

Intro: Continue our series titled: This Is Church! We are looking together at the essential elements of Church  
What are the “non-negotiables?” What are the things that MUST be present?

Friday I went to lunch with Pastor Pat from CCF. We decided on Mod pizza. Ours were entirely different...but alike

Crust: (Not round...Ledo's) Sauce (not red...white!) Toppings: Different (Pineapple and Broch!) Baked....

There are a LOT of things that LOOK like church...And a LOT of different ways of doing church...that are STILL Church!  
Here is the key we want to focus on: What are the absolute essentials? What MUST be present (even if done differently)

7 Marks Of A New Testament Church  
Acts 2:42-47 Page 772

- Evangelistic Proclamation
- Christian Baptism
- Apostolic Teaching

#### #4. Genuine Relationships:

*“They devoted themselves to ... the fellowship”*

- Shared life: Acts 2:46 Authentic community Where life is lived together: Not perfectly...But connected...care  
*Back yard Bash*
- Shared ministry: Acts 6:1-7 Taking care of the widows...no one else would!  
*Team development: Community: Some of the best and most meaningful relationships: Shared Ministry*
- Shared responsibility: Acts 13:1-2 Paul and Barnabas commissioned and sent out with blessing!  
*Knowing that you have someone that has your back! Praying for you...Encouraging you...Backstopping you*

Applic: This is the area that is most attractive in many instances to the world we live in

There has been a transition in what people think of Church. It has become: The SHOW!

For many, church is about what happens on Sunday in that hour...

INCLUDES that...but if that is all MISSED THE BEST

True church is not found in the SHOW...It is found in the RELATIONSHIPS

Applic: Friday looking at the projects for CityServe: Question from team:

Ramp for one of our members...elderly lady...very ill...Costly! So costly that it as much as many projects

Easy call for me: James 1:27

*“Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.”*

#### #5. Christ Centered Gatherings.

What we do is all about Jesus! You CANNOT separate Him...who He is, what He did, Why He came...from Church

Illus: A week or two ago Kimberly (receptionist) told me of a phone call she received in the office: Awana!

*“They devoted themselves to the breaking of bread”*

- 3 Examples: ~Communion: “This is my body, broken for you!” 1Cor 11:17-22
- ~Fellowship meal: “When you come together to eat...” 1Cor 11:23-26
- ~Worship: “praising God” Acts 2:47 Temple and Home

Applic: To share a meal is to share life:

That was a part of why Backyard Bash was so very important.

We started it the first summer right after our church had gone through a very difficult time

Relationships were strained...People were struggling...

Summer was coming...and I thought...we NEED to be together.

- 3 Essential Teachings: ~Unity Share a common bond
- ~Gospel proclaimed Share a common belief
- ~Anticipation of Return Share a common hope

Applic: Every wondered why music is such an integral part of worship? Communicates Unity (together) Diversity

When we sing...we are knit together:

When we share a meal...whether LS or a reg meal...we share life

When we study/preach we share a common belief

#### #6. Fervent Prayer:

*“They devoted themselves to prayer”*

We can say a LOT of really good things about Riva...but unfortunately I think this is not necessarily one of them

We pray: But I'm not sure we are “devoted” to prayer: *To be earnest; to persevere; to be constantly diligent; cover details*

- Corporate: Acts 3:1: On way to temple “at time of prayer”
- Acts 12:5-17 (Peter in prison)
- Individual: Acts 10:1-9 (Cornelius)
- Acts 10:9-23 (Peter) Two sides of the same coin!

**Applic:**

Imagine the difference there would be in the church...If Peter had not been praying...or Cornelius  
The Gospel going to the gentiles....God accepting people from every tongue, tribe and nation...  
That is the mark of the Church in Acts!

Old saying: The Church has always advanced on it's knees!

Applic: Considering adding a Contemplative Service (Quite, Reflective, Meditative, )

## 7. Sacrificial Lifestyle

“...selling their possessions and goods they gave to anyone as he had need...”

As soon as we read that, we immediately go to the financial part.

OMG...we are going to get rid of something we have extra...and give to someone in need!!

**Applic:** I will never forget talking with a man from Cuba: Married someone from Glen Arden

Fund raiser...he came to cook...afterwards...standing around talking

Someone said...”How different is it in the states...it must be wonderful for you!

No, I'm hoping to return to Cuba!

Americans don't know how to share...

Cuba: No cooking oil: Neighbor...get some...he shares it with you

US: No cooking oil: Need some...You should go to store and get some!

- **Material:** 4:42-45 Things
- **Personal:** 5:29 “We must obey God rather than man” (Put life on line for gospel)
- **Spiritual:** 9:15: Paul “My chosen instrument...take my name to gentiles...  
*I will show him how much he must suffer (Personal life offered)*  
10:27-29 Peter I was against...I came without objection (Personal change via prayer)

**Applic:** Surplus Vs Sacrificial lifestyle: God, I'm going to give you what I have left over

**Surplus:** Time Energy Finances Talents Effort

**Sacrificial:** God...I'm giving to YOU first...and if it costs me something...my lifestyle is limited

If my choices are fewer, if my options are less...If my abundance is diminished...OK

**Applic:** Where is the NEXT Generation of Pastor's and Missionaries coming from?

We are teaching our children to aspire to be the next Michael Jorday, Tiger Woods, Michael Phelps

Who and When and Where are we challenging our Children and our Teens to give their life to ministry?

When are they going to be challenged to live a lifestyle that says...God is first

- Do they see that in our church
- Do they see that in our personal lives
- Do they see that in school, workplace, neighborhood?

**CONCLUSION:** 7 Marks: We do well with some...Not so well with others!

How do YOU do with these?

Because...1 Cor: The Church is a body...and we are all members (parts of it)

One part does well...all do well

One part suffers, all suffer

In the next 8 – 10 weeks...look at each of these 7 in detail

Be Like Peter:

Be Like Paul:

Lay Down Your rights...Pick up your Responsibility...Follow Him