

NEXT LEVEL - JERUSALEM

APRIL 14: Read Acts 6:8-7:60.

(Consider joining the PRAYER GATHERING tonight with *the Well* at 6:30 pm.)

"When the cause of an illness gets into one's body, whether or not anyone knows where it comes from, or in what member it has lodged, the body is made ill.

This is the appropriate metaphor for the Christian community.

Every member serves the whole body, contributing either to its health or to its ruin, for we are members of one body not only when we want to be, but in our whole existence." D. Bonhoeffer

For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. Romans 12:4-5 ESV

What are the implications for each of us (as believers) being members of one body, not only when we want to be, but for our whole existence?

PRAY: Father, keep my focus steadfast on the things You want me to do for Your kingdom. Thanks for those who have served before me, beside me, and behind me. Help me remember *daily* that I contribute to Your Church, and give me wisdom and strength to choose what's good, healthy, and right.

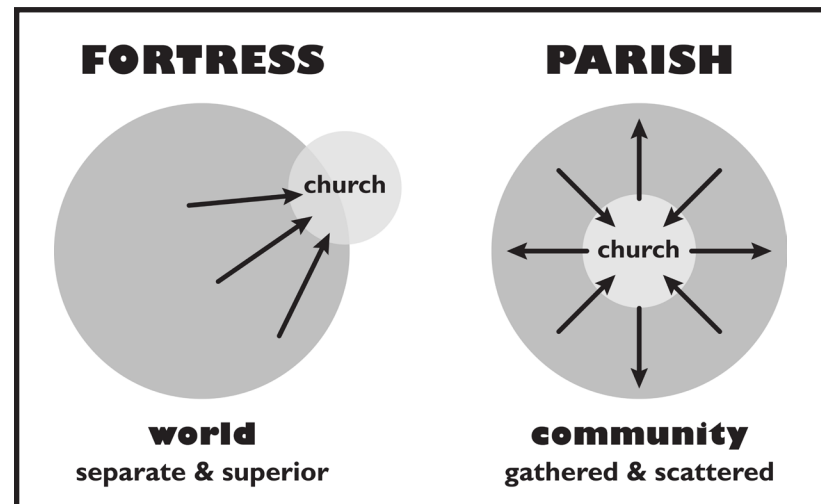
APRIL 15: Read Acts 8.

The Local Church is the Hope of the World

What thoughts come to mind as you read this statement?

Describe what began to happen to the local church in Acts 8.

Which concept best describes how the early Christians responded to their being persecuted and scattered?



Did they fortress up and seek to seclude and secure themselves?

Did they enter in and bring hope? How's your life affected today by their actions 2000 years ago? How will your actions today affect your family, your community, and future generations tomorrow?

PRAY: Help me see that we, as the local church, are the hope of the world. As a member of this body, allow me to fulfill my role in being and bringing hope to others. Work in my heart today. Open my eyes to see the next step I can take to grow more like Jesus in faithfulness and compassion.

APRIL 16: Read Acts 9:1-31.

Review April 14. Each of us, by the choices we make and the way we live, contributes (or extracts) the hope that IS the church. *How can we live up to this responsibility yet find our own purpose within our local church?*

The church of Jerusalem devoted themselves to FIVE things:

GROW - BELONG - SERVE - WORSHIP - SHARE

GROW They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching... Acts 2:42a

BELONG ...and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Acts 2:42b

devote: to give up or appropriate to or to concentrate on a particular pursuit, occupation, or purpose.

What's the state of your devotion to growth - knowing, understanding, and living God's word - in your life? Think about your experience within your community of faith. Does it feel like you're a member of a living body? Are you part of real small group life? If not, what keeps you from taking that step?

PRAY: Father, thanks for providing people who walk alongside me in knowing and becoming like Jesus. Show me the steps to grow in knowing You in such a way that I live differently. Thanks for my Jacob's Well faith community. Give wisdom and guidance to the leaders at Jacob's Well as they continue to seek Your will. (Think about your small group and pray for each person by name.)

APRIL 17: Read Acts 9:32-10:48. **SERVE** - Acts 2:43-45

Look at DEVOTE's definition above. *Is your commitment to serving others something you've put concentrated effort into and actually pursued? Why/why not?*

Re-read Romans 12:4-5. *How might you better serve THE WHOLE BODY?*

PRAY: Holy God, thanks for making me a member of the Body of Christ. Jesus, create in me a heart which longs to serve thereby contributing to the Body's health. Give me Your eyes to see needs and Your heart to serve here and around the world.

APRIL 18: Read Acts 11. **WORSHIP** - Acts 2:46

Declaring God's glory, praising Him, acknowledging His holiness, and in all humility surrendering every glory, honor, and praise to be worthy of Him alone.

Are you devoted to worship? In what ways do you intentionally pursue worship?

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God - this is your true and proper worship. Romans 12:1

PRAY: Lord, bring unity to Your body in the Chippewa Valley. We want to be holy and pleasing in Your sight. Open my eyes to the glory You reveal every day. I want to bring honor and praise to You. You alone are worthy.

APRIL 19: Read Acts 12. **SHARE** - Acts 2:47

Connecting God's story to my story, sharing the hope that I've been given to others.

What's your story? Think about the stories you've read in Acts 1-12. Peter, John, Joseph from Cyprus, Stephen, Cornelius, Saul, Barnabas... Mary, Rhoda, each unique, but connected through God's story. If your story were included, what would it say?

Take time to write out a few verses or a chapter *telling* your story.

PRAY: Father, make me bold! Give me the courage to proclaim Your kingdom, and share Your story through mine. Give me words of hope without hindrance.

APRIL 20: Read Acts 13-14.

PRAY: I want to be Your hands and feet and Your voice every time I speak. I give my life away for Your kingdom's sake. Send me out - to my family, community, and my world - to make You known.