

ORDINARY

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Pastor's Introduction

What does “ordinary” church look like? What sort of things should be happening when the church gathers? What is ordinary? When many people read the account of the creation of the New Testament church in Acts, we consider what was happening to be extraordinary. It certainly was incredible! As the church began, it was a place where the Lord was adding to their number daily. It was a place of intense fellowship and commitment to the teaching of the Word. Oftentimes, when we read the account of the church in Acts, we say, “That’s how church should be!” But why is that not ordinary? I contend that the Bible is God’s revelation of Himself to us. It is how we know Him. If Acts 2 is God’s introduction of His church to us, then why would He do it in a way that we could never replicate? I think that what we see happening in Acts 2 isn’t supposed to be extraordinary—it’s supposed to be ordinary.

Join us as we enter into a new sermon series called “Ordinary” in which we examine the launch of the New Testament church. Over these next nine weeks, we will look at how God was working in the early church and how He still desires to work in the church today!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John T. Green II". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ed. TG



Participant Guide for September 12, 2021

Baptism

Acts 2:41

Highlight

Which verse(s) spoke to you this week?

Explain

Sermon and discussion notes:



Apply

1. How would you explain baptism to an unbeliever?
2. When the people heard Peter's sermon that Luke records earlier in the chapter, Luke says that the people were "pierced to the heart" and asked, "what should they do?" Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized" (2:37-38). What does Luke mean when he says the people were "pierced to the heart?" What does that look like? Why is heart change necessary before someone can submit to repentance and baptism?
3. Is there a link between the people being pierced to the heart and the people accepting the message? How so? Do we have a role in piercing the heart of others? In what way?
4. Repentance is a precursor to baptism. We hear this word a lot in church, but what is repentance? How is repentance different from guilt or regret?
5. Is Baptism necessary for salvation? What passages in the Bible support your answer? What does baptism represent? What is the purpose of baptism?
6. We see a number like 3000 people added to their number. Why do you think the response was so powerful? Read Acts 2:14-36: Is there anything overly profound or special about Peter's sermon? Is that number unfathomable to us? Has the power of the gospel changed?

Respond

→ **Challenge - What are you going to do in response to the truth communicated today?**

- ◆ Do you remember your baptism? This week, reflect on what led you to follow Christ in baptism and how your life changed.

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Participant Guide for September 19, 2021

Scripture Reading

Acts 2:42

Highlight

Which verse(s) spoke to you this week?

Explain

Sermon and discussion notes:



Apply

1. The next few weeks describe the activities to which the early church devoted themselves. Each week we'll start by talking about how each aspect plays out in our church. In what ways does our church live out teaching?
2. Is there anything special about the order of the activities listed in verse 42? Why do you think "teaching" is first on the list? What does this order say about the priorities of the early church? Where does teaching fall on our priority list?
3. Whose responsibility is it to teach? Do you believe that it was exclusively the apostles who were doing the teaching, or were they passing on what they learned from Jesus and leading others to teach?
4. How did Bible reading contribute to the life of an Old Testament Jew? How did Bible reading contribute to Jesus' life? In what ways does Bible reading contribute to the Christian life?
5. Luke writes that the church devoted itself to these things. Here the word "devoted" means to stick by or be close. It can also mean to persist in something. Why did the early church need to devote themselves to the teaching of the apostles? Do we devote ourselves to teaching in the same way? In what ways do we and don't we devote ourselves? How can we encourage each other in this way?

Respond

→ **Challenge - What are you going to do in response to the truth communicated today?**

- ◆ Is there anyone among the group who may feel the call to teach? Have you been sensing the call to lead a group? This week pray for opportunities to teach and that you will be faithful to follow through.

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Participant Guide for September 26, 2021

Commitment to Church

Acts 2:42

Highlight

Which verse(s) spoke to you this week?

Explain

Sermon and discussion notes:



Apply

1. As we mentioned last week, verse 42 describes the activities of the early church. Each week we'll start by talking about how each aspect plays out in our church. In what ways does our church live out fellowship?
2. What thoughts and ideas come to mind when you hear the word fellowship? Are *fellowship* and *breaking bread* "churchy" words? How would you explain what fellowship and breaking bread means to someone who does not attend church?
3. In Greek, the word fellowship means to hold something in common. What did the early church hold in common? How does the gospel hold the church together in fellowship? What does it mean for the church to devote themselves to fellowship?
4. Have you ever thought about attending church as a commitment to that church? If your faith displays a commitment to God, how do you display your commitment to your church?
5. Read 1 John 1:3: What does John mean when he says that our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ?" How does our fellowship with God affect our fellowship with people? What are the dangers of not welcoming others into our fellowship? What do we do to avoid this pitfall?
6. A commitment to the church was of great importance to the early church. In what ways is our class demonstrating the importance of this commitment?

Respond

→ **Challenge - What are you going to do in response to the truth communicated today?**

- ◆ How are you doing when it comes to your commitment to the church? If you showed the same level of commitment to your friends or family that you show to the church, how would you be doing?

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Participant Guide for October 3, 2021

Prayer

Acts 2:42

Highlight

Which verse(s) spoke to you this week?

Explain

Sermon and discussion notes:



Apply

1. As we have mentioned the past few weeks, verse 42 describes the activities of the early church. For this last week, we'll start by talking about the final aspect that plays out in our church. In what ways does our church live out a devotion to prayer?
2. What role do you see prayer playing in our church? Would you consider our church a praying church? What about our class? How are we doing at devoting ourselves to prayer?
3. A devotion to prayer would assume that it is of utmost importance. Why was prayer important to the early church? What do you think prayer looked like for them?
4. Perhaps the most well-known prayer, even among non-Christians, is the Lord's Prayer. Read Luke 11:2-4: What are the critical elements of Jesus' model prayer? How can we use that as a template for our prayers?
5. It is said that if you fail to plan, you plan to fail. Do you need a plan for prayer? Did Jesus have a plan or routine? What did he do? Do you have a plan? If so, what is it? If not, how do you get there?
6. The past few weeks, we have looked at critical church activities. What happens if any of them are missing? Why were these four elements essential to the early church? Has anything changed since then? In other words, if it was necessary then, why should it also be necessary now? How do we, as a class, ensure that we're holding each other accountable in each of these areas?

Respond

→ **Challenge - What are you going to do in response to the truth communicated today?**

- ◆ Question 5 spoke of a prayer plan. What is your plan?

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Participant Guide for October 10, 2021

Movement

Acts 2:43

Highlight

Which verse(s) spoke to you this week?

Explain

Sermon and discussion notes:



Apply

- Whenever you hear the word “movement” in the Bible, what comes to mind?
- We see that the text says “everyone” was filled with awe because of what happened. Who is the “everyone” to which the text was referring? Why are they filled with awe?
- Whenever the people of this time would hear of “signs and wonders,” they would have thought back to Old Testament times, such as God using signs and wonders to bring the Israelites out of Egypt. As Jeremiah 32:20 says, He used them to “make a name for himself.” What emotions would this have stirred up within the first-century people?
- If we were to see someone perform a miracle today, we would likely give attention and kudos to the person who did the miracle. However, it is important to notice that this passage says that the miracles were being performed *through* the apostles and not *by* the apostles. Why is it important to know that miracles are meant to cause movement in our lives and point us back to the message of Jesus and not to glorify the messenger?
- Some church denominations have different opinions of what it means to be “filled with the Holy Spirit.” Charismatic and Pentecostal churches believe that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is a separate event from salvation. Baptists, historically, do not agree with this position. What do you believe and why?
- Being filled with the Holy Spirit often comes because we are “filled with awe” of Him. It causes movement within us. What does it mean to be “filled with the Holy Spirit?”

Respond

- **Challenge - What are you going to do in response to the truth communicated today?**
- ◆ In Acts 13, we see an instance whenever Paul is “filled with the Holy Spirit” and was able to stand in boldness for what he was called to do. This week, how can you stand in boldness in your life as you strive to live for Jesus?



Participant Guide for October 17, 2021

Generosity

Acts 2:44-45

Highlight

Which verse(s) spoke to you this week?

Explain

Sermon and discussion notes:



Apply

1. What does it mean to be generous? Describe a time when you displayed extraordinary generosity, or someone else showed extraordinary generosity to you.
2. What drove the church toward generosity? How had God been generous to the church? How did God's generosity affect their generosity? How should it affect ours?
3. Some Bible verses are descriptive; they described what someone did. Some Bible verses are prescriptive; they tell what she should do. In which category do you believe verse 45 falls? Explain your answer.
4. Read Matthew 19:16-21: What did Jesus say about generosity in verse 21? What was the rich young ruler's response? Why did Jesus' call to generosity grieve him?
5. Read Acts 20:35: Many of us have heard this phrase before. What is the context of this verse in Acts? What is the significance of this verse? How does it speak to generosity?
6. What is our class doing to display generosity to our community? Describe some ways that you can show generosity in the same manner as the early church.

Respond

→ **Challenge - What are you going to do in response to the truth communicated today?**

- ◆ Would you consider yourself a generous person? This week, reflect on the ways you show generosity to others and ways that you can be more generous!

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You don't have to be rich to be generous. You have to be generous to be generous.

Dr. Johnny Hunt, NAMB



Participant Guide for October 24, 2021

Hospitality

Acts 2:46

Highlight

Which verse(s) spoke to you this week?

Explain

Sermon and discussion notes:



Apply

1. What is your favorite meal? Why is food one of the first things that comes to mind when we think of being hospitable?
2. What else do you think of when you hear the word “hospitality?” What specific people come to mind? Is there anyone you know who is exceptionally hospitable? What do they do well?
3. In Acts 2:46, we see that the Christians “Every day they devoted themselves” to being together. In our culture today, everyday devotions consist of our individual “quiet time.” How should our individual “quiet time” motivate us to be with others?
4. What obstacles keep us from being hospitable to others? How do we overcome these obstacles?
5. “They ate their food with joyful and sincere hearts.” Do you consider yourself to be hospitable? How so? Are there any neighbors the Holy Spirit has laid on your heart to show hospitality? If you don’t know your neighbors, how could you initiate hospitality?

Respond

→ **Challenge - What are you going to do in response to the truth communicated today?**

- ◆ What members at our church bring you joy through eating together? Is there anyone who comes to mind that you may want to get to know better? This week, consider ways that you can serve others through your hospitality.

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Participant Guide for October 31, 2021

Community Impact

Acts 2:47

Highlight

Which verse(s) spoke to you this week?

Explain

Sermon and discussion notes:



Apply

1. What would you look for in a church that would cause you to want to join in and be a member of that specific congregation?
2. True worship of God is something that comes from within and will be evident in our countenance, our words, and our actions. There are many outward expressions of praising God that are contagious and draw others into a heart of worship. How important is the worship service to first-time visitors? What do you think it is like for first-time guests to visit our church? How is it different for believers and non-believers?
3. What would it take for us to enjoy the goodwill of other believers, and how do our relationships with one another impact those yet to believe?

John 13:34-35 John 13:34-35 (NLT)” So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. **Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples.”**

Jesus, the one who made a shoreline breakfast for those who had recently betrayed him during his arrest and crucifixion, was basically telling us to love like Him, and the result would be that others will want what we’ve got. If we love others with patience, devoid of criticism and self-seeking attention, it will give evidence that all we claim to believe is real. People will find the significance and security they are looking for in Christ in an environment that is slow to anger and quick to forgive.

4. A healthy Christian community attracts people to Jesus. The Jerusalem church’s zeal for worship and brotherly love was contagious. What are you doing to make your church the kind of place that will attract others to faith in Jesus?

Respond

→ **Challenge - What are you going to do in response to the truth communicated today?**

- ◆ And thus is the message of the church: The gospel is carried to imperfect people by imperfect people. Then those imperfect people are to band together to help one another grow to spiritual maturity. This week, prepare for next Sunday’s sermon by considering what it means to be saved.



Participant Guide for November 7, 2021

Salvation

Acts 2:47

Highlight

Which verse(s) spoke to you this week?

Explain

Sermon and discussion notes:



Apply

1. The end of the passage says, “those who were being saved.” Discuss what it means to be saved. The word in Greek is *sozos*, meaning to be rescued. What constitutes salvation to a believer?
2. Most think of what we are being saved from, the penalty of our sins, and the power of sin over us; but it is just as important for the Kingdom work of the Great Commission to discuss what we are being saved to. Read Ephesians 2:8-10 and discuss why good works, while not required for salvation, are an inseparable result and evidence of salvation. How does James further drive home this concept in James 2:14-26?
3. How can the resulting works of salvation impact the community around us?
4. In Acts 2:37-40, after Peter’s clear proclamation of Jesus being Lord and Messiah, the people were “pierced to the heart.” Read their question at the end of v.37. They knew this revelation of Messianic truth demanded action. Peter’s response in v.38-40 was the spiritual foundation for the church’s success, then and now. Why is salvation the only hope of God’s will being done “on earth as it is in heaven?”
5. The end of v.47 is the supernatural result of a church living out an “Ordinary” lifestyle of witnessing and love. What specific things can your group do today and in the weeks ahead to live an ordinary life of the New Testament, Great Commission, Great Commandment church? What evidence should you be expecting and tracking to be accountable to the mission of Being Disciples and Making Disciples?

Respond

→ **Challenge - What are you going to do in response to the truth communicated today?**

- ◆ Find someone this week to share the good news of the Gospel with and invite them to church this Sunday. Remember, to be obedient in our commission, it is necessary to share the Good News. Then you can leave it up to the Holy Spirit to work in the heart of those who hear.

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