

A banner with a green and yellow background featuring a field of grass. The text is centered and reads: DR. LAMAR E. SMITH CENTER FOR EVANGELISM & CHURCH GROWTH.

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EVANGELISM & CHURCH GROWTH

I have rows and rows of books on developing, growing, expanding the life and mission of a church, as well as many online resources. I have attended almost every type of workshop and seminar aimed at helping the church reach its highest potential, and I know there is value in most of them. But, I also see the Bible and the story of the early church as the best prescription for a healthy church.

Acts 2:42-47, the story of the first church birthed at Pentecost, offers a few of those prescriptions:

- They devoted themselves to the Apostles' teachings (the Bible).
- They devoted themselves to fellowship (love).
- They devoted themselves to the breaking of bread (the sacraments and community).
- They devoted themselves to prayer (the place where miracles are born).

The Bible goes on to say that the people around the church were filled with awe at what was happening in the lives of the people in that church.

- The church was generous.
- The church was happy and joyful.
- The church praised God.
- The people saw the Holy Spirit in the church.

"And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved."

(first-century church growth)

Is church as simple as the Bible, love, sacraments, community, and prayer? Probably not, but that does not preclude these simple practices as essential.

Maybe, if I lead my church to focus more on the Bible, pray together more seriously, gather in a more focused community that is centered in the sacrifice and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and build around a pattern of loving God and neighbor, just maybe that might be a solid enough foundation for my church to begin a movement to its highest potential.

Jesus, generosity, joy, community, the Bible, prayer, love, praise, and God adding daily those who were being saved. Sounds good to me.