

# Spirit Inspired Community and Culture

Sam D. Mathews

**Introduction:** Talk about the importance of **Community/Body of Christ**.

- We see that the God we serve is three in one (Gen 1:26), God is a community in Himself.
- We were created in His image, so we are called to community. It's our purpose. Funniest verse: Everything was GOOD in the beginning, God was praising Himself yet in Gen 2:18 - It is NOT GOOD for a man to be ALONE.
- We were destined and designed not to be lonely, isolated etc.
- We are the church of Jesus, that's me, you and everyone in this House. We are His bride and Jesus our bridegroom
- Now, in light of being called a community and in fellowship, this topic becomes so important isn't it? Jesus says to Seek ye first the Kingdom. It becomes part of are journey and destiny. Now let's transition to how we're supposed to operate together. We will look to the Bible and observe a few insights from the Book of the **Acts of the Apostles**.

**Context:** We'll be looking at a few observations on what a community/body of Spirit led people look like- from the Book of **Acts of the Apostles**. This book written right after the Gospels is a classic in my view for this particular topic. Jesus promised the gift of the Holy Spirit in John 14:16 and in John 14:18 he says - I will not leave you, I will come to you. Now when this promise was fulfilled in the Book of Acts. We see the how the early believers after the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:4), flowed together in the spirit.

Here are a few observations for us to ponder, meditate, learn and put into action:

## 1. UNITY in the Spirit

- Right from the very beginning we see that the early believers were united always, even before the pouring of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:14)
- They were together, sharing all things (Acts 2:42,44)
- They were with one heart & one mind (Acts 4:32)
- The Lord Jesus Himself talked about unity, love and being together. In fact the two commands He gave us as a Body talk about it! (Matthew 22:36-40 ; John 13:34)
- Unity is the platform for God to move, each one of us as individuals are different and carry something that God has placed within us. Division makes us weak & powerless. Let us learn to love and be as ONE body for God to release His purpose through us.

- The enemy wants disunity, slander, strife in the Body. We need to guard our heart against the viles and plans of the enemy, to stay strong together in the Kingdom.

## 2. Kingdom Minded

- Acts 2:21 ; they were always thinking about people and the Body of Christ
- Acts 2:38-41 ; they made it a mission to lead people to Christ and adding daily to the Kingdom. They made the Great commission their very mission and not just a suggestion.
- They met **constantly**, they were **committed** to the Body (Acts 2:46) - edified the Body with the Teaching of God's Word through the early apostles. We see this with Peter and the Apostle Paul right through the Book of Acts.
- We need to be people that's more aware of the things of the Kingdom, to go back to our roots such as: The Body of Christ, built by His Word, being a people led by the Holy Spirit, building Godly Character, Rejecting Evil, being good stewards of His grace...  
In simple terms: Living life the Jesus way!

## 3. The reality of Opposition

- Here's what I see in Acts, when we advance for His Kingdom, we can expect trials, persecution and opposition.
- The early church faced so much of opposition such as:
  - The Sanhedrin and the High Priest (Acts 5:17)
  - Peter imprisoned and on trial multiple times
  - Stephen accused of Blasphemy (Acts 6:11)
  - The church was greatly persecuted by Saul (Acts 8:3)

However, I want us to focus on their **response**. Here are a few of their responses mentioned in the Book of Acts:

- They always stood their ground! (Acts 5:29-32) They had a firm foundation in their Faith.
- They Prayed continuously, shouldered each other. We see right through the Book that the early believers always spent time in Prayer. Whenever anyone was in trouble. (Example: Read Acts 12 and Acts 16)
- They were enabled by the Holy Spirit! They used the Power of the Holy Spirit that was given to them in every trial.

## 4. Operated with great Power & Influence

- Signs and Wonders followed wherever they stepped foot. (Acts 5:12) Important point to keep in mind here is that the purpose of miracles are always to Glorify and Lift up the name of Jesus.

Few examples:

- Right after chapter 2, Lame man healed in Acts 3:1-9
- Healing through Peter's Shadow
- Paul & Silas in Prison (Acts 16)
- Handkerchiefs/Aprons that touched Paul's body instantly healed the sick and cast out demons (Acts 19:11-12)

- They walked with great courage and boldness!
- Great Grace was given to them (Acts 4:33,34)

Now the reality is, it takes time for a community to build, it takes commitment, patience and strength. However, it has to start somewhere. If that's you, we need to be intentional with patience and perseverance to carry this good work.

Zechariah 4:10 says- Do not despise these small beginnings, for the Lord rejoices to see the work begin. It has to start somewhere!

Will that be YOU? Will you be that person that stands in the gap for your community, for your church, for your city?

**Exodus 9:16**, but I have raised you up for this very purpose!

When we become a Child of God, each one of us has a purpose and calling!

- God raised up people for His Kingdom and had a specific plan and purpose: in **Hebrews chapter 11**, the hall of Faith. The writer mentions to us some names (Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Gideon, Samson, David and Samuel) as examples to us all.
- **2 Timothy 1:7**, Stir up the gift in YOU! We need to step up for our generation!
- Each of us is important! (1 Corinthians 12)
- **2 Corinthians 14:26**- Each one has something to bring to the Body.
- **1 Peter 2:9**, a generation rising

In closing, what do we learn from the early church? How are we as a Church, Community and individuals going to walk? More importantly, what are YOU going to do about it?

The early church literally turned the world upside down! (Acts 17:6)

- Let's be a people that walk in Unity
- Let's be a people that's Kingdom Minded, committed to the BODY of Christ
- Let's be a people that respond to opposition and trials
- Let's be a people that walk with great power and influence this generation

**Time to pray, submit and act...**

- Pray for Unity, Oneness in the Spirit among the leaders. For the Body of Christ, to shoulder one another, to be there for each other.
- Pray for us to be Kingdom Minded. That we would be all about souls.
- Guard our hearts in time of Trouble and when the enemy attacks
- Pray that we would be used by the Power of the Holy Spirit to walk in Signs and Wonders just as the early church
- Above all, that our relationship with God would be unchanging, a love for His Word, His people and a passion for His Name!