

## Upcoming Events

**Business Meeting:** November 10

**Veterans' Day:** November 11

**Ladies Bible Class:** November 17

**Budget preparations** for 2020

**Thanksgiving Day:** November 21

**Panera Bread Open Bible Study:** Tuesdays at 6:00 p.m.

**Hebrews class** Mondays at 10:00 a.m.

## Gospel Meeting Starts Today!

### Welcome to Jeremy Hodges

Also note Bulletin Article today by Jeremy

### November Birthdays

2 Mike Atkins      6 Ashley Tanner      10 Daniel Brown  
18 Emilia Letalu      27 Lupita Guzman

### November Anniversaries

2 Shannon & Susan Hudson

# Indio Informer

Vol. 30 No. 44

November 3, 2019

## The Jerusalem Model for Church Growth

By Jeremy Hodges

When we encourage our children to look at famous examples because they can sometimes choose traits that are either inappropriate to desire, or they may choose things that are impossible. None of our children who look up to a sports star as an example should be trying to live a life like they do, and most of them are never going to possess their physical traits and prowess.

Similarly, when we look at churches in the New Testament as examples, we need to choose which traits we are going to emulate today. We certainly do not want to imitate their problems (I'm looking at you, Corinth), and there are some situations that are frankly impossible. We lack many of the common benefits and blessings that many of the early churches had and must be realistic about those differences.

Looking to the church in Jerusalem is especially difficult, because the situation was so specific to God's plan that it allowed for an explosion of growth and instantaneous maturity. The gospel was preached to hundreds of thousands of people (Acts 2:5) who were anticipating the Messiah, and the message was accompanied by miraculous signs and wonders (Acts 2:33). They were meeting in the temple and able to move about freely through God's help (Acts 5:25, 42), and the persecution by the Sanhedrin was curtailed for a while (Acts 5:19-21). We simply cannot expect to garner three thousand souls in one preaching session, even if we have twelve multilingual speakers.

However, there are many things that the church in Jerusalem did that not only helped them continue to grow and foster a sense of community but grow in the face of terrible persecution and trial. What the saints did immediately after being baptized must be an example to us, if we want to have some of the blessings they did (Acts 2:37-47). We so often look at the second chapter of Acts to

### Regular Meeting Times

Sunday.....9:45 a.m.  
Sunday.....10:45 a.m.  
Sunday.....6:00 p.m.  
Wednesday.....7:00 p.m.

**Preacher:**  
Mike McKnight

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get people into the water, but we rarely teach them to continue to follow that example when they come up out of it. What lessons can we learn from that early church that will still help us today?

**They were devoted to the apostles' doctrine.** The first church continued to study together. Getting people to study together in many churches is near impossible because we live lives that are focused on so many other things. Between work, school, ball games, school plays, business trips, hitting the gym, or making yoga classes, most people's schedules are completely full. How much stronger would we be as a church if we paid more attention to biblical doctrine? What might happen if we actually cracked open our bibles with other believers on a day other than Sunday or Wednesday? What would happen if we rearranged our schedules to better reflect our true Lord and Savior? The answer is surely that our faith would be stronger.

**They were engaged in fellowship, the breaking of bread, and prayer.** Not only are bible classes outside of church services hard to come by, but many people can barely be bothered to attend the weekly church services. Many cannot see the growth that Jesus expects to see in their lives, because His church and their communal worship is not a priority. The hard reality is that people's true values are demonstrated by their choices, and so many will choose to value other activities above the weekly meeting of the saints.

**They met with one another daily.** They ate with one another in each other's houses. They were truly a community and acted like it. Jerusalem was a huge church by our standards, but people didn't get lost in the shuffle, or actively look to disappear in a sea of faces. They made it their business to know their fellow saints and spend quality time with them in their homes. We may not have the apostles accomplishing amazing miracles, but we are often not doing the things that we could that would allow us to grow like the true church of Christ.

It is becoming more and more common for churches to have fewer services, and it seems that every difficulty churches face, the answer seems to be increasingly to meet less and less. What if we faced our challenges with more meetings, and more opportunities

for study? We have these examples preserved for us in Scripture, but it is up to us to make those examples useful by putting them into action.

## **The absolute of Christian worship**

Excerpts from article by David Hersey

On one occasion during Jesus' ministry on earth, He and His disciples passed through Samaria. On this occasion, Jesus stopped at Jacob's well to get a drink of water while His disciples went to buy food. While there, a Samaritan woman came to draw water and she had a discussion with Jesus. During this discussion, she brought up the subject of worship. Jesus made a statement to her at that time regarding true worshipers which we are going to focus on for this lesson. Turning to John 4:23-24, we read, "*But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.*"

Those who worship God must worship in spirit and in truth. The word 'must' is what we call an auxiliary verb. It means to be bound by an imperative requirement. The Bible teaches us that faith is a must (Hebrews 11:6), and repentance is a must (Luke 13:3). When the word 'must' is used, the consequences for failure or refusal to comply are spiritual death. Those who fail to have faith will be condemned, likewise, those who fail to worship in spirit and in truth will suffer the same fate.

The word "must" modifies three elements which constitute Christian worship. The word 'must' modifies the object of worship – Him. We 'must' worship God. Consider the words of Jesus in Matthew 4:10, "*Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.*"

The word 'Must' modifies the attitude of worship which is spirit and the standard of worship which is truth. Our worship therefore must be to God, it must be in spirit and it must be in truth. Thus, the object, the attitude, and the standard of Christian worship are vital – they are a must!