

The Four-Fold Purpose of the Church

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Date: 12 April 2026

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[0 : 00] I want to encourage you to open up your Bibles, if you would please, to Acts chapter 2. Acts chapter 2, we're continuing our study as we look at this church, the new church that has begun! in the book of Acts. If you're using the Pew Bible, I would encourage you to turn to page 911, so you can find us there. We have been moving through this book together, and we plan to continue this study working through the book of Acts. I imagine it's going to take some time, but as we continue to discover God's work in revealing himself to us through his word and helping us to understand what the church means, that we as his church will be not only more informed, but will be those who are better representatives of Christ himself. The story, or I should say the account of the book of Acts, begins in Acts chapter 1, as the disciples are there with the Lord and Savior,

Jesus Christ. What I absolutely love about the beginning of this movement, this church age, and any of you who know about the church, anyone who is familiar with this work of God in this church, will understand the epic nature of what Christ has accomplished. That Jerusalem, it started there. It moved to Judea and Samaria and the ends of the earth. You and I are beneficiaries of a work that started 2,000 years ago in Jerusalem. It might be easy to be overwhelmed. Overwhelmed by the sense, the scale of what the church really means. It has gone through every age and is a part of every time from the time of Christ to now, and it's spread across the globe. Maybe it's easy for us to be overwhelmed until we come back to how it all started and we remember the nature of how things began.

Remember that Jesus gave his disciples two very simple commands. He said, go to Jerusalem and wait for the Spirit. Two simple commands is what started this epic age that we get to call the church. This new work of God in establishing a people to himself, not just Jews, but also including the Gentiles. And remember the promise that Jesus gave to the disciples if they would obey. Acts chapter 1, 8, there's two of them. It says, you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses. Now, so what do the disciples do?

So they go back to Jerusalem, just as Jesus has said, and they wait, just as Jesus has said. And the fulfillment of God's promise through his son Jesus happened exactly as Jesus had said. Ten days later, when they go to Jerusalem, ten days later, there is a time of Pentecost, and the Holy Spirit comes and dwells his people and turns them into witnesses. He makes them witnesses. This was a time of Pentecost.

[3 : 28] This is one of three times throughout the Jewish calendar when every Jewish male was supposed to come to Jerusalem, was supposed to give their offerings in the temple. It was a way for them to worship, a way for them to demonstrate their commitment to the Lord. Well, in this time of Pentecost, on this day in Jerusalem in Acts chapter 2, we find that there are at least 16 different nations that are represented from across the Roman Empire, in as many as 18 different languages or more that are represented. How in the world will this message go forth? How in the world will God begin to start this church movement? What's going to happen through the work of his Holy Spirit? And that's where I find incredible relief and comfort. You see, we find here, even at the beginning of this church movement, that the beginning of the church does not rest on gifted leaders. It doesn't rest on those who know everything there is to know about doctrine. It doesn't rest on individuals who bring their charisma, who bring their vision, who bring their purpose, who can stimulate the crowd and can pump them up so that a church is born. No, a church rests entirely upon the person of Jesus Christ.

It rests upon his word, obedience to his name, because Jesus himself has said, I will build my church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it. And so these believers go out in the power of the Holy Spirit. They speak. And what we find in Acts chapter 2 verse 11 is this. We hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God. Did you get that? They speak the works of God.

It's not just the gospel. It's not just doctrines. It's not just teaching. It is simply a goal of exalting the name of the Lord Jesus. It's lifting up his mighty works. It's helping those in Jerusalem to recognize the wonder of who he is, to testify to the glory of God. It begins, the church age begins with a tension that is drawn to the wonder of who God is, his glory. And so that's where we began our study by understanding the wonder of the glory of God and recognizing that if we're going to be God's people, we too need to come to appreciate and understand God's glory. So what is glory? Well, we defined it this way. We said God's glory is the visible manifestation of God's presence, power, and authority. It's how you know that God is near. It's how you know what God has said. It's how you know that God is in control. And so as we come to understand and see the glory of God, we come to appreciate that his glory is written everywhere that we look because the heavens declare the glory of God.

You look into the heavens, you see the stars, you see the handiwork of what he has made in the mountains, in the trees, and all the beauty of spring especially, the flowers that are blooming, and you begin to understand the glory of God is evident in the things that he has made.

But then this, the greatest blessing of the Christian life is to come and have a personal experience with the glory of God ourselves. In 2 Corinthians chapter 4 verse 6, it says this, for God who said, let light shine out of darkness has shown in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. So it was the glory of God on display here in Acts chapter 2. We hear them telling the mighty works of God. The glory of God is pushed to the forefront in the face of the face of the face of the face of the face of the face of the God. The glory of God is pushed to the face of the face of the face of the face of the face of the face of the glory, speaking and confessing and witnessing to the glory of God. So then in Acts chapter 2 verse 21, it says, it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

[8 : 01] That's the focal point of their message. The focal point of their message is to draw the listeners into wonder of who God is. To welcome them and invite them to enjoy the glory of God for themselves and to do it by believing or calling upon his name so that they too may have this experience of salvation and deliverance. I wonder this morning, do you know the son?

The son who the believers on that day of Pentecost were speaking about, the mighty works of God, confessing the wonder of who he is and directing hearts to see the son.

I wonder this morning, have you called on the name of the Lord to enjoy salvation for yourself? You see, that's where Peter begins his message and we see in the next several verses, beginning in verse 22, going on to verse 24, that Peter will now speak about the son. He'll speak about the son being fully man. He'll speak about the son being fully God. He'll speak about the son's death, his resurrection, and the son being exalted to the right hand of the father. He preaches about Christ. And 3,000 souls now respond to the message as we continue to work our way through Acts chapter 2. They respond to the message, not in a way that is simply acknowledging the truth that they've heard, but they recognize that the truth that has been spoken, now they're responsible to respond to this truth. So what do they do? They repent. They see their sin. They repent from their sin. And they're baptized as an expression, a way to demonstrate that the work of Christ, his death, his resurrection, is now a work that is illustrated in their own lives as well, as they come to be baptized. This is what Jesus had prayed for the night before his crucifixion. He's prayed for a community of believers. He's prayed for souls of those who would come to faith in him and would be now one with him because of his work on the cross. John chapter 17 verses 20 and 21 says this. This is Jesus' prayer. He says,

I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they might be one just as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. You see, a church was born. But why does the church exist? What is the purpose of the church? And that's now where we turn our attention beginning in verses 42, moving on to verse 47. Luke will answer this question here in the book of Acts, not by giving us a brochure and kind of telling us all about it, but he's going to give us a picture, a picture of a people, a people who have been changed, a people who have been brought together, a people who are now unified and are expressing that oneness as we work our way through these next several verses. But before we get there, I want to just draw your attention to this fourfold purpose that we're going to begin to see unpacked as we make our way through these verses.

This fourfold purpose is what God has called every believer to be part of. And you can see the banners behind me that we have bow, build, bless, and belong. But these represent the four

priorities that God has given to every believer, and especially believers who are gathered as a church to fulfill the mission that God has called us to. The purpose of worship that we'll talk about in just a moment.

[11 : 57] The purpose of discipleship, which we'll also talk about next week. The purpose of evangelism, and then the purpose of our fellowship or our unity. All of these things, these pieces, are a part of the priorities that God has given to us as a church and should be true in the lives of every believer. So what are these fourfold purposes? Well, let me just touch on them and then we'll concentrate this morning on worship. But first, worship. Worship. We've said that worship, we kind of want to make this memorable. So we have compared worship with bow or to bow your heart in worship to God. Of course, God has created us for worship. That those who have come to a place of recognizing the glory of God, the worthiness of God, it should immediately bring them to the point of recognizing not only his worth, but in bowing, in worship, in reverence, in devotion to him.

We see that in Romans chapter 12, verse 1, where Paul will say, I appeal to you, therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Those of us who have enjoyed the benefits of salvation. Those of us who have come to terms with the mercies of God. That while we are sinners and because of our sin, we are hostile and enemies against God. That God still sent his son to us to demonstrate his love. To Jesus, as Jesus walks in obedient life, and then he lays down his life to pay for sin so that we can enjoy the benefits of his sacrifice and we can be forgiven.

Those who understand what Christ has done, his mercy for us, should be the first in line to worship him. This is our reasonable worship, our spiritual worship that those of us who have come to faith in Jesus Christ will do. This is what we were made for. So what is worship? Well, what we have said that worship is living with a spotlight on Jesus. It's living with a spotlight on Jesus. And so it's not just when you come to a morning service once a week that you come to worship. No, worship is meant to be the expression of every part of every day. It's meant to fill the totality of your life. Every sphere in which you live is meant to be a sphere in which you worship. Our work should be worship. Our family time should be worship. Our leisure should be worship. Our sports activities, our academics, our time at school, our gardening. Whatever we do is meant to draw us into a greater affection and a greater love for the Lord Jesus.

I love how the Apostle Paul puts it in 1 Corinthians 10 31 where he says, whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. That is worship. Recognizing the worthiness of God and bowing before him in worship. The Apostle Paul expresses this well in Philippians 1 21. You have that at the bottom of this slide.

For me to live is Christ and to die is gain. So we recognize that every part of life is meant to draw us deeper in love with Jesus and to put his life and his message on display so that others can see it as well.

[15 : 59] Worship. The next is discipleship. And if worship is bow, then discipleship is build for us. It's leading every person one step closer to Jesus.

Leading every person one step closer to Jesus. And my guess is this morning that we think about, when we think about making disciples, disciples, my guess is that maybe you relate, you are familiar with a program, something formal that helps you become a disciple. Maybe you're part of a Bible study. Maybe you're part of a small group.

Maybe you're part of some way to help you understand the Bible more. And so the formalized process of discipleship is what we've become to be familiar with. And in each of those scenarios, there is a discipler or a mentor or a teacher. Somebody who has more knowledge, who is helping those of us who have less knowledge to be more like Jesus, to grow in discipleship.

But as we're going to see, discipleship, while it does have a formal component, is also meant to have an informal component. It's about life on life.

It's about, it's meant to be about people who are together. That discipleship can't happen without fellowship. And we'll learn about that more next week. You know, we're familiar with Matthew chapter 28 verses 19 and 20.

[17 : 32] It says, Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.

And behold, I am with you always to the end of the age. We tend to think that this verse is for the super Christian. The ones who've arrived.

The ones who are really mature. The ones who've been Christians for a while. The ones who have all the answers. Maybe the ones who we feel are really gifted. But for the rest of us, discipleship is just something we enjoy the benefits of.

But that's not how Jesus phrases this verse. Notice, he's writing this verse to those who are disciples, but those who will also be disciples. And a disciple is simply somebody who is sent from Jesus to do his work.

Those who have come into relationship with him. If you know Jesus Christ as your Savior, and you've given your life to him, then you are a disciple. So this verse is for you.

[18 : 36] It's for me. And in our going, it says, Go, therefore, and make disciples. We have a responsibility. All of us in this room, who are believers in Jesus Christ, have this mandate.

Go and make disciples. And yet, why is it that so few of us are doing this work?

I think it's because we misunderstand what discipleship is all about. And we think that discipleship always has to flow downhill. It has to flow from those who are more spiritual to those who are less spiritual.

And because we don't feel qualified, we don't feel like we've arrived yet, we're not that super Christian yet, then we have nothing to offer. But that's not what Jesus is saying here. Somehow, all of us need to be involved in this process.

And how does it happen? Well, I think it happens simply. It happens simply as we understand the call that God has put on our hearts to lead every person one step closer to Jesus.

[19 : 36] How does that happen? Well, that happens as God is working in your life. And as you share how God is working in your life with somebody that you're in relationship with.

Maybe that's a co-worker. Maybe that's even one of your children. Maybe that's a friend in your family. Maybe that is somebody that's in your circles who comes to this church and they may be more spiritual and have been a Christian for a long time.

They may be a baby Christian and have only known Jesus for a couple of months. They have something to offer you. I think about this even for myself.

I've been a Christian now for, well, I'm 53, I'll be 54 this year. I got saved when I was five years old. So what, is that 48, 49 years I've been a Christian?

And it's interesting that the longer you're a Christian, the easier it is for complacency to rest on your heart. There is something about the freshness of a new believer that makes my heart warm.

[20 : 42] And helps me, I'm kind of a fuddy-duddy, an old guy. It helps me to realize the wonder of what the gospel can do.

It reignites in my heart an affection for Jesus. It sparks within me a desire to be about discipleship and evangelism. It does something for me.

And that's by design. We belong together. We need each other. There are things that we have to offer each other. It happens through mutual relationship and community that God has placed us in. Every one of us needs to be about intentionally and incrementally helping to encourage others around us to look more like Jesus.

Paul explains this well in Colossians 1, verse 28, when he says, Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom.

[21 : 40] Why? That we may present everyone mature in Christ. If you're a believer here today, and you're part of this fellowship, the people who are here belong to you.

They're your responsibility to help lead them one step closer to Jesus. Jesus, in your conversations. That our conversations are adorned with the gospel of God.

And the wonder of what Christ is doing in your heart, so that you can encourage them to take one more step. Evangelism is next. In making disciples, we have to share this good news.

How do the disciples happen? Well, they happen as we are proclaiming the mighty works of God to the world around us. And this is what happens in Jerusalem. And even this is not reserved for the elite believer.

We're instructed to share the news of the gospel wherever we go. And this can seem quite intimidating. You might say, I don't have the gift of evangelism. This is not something I'm good at.

[22 : 46] But, you see, we've found that something is helpful. It's helpful to remember that God has called us all to two commands, right?

What is the first and great command? It is to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. And you know what happens? When that becomes true of you, it flows out into

something else.

It flows out into the second command. That you're going to love your neighbor as yourself. You see, loving your neighbor will naturally lead to telling them about Jesus.

And the more you love Jesus with your heart, soul, mind, and strength, the more all-encompassing that love will become. And the more your identity will reflect the image of Jesus.

And so, the conversations and relationships that you're a part of, the one thing that's going to stand out in that conversation is that you love Jesus. So, rather than seeing evangelism as a transaction, rather than seeing evangelism as an agenda or something that we need to do on a Saturday, we see evangelism as an expression of our love for the Lord.

[24 : 01] We live like Jesus to bless the world, not to make converts. We don't make converts. God makes converts.

We have the responsibility of sharing the good news so that God can then do His work of building His church. See, we live to present the beauty of our Lord Jesus.

And He is beautiful. And that's what Jesus did. We see that in Acts chapter 3, verse 26, it says, God, having raised up His servant, sent Him to you first to bless you by turning every one of you from your wickedness.

That's the joy that we get to have as those who love Jesus is wherever we go, we get a chance then to express our love for Christ to the world around us, whether or not they ever come to faith in Jesus Christ.

Because it's about the glory of God and affection for God and entrusting to God the results of that message. Finally, we come to fellowship.

[25 : 14] What is fellowship? Well, fellowship is this space in which we belong together. It's this space where we understand we're connected together, we're unified together.

And that's what we see in this church. Acts chapter 2, verse 42. And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

This word for fellowship is the word koinonia. It's the word for sharing. It's the word for community. It's the word for togetherness. They were of one heart, one mind.

It was almost as if they were like one person. They're described as like one man there in Jerusalem. They're so connected. And we realize it's not just about being in the same room together.

It's not about just sharing the same space. But it's growing in our affection for one another. And I use the word affection because it's so much more direct and fitting, I think, than growing in love with one another, which is also true.

[26 : 21] I really want to love you by showing you that I have an affection for you. Not just general, but very specific.

And this will show up in our conversations. It will show up in our ministry to one another. It will show up in our service. It will show up in the one another's that we do. The bearing of one another's burdens.

The praying for one another. The loving one another. All the one another's we find through the scripture are taking place through this fellowshiping aspect.

As we work through this passage, we find in verse 42, they're breaking of bread. We find in verse 42, they're praying for one another. It prompted generosity in verses 44 and 45.

All who believed were together and had all things in common. They were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all as any had need. This was a community of individuals who had real, authentic affection for one another.

[27 : 28] It showed up. So this is our fourfold ministry. This is what God has called every believer to be involved in. So let's turn our attention just for the next few moments back to chapter 2, verse 42.

And we're going to focus and drill down just a little bit more on worship and answer this question, what is worship? So that we know how to be better worshipers. So what is worship?

Worship begins with knowing God truly. It begins with knowing God truly. We see that in verse 42. It says, And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayers, and awe came upon every soul. And many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles.

And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all as any had need. And day by day,

attending temple together, and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising who?

[28 : 39] Praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved. Worship is defined in several different ways, but I find two that are helpful.

John Piper says this, It's treasuring God above all else. MacArthur has said, it's to honor, it's honor and admiration that's directed to God. Worship is the God-centered response of the whole person. It directs the whole person to love Him the way and worship Him the way that He deserves. And we find here this atmosphere. Did you notice it? As we're working through and read through these verses, did you see and get a sense of the electricity that's happening, the enthusiasm that's taking place in these new believers who are all together, they cannot get enough of one another. Do you sense that at all? This vibrance that's taking place? I think we can understand and appreciate what's happening. I remember my own conversion that took place when I was five years old.

And I remember that Sunday morning, it was an early Sunday morning that my father was waking me up for church for that morning. And I don't know what I'd been thinking about that whole day, but I do know that my dad and my mom faithfully taught me the scripture.

[30 : 11] I knew what the Bible said. I knew what the Bible said about sin. I knew that sin separates us from God. And I knew that I was a sinner because all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

So as a sinner, I had set myself against God and against His glory and decided to do things my way. But God in His grace sent His Son, Jesus.

Why? Because God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. That's possible because of Jesus' righteousness. Jesus' perfection. perfection. Jesus fulfilled the law. He did it perfectly. He was the God-man. And as man, He could die for my sin. As God, that sacrifice that Jesus paid applied to everyone who believed.

And I wanted to enjoy the benefits of that invitation to recognize that Jesus in His death paid for my sin. We find that in Romans 6, verse 23, the wages of sin is death.

[31 : 23] That's what I deserve. But the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. So you have to know Jesus. And so I asked my dad in those quiet moments if he would lead me in a prayer so that I could come to know Jesus as my own personal Lord and Savior.

In that morning, I gave my life, my heart, to Jesus. And I appreciate what my dad wanted to remind me of is that coming to faith in Christ doesn't mean that everything's going to be okay.

Matter of fact, sometimes coming to Christ makes things harder. But having Jesus, having Jesus is all that we need. Jesus has been sufficient.

Jesus has been all that I need. And for me, there was an energy and a zeal that happened of fresh electricity in my heart because of the work of Christ in my life in that moment.

Even as a five-year-old, I was going bananas. I couldn't help. I wanted to rush to all of my friends in children's Sunday school. I wanted to tell everybody about what Jesus had done for me.

[32 : 32] And my next-door neighbor the next day, I ran across the street. I wanted to tell her what Jesus had done for me. So you can imagine the electricity of this moment, this church, 3,000 men.

Who knows how many women and children coming to faith in Jesus. And the testimony of knowing Jesus not only led them to worshipping Jesus, but it led them to community with one another.

This electricity. And this new joy leads to sincere devotion. And it's devotion. You see that in verse 42.

Devotion to the teaching. The apostles' teaching. The apostles were teaching about who Christ was. The apostles were communicating that word they heard first from the Lord Jesus.

In John chapter 1, we understand that the word of God was made flesh. He dwelt among us so that he could communicate to a people who needed to hear him. Who needed to hear his word.

[33 : 34] So they could know him and worship him. You cannot worship a God you do not know. And so God has communicated himself through his word so that we can not just know him, but we can be drawn into relationship and we can come to worship him.

And that's why the gospel, it's where the gospel begins. And now flowing out from this space, now you see a people who are changed. They know God.

They're worshipping God. And it leads to this next part. Worship then also leads to loving God supremely. To loving God supremely. You see this in verses 46 and 47.

Notice. And day by day attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they receive their food with glad and generous hearts. Praising God and having favor with all the people. Their affection for God is reflected in their affection for one another. God has changed them. They're no longer individuals.

[34 : 38] Now they belong together. And this affection is spilling over. The work of God in their hearts is drawing them to one another.

This corporate nature of their worship is telling. They recognize that God had done something and it had changed them. And now they're not just attending temple individually. Now they're attending temple day by day together.

Hey, would you go with me to the temple? Let's do this together. Let's worship the Lord together. We're in this. God has done something for us. Let's celebrate this work and do it.

Do it together. And we understand that worship while it's amplified on a Sunday morning it's not restricted to Sunday. As a matter of fact Sunday morning isn't accomplishing the objective if it's the only time that you worship through the week.

See, we have failed as a church if worship doesn't spill into every part of your every day. We have failed in our purpose as a body if we're content with just an hour with God once a week.

[35 : 47] And that's what we say when our worship on Sunday when it fails to show up on Monday then worship really isn't taking root in your life.

And we see worship in this church worship that pervades every dimension of life. They enjoyed worship because they were growing in love with the Lord and growing in love with one another. And finally worship results in obeying God sincerely. In obeying God sincerely. As we work through this passage we're going to notice immediately that all of the patterns that we see reflected in this church are first patterns that showed up in our Lord Jesus.

That Jesus himself was a teaching prophet. That Jesus fellowshiped with his disciples. He fellowshiped with others. Those intimate times we get to see even at Bethany as Jesus is fellowshiping with Mary and Martha and Lazarus.

He's also breaking bread with his disciples. He's attending temple with his disciples. Jesus is fulfilling the commands that God has instructed him to do.

[37 : 02] All of those commings we find throughout the Old Testament Jesus fulfilled every single one. He is the fulfillment of all that God expected. And he's establishing that worship to God requires obedience to God.

We find in Philippians chapter 2 verse 8 this statement in being found in human form he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death even death on a cross.

So the apostle John will say in his letter in 1 John chapter 2 verses 3 and 4 and by this we know that we have come to know him if we keep his commandments. Whoever says I know him but does not keep his commandments is a liar and the truth is not in him.

Now does that mean that our salvation is contingent upon obedience? No. It's contingent upon the work of Christ's obedience. He was obedient so we can enjoy the benefits of that but the assurance of the faith that we have is confirmed by our obedience to the Lord Jesus himself.

Our love for him spills out in obedience to him. You see at Maranatha there are some lanes that we want to try to help kind of nurture worship in your life.

[38 : 21] We want you to see that worship isn't just something that happens here on Sunday but it should spill into every part of your week. And I just want to draw attention to a couple very briefly. First I trust that you notice that our singing is meant to draw you in to worshipping Jesus.

It draws attention to him. It's living with him in the spotlight. And so Pastor John does some things very intentionally to draw attention to Jesus and not distract from him.

Things like picking songs that speak about Jesus. Picking songs that use the word of God as a foundation for our singing.

That draw your affection to him. That help you grow and wow this Jesus is amazing I want to know him more. That's the goal of the songs that we sing.

It's not to draw attention to you and all of your troubles and all of your pains. It's to help you understand that in your pain you can look to Jesus who's able to resolve them in himself.

[39 : 27] Maybe not send them away perhaps but to strengthen you in the process of recognizing that he is this friend that sticks closer than a brother even when you're facing opposition.

We sing songs that are meant to direct your attention to Jesus. But even in the way that we sing songs here it's to draw attention to the wonder of Christ.

And that's why John has been very careful to kind of keep the lights up so that we can see one another. We can enjoy the benefits of being a part of this community.

And while we are individuals and while we do have a responsibility to worship God one-on-one with the Lord, Sunday morning is a way for us to be together.

Pastor John has often said, and I agree, that when you have a chance to look around the room and you know that somebody in the room is really struggling and yet there they are singing to the Lord praises to God.

[40 : 33] I trust that that helps to encourage you to know, you know what, if they can sing to Jesus when things are really bad, what a great lesson for my heart to know that Jesus is able to help me even in this pain that I'm feeling.

John also wants to make sure that we don't spotlight the giftedness of our musicians or our singers. And by God's grace we have a lot of really gifted people here.

I am so thankful for how God has assembled that. But it's not about showcasing people, it's about drawing attention to our Savior. And so when we sing songs and the way we sing songs, we want to make sure that Jesus is the center of all of those things, not a musician who is really gifted in what they do.

We also want to draw attention to the wonder of who God is through our preaching. So we're going to preach the text. We're going to get you into the Word of God. And we're going to, by design, normally we're going to teach expositionally through books of the Bible.

That's our goal. And what that helps me to do is make sure that I'm not just telling you the things that are easy and comfortable for me to say or things that are easy and comfortable for you to hear. We want to prioritize the Word of God and we want to prioritize the teaching so that Jesus is in the spotlight through good things and hard things to know, you know what, here's a church that's going to tell me the truth whether or not it's easy for me to hear.

[42 : 07] So we're going to go through books of the Bible. We're going to teach in a way that's expositional verse by verse, book by book, that's the goal.

We also want to be a people who are drawn together in prayer. Pastor David has done an amazing job in putting together something every single week called the Powerhouse Prayer. It is a little telegram article and it is phenomenal.

It walks you through not only the prayer requests that are current in our body but also walks you through a passage of scripture to know how you can pray more faithfully.

How can you use the Word of God to pray in a way that you're not distracted, that helps to align your heart to what God wants to do. Praying God's words back to Him.

In prayer we also have small groups that incorporate prayer as a main element of their time together. prayer in giving. We want to call you to give not because we need money.

[43 : 07] We want to call you to give because we want you to enjoy the blessing of recognizing that God is able to provide for your needs. And to enjoy the blessing of knowing Him for yourself and seeing that in your expression of giving you're trusting Him with your stuff.

Fellowship. We want our fellowship to be Christ-centered. We'll talk about that more next week. We want to draw our attention not just to the things that are going on in your life.

We care about those two but we want your fellowship to be the kind of fellowship we see in Hebrews where you're stirring one another up to love and good deeds. And finally, service.

Service to God. In your service here at Maranatha that your service is directed to Him. You see, worship happens when we gather and sing and pray and hear the word of God.

We fellowship and we praise but worship is meant really to direct your hearts to Him. And I trust that as we grow in this together that God will help us to be faithful.

[44 : 18] Let me pray. Father, I thank you. I thank you for your word and for the challenge we get from this scripture. how you put the church together.

It's incredible. Thank you that the work of the church does not rest on us. The work of building this church rests on you. So steer our hearts towards you, Lord.

Help us to know you more, to love you more, to depend on you more so that we can show Christ through our lives more clearly day by day.
In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. God bless you. Have a great week. Amen.