zacharias was promised gladness with the birth of John - Luke 1:14
John leaped in the womb of Elizabeth at the voice of Mary - Luke 1:44
the Father anointed Christ with the oil of gladness - Hebrews 1:9
Christ will present Christians to the Father with exceeding joy - Jude 24

The early church was filled with joy because of singleness of heart

The early church was praising God as He worked in their lives

The early church was having favor with all of the people

This great joy was used to draw many others to Christ
the Lord was adding to the church daily

The early church was filled with joy as disciples multiplied

Acts 6:7

“Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.”

The early church was filled with joy as the churches multiplied

Acts 9:31

“Then the churches throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and were edified. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, they were multiplied.”

The churches had peace and were being built up

The churches were walking in the fear of the Lord

The churches were walking in the comfort of the Holy Spirit

The churches were multiplying

III. The early church focused on developing stable Christians

The development of the stable Christians can be summarized by FLOCKS

A. The Development of Fellowship

1. The Development of Fellowship with Christ - I John 1:3-4

Christ changed the disciples from servants to friends to brethren

John 15:15

“No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but **I have called you friends**, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you.”

John 20:17

“Jesus said to her, ‘Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but **go to My brethren** and say to them, “I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.”’”

Christ shared His plans with His friends (disciples)

the new commandment - John 13:34-35
the Comforter to teach us - John 14:26
the power to minister - Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4
the commission to make disciples - Matthew 28:19-20
the plan to reach the world - Acts 1:8

Christ promised to abide in the brethren

Christ taught that abiding is the basis for fruitfulness - John 15:1-8
Christ taught that obedience brings joy - John 15:9-14
Christ prayed that all believers would be One - John 17:20-23

The early church was helping new believers become one in Christ

This happened as they had Bible study and fellowship together - Acts 2:42
This happened as they shared their lives together - Acts 2:44-45
This happened as they were of one accord - Acts 2:46
This happened as they ate meals together - Acts 2:46
This happened as they experience great joy - Acts 2:46
(joy is what happens within when we are right with Christ)
This happened as they praised God together - Acts 2:47
This happened as they saw Christ continue to work - Acts 2:47

2. The Development of Fellowship with One Another - 1 John 1:7

The early church developed true fellowship as they ministered to one another

That fellowship included sharing with one another in Bible study

Acts 2:42

“And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and **fellowship**, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.”

That fellowship included sharing with the poor

Romans 15:26

“For it pleased those from Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain **contribution** for the poor among the saints who are in Jerusalem.”

That fellowship included celebrating communion together

1 Corinthians 10:16

“The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the **communion** of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the **communion** of the body of Christ?”

That fellowship was made possible through the Holy Spirit in each one

2 Corinthians 13:14

“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the **communion** of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.”

That fellowship included encouraging one another

Galatians 2:9

“And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that had been given to me, they gave me and Barnabas the right hand of **fellowship**, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.”

That fellowship was the result of a humble attitude

Philippians 2:1-3

“Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any **fellowship** of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.”

That fellowship included sharing with one another

Hebrews 13:16

“But do not forget to do good and to **share**, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.”

B. The Development of Godly Leadership

**The importance of understanding the definition of a disciple
(see page 14 for greater detail)**

The definition of a disciple is given in Matthew 13:52

“Then He said to them, ‘Therefore every scribe **instructed** concerning the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out of his treasure *things* new and old.’”

A disciple has become the head of a spiritual household

this means that a disciple has become a spiritual parent

A disciple has a treasure

this means that a disciple knows and obeys the Word of God

A disciple brings out of that treasure new things

this means that a disciple is continuing to learn new things

A disciple brings out of that treasure old things

this means that a disciple is sharing the basics with others

this sharing occurs through example

this sharing occurs through teaching

Although our commission is to make disciples, the word is not used between Acts 1:16 and Acts 5:42 (this is a period of about six or possibly seven years)

This points out the fact that it takes time to develop godly leadership

**The definition shows that the early church Made Disciples
that were spiritual parents (heads of spiritual households)**

Acts 6:1

“Now in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution.”

The multiplication of disciples made it possible to expand the leadership team

Acts 6:3-6

“Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.’ And the saying pleased the whole multitude. And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch, whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid hands on them.”

C. The Development of Outreach

The Multiplication of Leadership made Expansion of Outreach Possible

Acts 6:7

“Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.”

This expanded outreach to others in Jerusalem

Acts 6:8-10

“And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and signs among the people. Then there arose some from what is called the Synagogue of the Freedmen (Cyrenians, Alexandrians, and those from Cilicia and Asia), disputing with Stephen. And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke.”

This expanded outreach to the surrounding region

Acts 8:1, 4

“Now Saul was consenting to his death. At that time a great persecution arose against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles...Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word.”

This expanded outreach to the Samaritans

Acts 8:5-8

“Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ to them. And the multitudes with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. For unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of many who were possessed; and many who were paralyzed and lame were healed. And there was great joy in that city.”

This multiplied churches throughout the region

Acts 9:31

“Then the churches throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and were edified. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, they were multiplied.”

This expanded outreach to Gentile cities

Acts 11:19-21

“Now those who were scattered after the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to no one but the Jews only. But some of them were men from Cyprus and Cyrene, who, when they had come to Antioch, spoke to the Hellenists, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord.”

D. The Development of Caring

The Development of Caring and Concern immediately developed

Acts 2:44-45

“Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need.”

The Development of Caring and Concern was not stopped by lack of money

Acts 3:6

“Then Peter said, ‘Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk.’”

The Development of Caring and Concern included caring for Hebrew widows

Acts 6:1

“Now in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution.”

The Development of Caring and Concern expanded to Hellenist widows

Acts 6:2-3

“Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, ‘It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business...’”

The Development of Caring and Concern expanded as the church expanded

Acts 9:36

“At Joppa there was a certain disciple named Tabitha, which is translated Dorcas. This woman was full of good works and charitable deeds which she did.”

The Development of Caring caused Gentiles to become concerned for Jews

Acts 11:28-30

“Then one of them, named Agabus, stood up and showed by the Spirit that there was going to be a great famine throughout all the world, which also happened in the days of Claudius Caesar. Then the disciples, each according to his ability, determined to send relief to the brethren dwelling in Judea. This they also did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.”

**The disciples had seen the compassion of Christ
The disciples now had compassion for one another**

E. The Development of Knowledge

The early church helped people begin to grow in their knowledge of Christ

Acts 2:42

“And they continued steadfastly in the **apostles' doctrine** and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.”

The early church reached many people for Christ by sharing the Word

Acts 4:4

“However, **many of those who heard the word believed**; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand.”

The early church was even commanded not to speak of Christ any more

Acts 4:18-20

“So they called them and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered and said to them, ‘Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. For **we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.**’”

The early church continued to speak the Word with boldness

Acts 4:31

“And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and **they spoke the word of God with boldness.**”

The early church equipped everyone to share the Word of God

Acts 8:4

“Therefore those who were scattered **went everywhere preaching the word.**”

The early church even got interested nonbelievers searching the Word

Acts 17:11-12

“These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that **they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily** to find out whether these things were so. Therefore many of them believed, and also not a few of the Greeks, prominent women as well as men.”

The early church wanted people to know the whole counsel of God

Acts 20:27

“For I have not shunned to declare to you **the whole counsel of God.**”

F. The Development of Service

The early church helped people learn to serve the Lord

People served by sharing what they had with others

Acts 2:44-45

“Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need.”

People served by opening their homes as places of ministry

Acts 2:46

“So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and **breaking bread from house to house**, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart...”

People served by caring for the needs of widows

Acts 6:3-6

“Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.’ And the saying pleased the whole multitude. And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch, whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid hands on them.”

People served by doing good works for others

Acts 9:36-39

“At Joppa there was a certain disciple named Tabitha, which is translated Dorcas. This woman was full of good works and charitable deeds which she did. But it happened in those days that she became sick and died. When they had washed her, they laid her in an upper room. And since Lydda was near Joppa, and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent two men to him, imploring him not to delay in coming to them. Then Peter arose and went with them. When he had come, they brought him to the upper room. And all the widows stood by him weeping, showing the tunics and garments which Dorcas had made while she was with them.”

People served because they were given liberty to serve one another in love

Galatians 5:1, 13

“Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage...For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.”

IV. The early church made disciples and developed leadership

A. The early church understood they were to “Make Disciples”

The definition of a disciple is given in Matthew 13:52:

“Then He said to them, ‘Therefore every scribe **instructed** concerning the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out of his treasure *things* new and old.’

A disciple has become the head of a spiritual household

this means that a disciple has become a spiritual parent

A disciple has a treasure

this means that a disciple knows and obeys the Word of God

A disciple brings out of that treasure new things

this means that a disciple is continuing to learn new things

A disciple brings out of that treasure old things

this means that a disciple is sharing the basics with others

this sharing occurs through example

this sharing occurs through teaching

The early church helped people grow to maturity and become spiritual parents

newborn babes - 1 Peter 2:2

(spiritual toddlers) very immature spiritual children - 1 Corinthians 3:1-3,

1 Corinthians 13:11; Ephesians 4:14; Hebrews 5:11-14

spiritual children - 1 John 2:12-14

spiritual young men - 1 John 2:12-14

spiritual parents - 1 John 2:12-14; 1 Thessalonians 2:7-12; 1 Corinthians 4:15-17

The early church helped people become obedient to the Word

Philippians 2:12

“Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling...”

The early church helped people learn to speak the truth in love

Ephesians 4:15

“But, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head--Christ...”

The early church helped every Christian learn to do his share

Ephesians 4:16

“...from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.”

B. The one hundred twenty disciples became spiritual parents to the three thousand new believers

There were at least a hundred and twenty believers before the Day of Pentecost
Acts 1:15

“And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples (altogether the number of names was about a hundred and twenty)...”

The early church immediately divided the new believers into small groups
Acts 2:42

“And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.”

These groups focused on four things

The apostles' doctrine (Bible study)

Fellowship

Breaking of Bread (communion)

Prayer

Some of these groups may have met in the temple in Jerusalem - Acts 2:46

the temple had a large covered area around the entire court of the temple

this covered area was about forty-five feet wide along the outer wall

this covered area was supported by fifteen hundred pillars

Jewish teachers would often sit by one of these pillars and teach a small group
(Paul had studied at the feet of Gamaliel probably next to one of these pillars)

Acts 22:3

“I am indeed a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but **brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel**, taught according to the strictness of our fathers' law, and was zealous toward God as you all are today.”

Most of these groups met in homes - Acts 2:46

“So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart.”

In other cities, these groups met in homes or other buildings

usually for the first few weeks in the synagogue

then they often were forced to move to houses - Acts 18:7

or schools - Acts 19:9

or even third floor rooms - Acts 20:9

**In Jerusalem, if each of the hundred and twenty led only two groups
all of the new Christians would have been in small groups of about a dozen**

C. The ministry of a spiritual parent defined

Paul and his team became spiritual parents to converts in new cities

1 Thessalonians 1:1

“Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Paul and the team provided the care of a nursing mother

1 Thessalonians 2:7-9

“But we were gentle among you, just as a nursing mother cherishes her own children. So, affectionately longing for you, we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives, because you had become dear to us. For you remember, brethren, our labor and toil; for laboring night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, we preached to you the gospel of God.”

Paul and the team provided the example of a godly father

1 Thessalonians 2:10-12

“You are witnesses, and God also, how devoutly and justly and blamelessly we behaved ourselves among you who believe; as you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father does his own children, that you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.”

The church at Corinth was one church where few spiritual parents developed

1 Corinthians 4:15-17

“For though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet you do not have many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. Therefore I urge you, imitate me. For this reason I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful son in the Lord, who will remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every church.”

**An instructor was a slave that raised a son for his father
(this was usually done through severe discipline and no love)**

The law was our instructor to bring us to God

Galatians 3:24-25

“Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.”

**Mentor was the best known instructor (tutor) in Greek writings
Why does the church often follow the world?**

D. The early church expanded the leadership team in Jerusalem

The apostles were the original leadership team in Jerusalem

Acts 5:12

“And through the hands of **the apostles** many signs and wonders were done among the people. And they were all with one accord in Solomon's Porch.”

The apostles added to the leadership team in Jerusalem

Acts 6:2-6

“Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, ‘It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.’ And the saying pleased the whole multitude. And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch, whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid hands on them.”

The apostles helped develop leadership teams in other churches

Acts 8:14

“Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them...”

Acts 11:22

“Then news of these things came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent out Barnabas to go as far as Antioch.”

The leadership team in Jerusalem had expanded to include elders

Acts 15:2

“Therefore, when Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and dispute with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas and certain others of them should go up to Jerusalem, to the apostles and elders, about this question.”

James, the half-brother of Christ, became the lead elder

Acts 11:17

“‘If therefore God gave them the same gift as He gave us when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could withstand God?’”

James, rather than an apostle, was the leader at the Jerusalem Council

Acts 15:13

“And after they had become silent, James answered, saying, ‘Men and brethren, listen to me:...’”

E. The early church continued to develop church leadership teams

The church sent Barnabas to help develop the leadership team in Antioch

Acts 11:22

“Then news of these things came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent out Barnabas to go as far as Antioch.”

Barnabas soon added Saul to the leadership team

Acts 11:25-26

“Then Barnabas departed for Tarsus to seek Saul. And when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. So it was that for a whole year they assembled with the church and taught a great many people. And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.”

The leadership team in Antioch expanded adding Christians from the church

Acts 13:1

“Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.”

The Holy Spirit removed Barnabas and Saul to do the same in other cities

Acts 13:2-3

“As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’ Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away.”

Paul and Barnabas later returned to Antioch

Acts 14:26-27

“From there they sailed to Antioch, where they had been commended to the grace of God for the work which they had completed. Now when they had come and gathered the church together, they reported all that God had done with them, and that He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles.”

The leadership team in Antioch continued to increase in number

Acts 15:35

“Paul and Barnabas also remained in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, **with many others also.**”

**If we are obedient to God and Make Disciples,
The Leadership Team will Continue to Grow**

F. The early church showed people by example how to minister

The leaders showed the believers the importance of prayer

Acts 4:29-31

:‘Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word, by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus.’ And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.”

Acts 12:5

“Peter was therefore kept in prison, but constant prayer was offered to God for him by the church.”

The leaders took others with them as they ministered

Acts 11:12

“Then the Spirit told me to go with them, doubting nothing. Moreover these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered the man's house.”

Acts 13:5

“And when they arrived in Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. They also had John as their assistant.”

Acts 20:4

“And Sopater of Berea accompanied him to Asia--also Aristarchus and Secundus of the Thessalonians, and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy, and Tychicus and Trophimus of Asia.”

The leaders encouraged others to follow their example

1 Corinthians 11:1

“Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.”

1 Thessalonians 1:6

“And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit...”

The leaders showed other developing leaders how to minister

Acts 20:20-21

“...how I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house, testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.”

**They showed them how to minister publicly
They showed them how to minister house to house
They showed them how to explain the Gospel**

G. The early church developed people through church meetings

The instructions that Paul gave the church at Corinth showed that they needed to learn to function like other churches so we will learn several lessons from what they failed to do

The early church had meals and communion with their services

Acts 2:46

“So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart...”

The church at Corinth had to learn to examine themselves

1 Corinthians 11:28-30

“But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep.”

The church at Corinth had to learn to share their food with those who lacked

1 Corinthians 11:22

“What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and shame those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I do not praise you.”

The church at Corinth had to learn to share their meals with the slaves

1 Corinthians 11:33

“Therefore, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another.”
(Many Christians were slaves and could not get there as early as others)

The church at Corinth had to learn that each had different ministries

1 Corinthians 12:4-6

“There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all.”

The church at Corinth had to learn to function as one body

1 Corinthians 12:12-13

“For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body--whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free--and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.”

The early church developed people in the meetings of the whole church

**the early church had services similar to services in the Jewish synagogue
the services in the synagogue included seven to nine men reading Scripture**

Christ demonstrated this in the synagogue at Nazareth

Luke 4:16

“So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. **And as His custom was,** He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and **stood up to read.**”

The early church gave several the opportunity to read the Scripture

1 Corinthians 14:26

“How is it then, brethren? Whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification.”

The early church limited speaking in other languages to two or three people

1 Corinthians 14:27

“If anyone speaks in a tongue, let there be two or at the most three, each in turn, and let one interpret.”

The early church interpreted anything spoken in another language

1 Corinthians 14:28

“But if there is no interpreter, let him keep silent in church, and let him speak to himself and to God.”

The early church had two or three men explain the Word of God

1 Corinthians 14:29-30

“Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others judge. But if anything is revealed to another who sits by, let the first keep silent.”

The early church wanted every person to learn the Word of God

1 Corinthians 14:31-33

“For you can all prophesy one by one, that all may learn and all may be encouraged. And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. For God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.”

**To “prophesy” is to speak or explain what has been written
The ones that learned the most were always the speakers
The ones who heard the Word of God were to be encouraged
The ones that spoke were to prepare so that their spirits were subject**

V. The early church developed church organization as needed

A. The early church developed additional organization as it was needed

The apostles functioned as the first church leadership team

Acts 6:2

“Then **the twelve** summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, ‘It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables.’”

The apostles did not add leaders to the leadership team until they were disciples

Acts 6:1

“Now in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution.”

The apostles gave basic qualifications for those joining the leadership team

Acts 6:3

“Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of **good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom**, whom we may appoint over this business...”

**men of good reputation
men full of the Holy Spirit
men full of wisdom**

The apostles commissioned seven Hellenists to minister to the Hellenist widows

Acts 6:5-6

“And the saying pleased the whole multitude. And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch, whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid hands on them.”

The seven continued to expand their ministry

Acts 6:8-10

“And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and signs among the people. Then there arose some from what is called the Synagogue of the Freedmen (Cyrenians, Alexandrians, and those from Cilicia and Asia), disputing with Stephen. And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke.”

Acts 8:5-6

“Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ to them. And the multitudes with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did.”

B. The early church developed basic organization in every church

The church in Antioch developed a multicultural leadership team

Acts 13:1

“Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.”

**This team came from five different regions
This team was probably multiethnic
This team was also multilingual**

This team did not have anyone that was originally from Antioch

The church in Antioch was led to send a team to start other churches

Acts 13:2-3

“As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’ Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away.”

**The team gave us a Biblical process for church development
(this same pattern is found in all the main churches in Acts)**

Acts 14:21-23

“And when they had **preached the gospel** to that city and **made many disciples**, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, **strengthening the souls of the disciples**, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, ‘We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.’ So when they had **appointed elders in every church**, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.”

**They preached the Gospel
They gathered believers into groups and made disciples
They strengthened the disciples to prepare them for leadership
They appointed a leadership team in every church**

**They later helped those churches
Acts 16:1-5
send out leaders to start churches in surrounding areas - 5
send out a key leader to start churches in other regions - 1-3**

C. The early church developed disciples and leadership teams

Christ said He would build His church

Matthew 16:18

“And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.”

Christ commissioned the disciples to Make Disciples

Matthew 28:19-20

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’ Amen.”

The disciples were obedient and multiplied disciples

Acts 6:7

“Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.”

Acts 11:26

“And when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. So it was that for a whole year they assembled with the church and taught a great many people. And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.”

This same pattern was followed in every city

Acts 14:21

“And when they had preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch...”

They developed a leadership team in every church

Acts 13:1

“Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.”

Acts 14:23

“So when they had appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.”

**They developed a group of elders in every church
They prayed for the Lord to work through those leaders
They commended those leaders to the Lord
They trusted the Lord to work through each team**

D. Paul sent team members to develop organization where it was lacking

Paul sent Timothy to develop the leadership team in Thessalonica

1 Thessalonians 3:1-2

“Therefore, when we could no longer endure it, we thought it good to be left in Athens alone, and sent Timothy, our brother and minister of God, and our fellow laborer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you and encourage you concerning your faith...”

Paul sent Timothy and later Titus to Corinth

1 Corinthians 4:15-17

“For though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet you do not have many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. Therefore I urge you, imitate me. For this reason I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful son in the Lord, who will remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every church.”

2 Corinthians 7:6-7

“Nevertheless God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus, and not only by his coming, but also by the consolation with which he was comforted in you, when he told us of your earnest desire, your mourning, your zeal for me, so that I rejoiced even more.”

Paul left Timothy in Ephesus to further develop the leadership team

1 Timothy 1:3

“As I urged you when I went into Macedonia--remain in Ephesus that you may charge some that they teach no other doctrine...”

Paul left Titus to develop a leadership team in every church in Crete

Titus 1:5 qualifications in verses 6-9

“For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you...”

The primary responsibility of Titus was to develop leadership teams

Help potential leaders develop a respected life
Help potential leaders develop a healthy marriage
Help potential leaders develop a healthy family relationship
Help potential leaders become Christ-centered and not self-centered
Help potential leaders deal with former sinful habits
Help potential leaders learn to use their homes for ministry
Help potential leaders develop godly character
Help potential leaders learn to teach the Word of God
Help potential leaders learn to correct those who contradict

E. The early church had equippers within the various leadership teams

God was the One who gifted people for leadership development as they matured
Ephesians 4:11-12

“And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ...”

God is the giver of the equipping gifts

He gave apostles
They gave eyewitness testimony of the resurrection - Acts 1:21-22
He gave prophets
They gave the written Word of God - 2 Peter 1:19-21

These gave the foundation on which the church stands

Ephesians 2:19-22

“Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone, in whom the whole building, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.”

He gave evangelists
to equip the saints for the ministry of evangelism
(so all could learn to evangelize - Mark 16:15; Acts 8:4)

He gave pastors
to equip the saints to minister to one another
(so all could learn to serve one another in love - Galatians 5:13)

He gave teachers
to equip the saints to teach the Word of God
(so all could be ready to teach the Word of God - 1 Peter 3:15)

Equippers equipped people by showing them how to minister

Acts 20:20-21

“How I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house, testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.”

God had a goal for each Christian and for the whole body

Ephesians 4:13

“Till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ...”

**God wanted the body to come to the unity:
of the faith and
of the knowledge of the Son of God**

**God had given them the unity of the Spirit, which they were to maintain
Ephesians 4:4-7**

**They were coming to the unity of the faith as they matured
in their knowledge of the Word of God
Philippians 1:27**

**They were coming to the unity of the knowledge of the Son of God
as they grew in their relationship with Christ
Philippians 3:10; 2 Peter 3:18**

God wanted each Christian and the whole body to grow to spiritual maturity

**They were to be mature in understanding - 1 Corinthians 14:20
They were to be mature in knowing the will of God - Colossians 4:12
They were to be mature in recognizing good and evil - Hebrews 5:14
They were to be mature in following the law of liberty - James 1:25
They were to be mature in patience - James 1:4
They were to be mature in speech - James 3:2
They were to be mature in love - 1 John 4:18**

God wanted them to grow to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ

**They were to be filled to the fullness of God - Ephesians 3:19
They were to grow to the fullness of Christ - Ephesians 4:13
They were to be continually filled with the Spirit - Ephesians 5:18
Christ possessed all the fullness of the Godhead - Colossians 2:9
Christ says that they were complete in Him - Colossians 2:10**

God did not want them to remain as spiritual young children

Ephesians 4:14

“That we should no longer be children, tossed to and for and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting...”

Characteristics of a spiritual young child

- A spiritual young child was deceived by false teachings - Ephesians 4:14**
- A spiritual young child was deceived by false teachers - Ephesians 4:14**
- A spiritual young child was carnal (fleshly) - 1 Corinthians 3:1**
- A spiritual young child was not able to eat solid food - 1 Corinthians 3:2**
- A spiritual young child behaved like a mere man - 1 Corinthians 3:3**
- A spiritual young child was limited in his understanding - 1 Corinthians 13:11**
- A spiritual young child was dull of hearing - Hebrews 5:11**
- A spiritual young child needed to relearn the basics - Hebrews 5:12**
- A spiritual young child was unskilled in the word of righteousness - Heb. 5:13**
- A spiritual young child was not mature enough to discern - Hebrews 5:14**

God wanted them to grow up into the head who is Christ

Ephesians 4:15

“But, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head--Christ...”-

- They were to learn to speak the truth**
- They were to learn to speak in love**
- They saw that happen as they grew in all areas**
- They saw that happen as they grew in Christ**
- They recognized that Christ was their head and that they would speak in truth and love as they obeyed Him**

Lessons we can learn from the leadership development of the early church

Do I make it a habit to speak the truth?

Do I make it a habit to speak that truth in love?

God wanted every Christian to become an active, functioning part of the body

Ephesians 4:16

“From whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.”

The various parts of the body made one whole body

The various parts of the body were connected to each other

The various parts of the body were becoming connected in love

required developing healthy relationships between the various Christians
relationships that were controlled by love
relationships that showed acceptance of one another
relationships that demonstrated openness
relationships that were characterized by trust
relationships where communication was direct

The various parts of the body each had something to supply

The various parts of the body worked together through supernatural power

The various parts of the body each had a job to do

the early church body helped each person learn to function effectively
the early church body helped each person learn to function in love
the early church body helped each person learn to depend on
supernatural power

The various parts of the body worked together to cause the body to grow

the body experienced spiritual growth
(growth in depth)
the body experienced numerical growth
(growth in breadth)

The various parts of the body worked to build up each other

The various parts of the body built one another up in love

VI. The early church developed reproducing churches

A. The early church was given a vision for the world

Christ had developed a vision for the next towns

Mark 1:38

“But He said to them, ‘Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also, because for this purpose I have come forth.’”

Christ had developed a vision for all of Galilee

Mark 1:39

“And He was preaching in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and casting out demons.”

Christ had developed a vision for Judea

John 3:22

“After these things Jesus and His disciples came into the land of Judea, and there He remained with them and baptized.”

Christ had developed a vision for Samaria

John 4:35

“Do you not say, ‘There are still four months and then comes the harvest’? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!”

Christ gave a commission to Make Disciples of every ethnic group

Matthew 28:19-20

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’ Amen.”

Christ told the disciples to be witnesses to the ends of the earth

Acts 1:8

“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

**All Christians today also need to develop a vision for the ends of the earth
Christ developed the vision of the disciples by taking them to see the needs!**

B. The early church was a sending church

Philip went with the Gospel to Samaria

Acts 8:5-6

“Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ to them. And the multitudes with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did.”

The church sent Peter and John to help the Samaritans

Acts 8:14

“Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them...”

Other Christians took the Gospel throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria

Acts 9:31

“Then the churches throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and were edified. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, they were multiplied.”

**Churches developed throughout the entire region
The churches had peace and were being built up
The churches were walking in the fear of the Lord
The churches were walking in the comfort of the Holy Spirit
The churches were continuing to multiply**

Other Christians began to take the Gospel to Gentile cities

Acts 11:19-21

“Now those who were scattered after the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to no one but the Jews only. But some of them were men from Cyprus and Cyrene, who, when they had come to Antioch, spoke to the Hellenists, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord.”

The church sent Barnabas to help the Gentiles

Acts 11:22

“Then news of these things came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent out Barnabas to go as far as Antioch.”

The church in Jerusalem sent people to help other people groups!

C. The early church was developing sister churches

The church in Antioch sent a team to develop churches in Cyprus

Acts 13:2-4

“As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’ Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away. So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus.”

Timothy had a good report in several churches in Galatia

Acts 16:1-2

“Then he came to Derbe and Lystra. And behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a certain Jewish woman who believed, but his father was Greek. He was well spoken of by the brethren who were at Lystra and Iconium.”

Churches were being established throughout the region

Acts 16:5

“So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and increased in number daily.”

Paul and a team established the church in Ephesus

Acts 19:8-9

“And he went into the synagogue and spoke boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading concerning the things of the kingdom of God. But when some were hardened and did not believe, but spoke evil of the Way before the multitude, he departed from them and withdrew the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus.”

Churches were then established throughout Asia

Acts 19:10

“And this continued for two years, so that all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.”

Paul wrote letters to churches that new Christians had established

Colossians 2:1

“For I want you to know what a great conflict I have for you and those in Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh...”

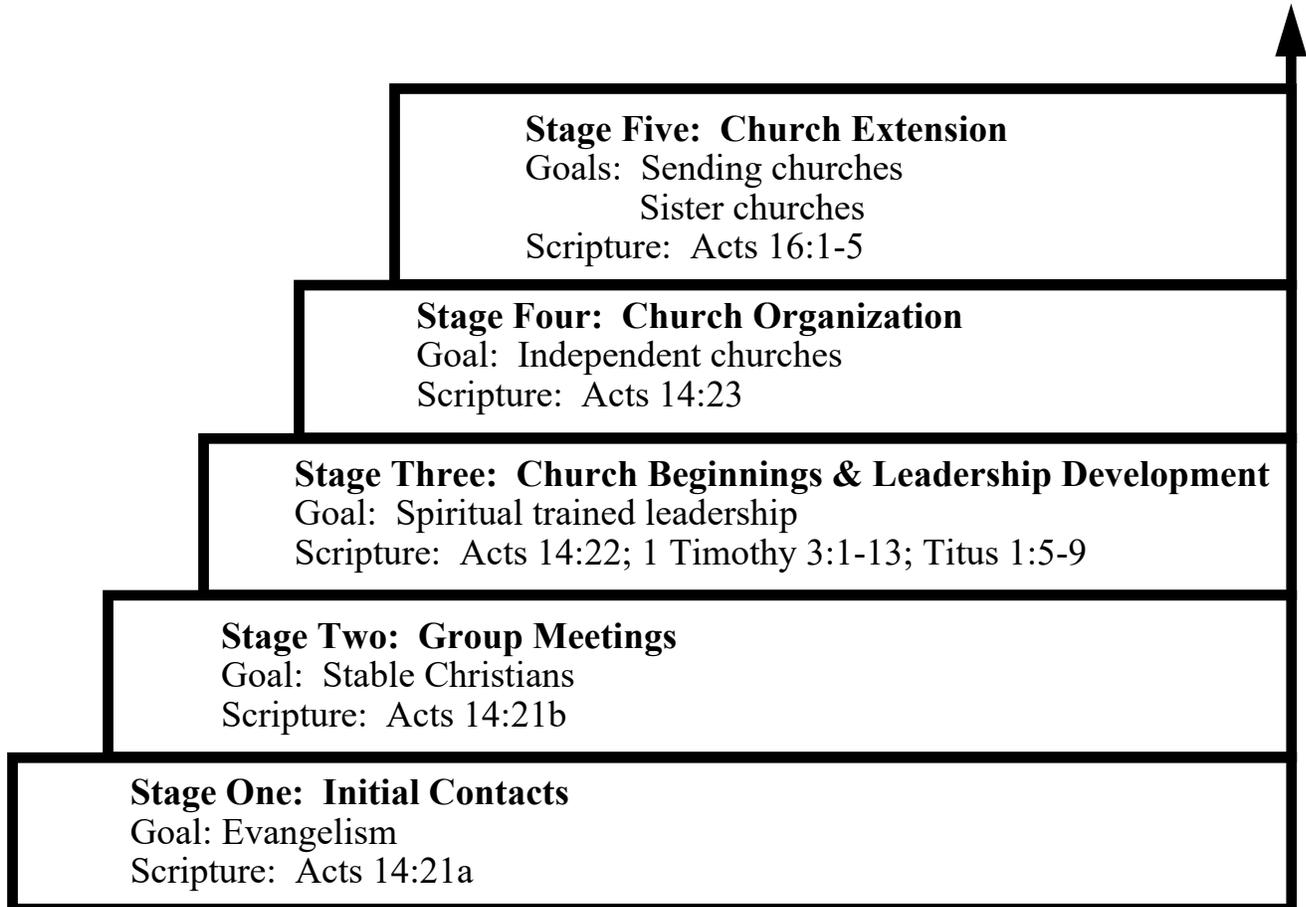
Colossians 4:12-13

“Epaphras, who is one of you, a bondservant of Christ, greets you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. For I bear him witness that he has a great zeal for you, and those who are in Laodicea, and those in Hierapolis.”

D. The early church had a pattern for developing new churches

Biblical Church Development

Each church in Acts had these five stages of development



As each new stage develops, the previous stages must continue for a church to remain healthy!

	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4	Stage 5
Jerusalem	Acts 2:1-41	2:42-47	3:1-5:42	6:1-8	8:4, 14, 11:22
Antioch	Acts 11:19-21	11:22-25	11:26	13:1	13:2-4
Galatia	Acts 14:21a	14:21b	14:22	14:23	16:1-5
Corinth	Acts 18:1-6	18:7-8	18:9-11	18:12-18a	18:18b-19
Ephesus	Acts 18:24-19:7	19:8-9	19:10	19:11-21	19:22, 20:4

E. The early church gives us lessons for today

We need to develop the same vision

A vision to make reproducing disciples

Matthew 28:19-20

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’ Amen.”

2 Timothy 2:2

“And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.”

Paul → Timothy → Faithful men → Others also

A vision to serve Christ by being His servants that He uses to build His church

Matthew 16:18

“And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.”

Acts 1:8

“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

Colossians 4:12-13

“Epaphras, who is one of you, a bondservant of Christ, greets you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. For I bear him witness that he has a great zeal for you, and those who are in Laodicea, and those in Hierapolis.”

Are you willing to be a servant of Christ that He uses to help build His church?

**Christ can use you to either lead a team that is establishing churches
or become a part of a team that is establishing churches!**

Acts 13:2

“As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’”

Acts 20:4

“And Sopater of Berea accompanied him to Asia--also Aristarchus and Secundus of the Thessalonians, and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy, and Tychicus and Trophimus of Asia.”

Acts

This outline is taken from:

Acts 1:8

“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

The Gospel Spreads in Jerusalem

Acts 1:1-7:60

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|----------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| I. The Lord speaks His final words and returns to heaven | 1:1-11 |
| A. Christ appeared over a period of forty days | 1:1-3 |
| B. Christ gives His final instructions | 1:4-8 |
| C. Christ ascends into heaven | 1:9-11 |
| II. The Lord prepares the disciples as they wait for the Holy Spirit | 1:12-26 |
| A. The disciples continue in prayer | 1:12-14 |
| B. The disciples choose a replacement for Judas | 1:15-26 |
| III. The Lord sends the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost | 2:1-47 |
| A. The disciples receive the Holy Spirit | 2:1-4 |
| B. The disciples share the Gospel in many languages | 2:5-13 |
| C. The disciples listen as Peter preaches to the multitude | 2:14-40 |
| D. The disciples see the Lord start the church | 2:41 |
| E. The disciples begin helping others grow | 2:42-47 |
| IV. The Lord causes the number of Christians to multiply | 3:1-5:42 |
| A. Peter and John are given power to heal a crippled man | 3:1-11 |
| B. Peter preaches his second recorded sermon | 3:12-26 |
| C. Peter and John preach to the religious leaders | 4:1-12 |
| D. Peter and John are told to stop preaching about Christ | 4:13-22 |
| E. Peter and John report to the other leaders what happened | 4:23-30 |
| F. Peter and the others continue to minister | 4:31-37 |
| G. Peter rebukes the sin of Ananias and Sapphira | 5:1-11 |
| H. Peter and the other apostles do many miracles | 5:12-16 |
| I. Peter and the other apostles are arrested again | 5:17-28 |
| J. Peter and the other apostles answer the religious leaders | 5:29-39 |
| K. Peter and the other apostles rejoice in persecution | 5:40-42 |
| V. The Lord causes the number of disciples to multiply | 6:1-7:60 |
| A. The Lord multiplies the number of disciples | 6:1-7 |
| B. The Lord uses Stephen in the Greek culture synagogue | 6:8-15 |
| C. The Lord gives Stephen opportunity to preach to the leaders | 7:1-53 |
| D. The Lord welcomes Stephen to heaven | 7:54-60 |

The Gospel Spreads in Judea and Samaria

Acts 8:1-12:25

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|-------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| I. The Lord involves all Christians in spreading the Gospel | 8:1-4 |
| II. The Lord uses Philip to share the Gospel in Samaria | 8:5-25 |

A. Philip shares the Gospel in Samaria	8:5-13
B. Philip is joined by Peter and John	8:14-17
C. Philip sees Peter rebuke Simon, the sorcerer	8:18-24
D. Philip see Peter and John leave to minister throughout Samaria	8:25
III. The Lord uses Philip to share the Gospel with an Ethiopian	8:26-40
A. Philip obeys the Lord and goes to the desert	8:26-28
B. Philip is led by the Holy Spirit in the desert	8:29-34
C. Philip preaches the Gospel to the Ethiopian	8:35-37
D. Philip baptizes the Ethiopian and then preaches in other cities	8:38-40
IV. The Lord draws Saul to Himself	9:1-30
A. Saul meets the Lord on the road to Damascus	9:1-6
B. Saul spends three days in darkness	9:7-9
C. Saul waits as the Lord prepares Ananias to visit him	9:10-16
D. Saul becomes a believer and is baptized	9:17-19
E. Saul preaches the Gospel in Damascus	9:20-22
F. Saul is forced to flee from Damascus	9:23-25
G. Saul preaches the Gospel in Jerusalem	9:26-28
H. Saul is forced to flee to Tarsus	9:29-30
V. The Lord causes the church to spread throughout Judea	9:31-43
A. The Lord multiplies churches throughout the region	9:31
B. The Lord gives Peter a ministry in Lydda and Sharon	9:32-35
C. The Lord gives Peter a ministry in Joppa	9:36-43
VI. The Lord spreads the Gospel to the Gentiles	10:1-11:18
A. The Lord hears the prayer of Cornelius	10:1-8
B. The Lord prepares Peter to take the Gospel to Cornelius	10:9-18
C. The Lord lets Peter meet Cornelius and his friends	10:19-27
D. The Lord has Peter tell why he had come	10:28-33
E. The Lord gives Peter the opportunity to preach to Cornelius	10:34-43
F. The Lord saves the entire group	10:44-48
G. The Lord has to work in the rest of the church	11:1-3
H. The Lord had Peter tell about his vision	11:4-10
I. The Lord had Peter tell how the Lord had prepared Cornelius	11:11-14
J. The Lord had Peter tell how the Gentiles received the Spirit	11:15-16
K. The Lord caused the entire church to rejoice	11:17-18
VII. The Lord spreads the Gospel to Antioch	11:19-30
A. The Lord worked in the lives of many in Antioch	11:19-22
B. The Lord guided the church to send Barnabas to Antioch	11:23-24
C. The Lord added Saul to the team with Barnabas	11:25-26
D. The Lord gave the Christians in Antioch a concern for others	11:27-30
VIII. The Lord protects Peter from Herod	12:1-25
A. Peter was arrested and jailed by Herod	12:1-4
B. Peter was released from the prison by an angel	12:5-10
C. Peter knew where people would be praying	12:11-18
D. Peter left the judgment of Herod to the Lord	12:19-23

E. Peter heard how the Lord was continuing to work

12:24-25

The Gospel Spreads to the Ends of the Earth

Acts 13:1-28:31

- I. The Lord sends Barnabas and Paul to the work to which He has called them (the first missionary trip) 13:1-14:28
- A. Paul and Barnabas were sent by the Lord to go to other areas 13:1-3
 - B. Paul and Barnabas took John Mark with them 13:4-5
 - C. Paul and Barnabas were opposed by Elymas 13:6-13
 - D. Paul and Barnabas shared the Gospel in Antioch of Pisidia 13:14-52
 - E. Paul and Barnabas shared the Gospel in Iconium 14:1-5
 - F. Paul and Barnabas shared the Gospel in Lystra 14:6-19
 - G. Paul and Barnabas established churches in this region 14:20-23
 - H. Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch and reported 14:24-28
- II. The Lord gives guidance for Gentile believers 15:1-35
- A. Paul and Barnabas were challenged by Jews from Judea 15:1-3
 - B. Paul and Barnabas shared how God worked with the Gentiles 15:4-5
 - C. Paul and Barnabas heard Peter tell about Cornelius 15:6-11
 - D. Paul and Barnabas told what the Lord did in their ministry 15:12
 - E. Paul and Barnabas heard the conclusion of James 15:13-21
 - F. Paul and Barnabas are commended by the leaders 15:22-26
 - G. Paul and Barnabas have two other brothers go with them 15:27-35
- III. The Lord sends Paul on a second missionary trip 15:36-18:22
- A. Paul and Barnabas both form ministry teams 15:36-41
 - B. Paul adds Timothy to his team 16:1-5
 - C. Paul and the team learn about closed and opened doors 16:6-10
 - D. Paul and the team minister in Philippi 16:11-40
 - E. Paul and the team minister in Thessalonica 17:1-9
 - F. Paul and the team minister in Berea 17:10-15
 - G. Paul ministers alone in the city of Athens 17:16-34
 - H. Paul and the team minister in Corinth 18:1-17
 - I. Paul returns to Antioch and Jerusalem 18:18-22
- IV. The Lord sends Paul on a third missionary trip 18:23-21:16
- A. Paul strengthened the disciples throughout Galatia 18:23
 - B. Paul had left Aquila and Priscilla to minister in Ephesus 18:24-28
 - C. Paul and the team ministered in Ephesus and in all of Asia 19:1-41
 - D. Paul and the team ministered in Macedonia 20:1-5
 - E. Paul and the team ministered in Troas 20:6-12
 - F. Paul and the team ministered to the leaders of Ephesus 20:13-38
 - G. Paul and the team ministered in Tyre 21:1-6
 - H. Paul and the team ministered in Caesarea 21:7-14
 - I. Paul and the team go to Jerusalem 21:15-16

- V. The Lord protects Paul in Jerusalem
 21:17-23:35
- A. Paul gave a report of what the Lord was doing *21:17-19*
 - B. Paul took a Jewish vow *21:20-26*
 - C. Paul was seized in the temple *21:27-40*
 - D. Paul spoke to the crowd who wanted to kill him *22:1-21*
 - E. Paul heard the crowd call for his death *22:22-29*
 - F. Paul made his defense before the Sanhedrin
22:30-23:10
 - G. Paul heard there was a death plot against him *23:11-22*
 - H. Paul was removed by night to Caesarea *23:23-35*
- VI. The Lord uses Paul in Caesarea *24:1-26:32*
- A. Paul gives his defense before Felix *24:1-27*
 - B. Paul has his case discussed by Festus and Agrippa *25:1-27*
 - C. Paul gives his defense before Agrippa *26:1-32*
- VII. The Lord sends Paul to Rome and uses him there *27:1-28:31*
- A. Paul is sent to Rome by ship *27:1-44*
 - B. Paul shares the Gospel on Melita (Malta) *28:1-10*
 - C. Paul shares the Gospel in Rome *28:11-31*