

DIGGING DEEPER**“WHAT’S THE BIG IDEA?”—WEEK 1****OPENING QUESTION:**

If you grew up in a church, share a little bit about that experience—what did you remember liking/not liking about the Body of Christ? If you did not grow up in a church, what was your perception of church then? Now?

**ACTS 2:41-47 (NIV)**

⁴¹ Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day. ⁴² They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. ⁴³ Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. ⁴⁴ All the believers were together and had everything in common. ⁴⁵ Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. ⁴⁶ Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved."

OBSERVATION QUESTIONS:

1. What is the context of this passage? Take a look at the rest of chapter 2 and observe who, what, where, when and why leading up to our text?
2. What is 'his message'? What does it mean to be "baptized"? What is an apostle? A believer? How many people were added to their number?
3. What types of experiences and commitments 'marked' this new community of Christ? What affect was their community having on the larger community of their day?

Discussion Questions:

1. People sometimes have a problem with the so-called “mega-Church” or “church growth” movement and the numbers of people and the numbers of people connected to them. But, here...the Holy Spirit brings 3000 people into the church in one day!! Clearly the Lord is not opposed to large churches/fellowships. Small or large, if they are healthy, He definitely wants them to grow. Why do you think people like/dislike such large fellowships/growth movements today?
2. Do you believe such a life-giving, society-affecting communities of the Holy Spirit are still possible today? If not, why not? If so, why are so many churches in America having so little impact on our culture and our world? Why don't we see thousands coming to Christ here and now?
3. What role should the following discipleship habits have in our lives today? What could you/your group do to help foster these habits in your lives and throughout our church?
 - Devoting ourselves to Biblical teaching and the study of the Word
 - Prayer (personal and corporate)
 - Meeting daily in our 'Temple Courts' (not forsaking the assembly)
 - 'Breaking bread' and eating/fellowshipping with one another in our homes
 - Sacrificially sharing our personal resources with those in need
 - Giving praise/Sharing testimonies of God's awesome power and presence
 - Enjoying favor with people outside the church
 - Seeing people come to Christ on a daily basis

PRAYER NOTES FROM PASTOR JAMES

- *Pray for renewed biblical commitments within our congregation! Especially for an evangelistic heart for the lost and the least!*
- *Pray for our 2008 Ministry initiatives, changes, and finances. Pray that the Lord leads, guides, and provides!*
- *Pray for our Building and Development team as we put the finishing touches on the BHB architectural plans, financing, and begin the process towards groundbreaking this spring!*
- *Pray for healthy hearts, healthy bodies, healthy relationships, and healthy small groups in 2008!*