

Both/And

Embracing Our Identity as a Gathered and Scattered Gospel Community

Big Idea

In the midst of this COVID season, we have been given an opportunity to recalibrate our patterns of behavior and embrace that we are people who are called together (Gathered) and we are a people who are sent (Scattered) for the sake of the Gospel.

Main Passage

Acts 2:42-47

Teaching

Acts: 2:42-47

- The Acts 2 community is calibrating for the first time.
- Post-Pentecost-Chaos into order in a short amount of time.
- They were starting from scratch, following the teachings of Christ and the Apostles.
- The Acts 2 church participated and modeled what a Gathered and Scattered church looked like.
 - Gathered Activities:
 - Gathering at the Synagogue
 - Corporate prayer gatherings at set times in the Temple
 - The gathering and delivery of shared goods
 - Worship/praising God
 - Breaking of bread - Eucharist
 - Scattered Activities:
 - Breaking bread together in homes, sharing meals
 - Sincere and glad hearts; single-minded simplicity towards generosity
 - Prayer both individually and with their "extended family"
 - Receiving teaching
 - The community life of the Acts 2 church was complete and comprehensive!
 - Care for new believers
 - Elements of worship
 - Evangelistic outreach
 - Caring for the material needs of each other
 - Oneness in spirit
 - Joyful, informal fellowship

Application

1. Remember: We are the Church; we don't simply go to church and participate in church activities.
 - As the Church, we have unique markings:
 - We are a radically hospitable people
 - We strive to live life through the lens of community and not alone
 - We are devoted to fellowship
 - We are committed to allowing the Gospel to permeate our lives in every way
 - We are committed to being disciple makers

2. As the Church, we are invited into life that is Gathered and Scattered.
 - Ralph Winter - There are two structures for God's Redemptive Mission: A gathering structure and a scattering structure
 - What are some Gathered Structures?
 - What are some Scattered Structures?
 - We have had so many aspects of our typical gathering structures taken by Covid
 - Let's grieve those
 - But perhaps there is also an invitation for us?
 - Are we being invited more fully into a scattered life?
 - What if this is an invitation into recalibration?

3. A lens in which to organize our sent, scattered living: **the Oikos Principle**
 - Oikos translates as "extended family"
 - Oikos is the primary organizing principle of the church, an "extended family on mission" that contains people who believe, people who are searching and people who do not yet believe
 - We all have 8-15 people in our lives that we are connected to, have relationships with who don't know the Gospel, or don't have a church community that they are part of
 - This isn't to force, or some kind of bait and switch, but rather a lens for how to view natural connections we already have in our life
 - Go home and pray for your 8-15
 - Go home and write down your 8-15
 - Go home and start to be the church to your 8-15

Final Question:

Where do you need to re-calibrate your life to more fully live into the Both/And of the Gathered and Scattered church?

Sources for Sermon:

1. *NIV Application Commentary, Acts: Ajith Fernando, 1998*
2. *The New Testament and the People of God, N.T. Wright, 1992*
3. *And: The Gathered and Scattered Church, Hugh Halter and Matt Smay, 2010*
4. *Not My Church, Tom Mercer, 2019*

Oikos Principle Prayer Card: https://694b0fde-0d24-4bcd-847c-82fbbb95496a.filesusr.com/ugd/a52586_6409c761751d4477a26b367a2ba6b48a.pdf