

Building a Community that Stands - a study in the Book of Acts – Izwe Nkosi

[1.]

Acts 2:42-44 [2.] The believers devoted themselves to four things:

1. The apostles' teaching – understandably: hearing about Jesus from those who knew him.
2. Fellowship – understandably: faith needs people alongside to encourage.
3. Prayer – understandably: it's a pillar of every faith community.
4. Breaking of bread? Can mean:
 - Communion; reminding ourselves of Luke 22:14-20 [like we did on Sunday]
 - Simply eating together in homes. Church doesn't just happen 'in the temple courts', but finds its expression in community, in hospitality.

Don't underestimate what God can do with your dinner table.

- Church can take place there. Dinner tables matter; they are altars, places of prayer, change.
- The Bible insists on it. Rom 9:12b *Practise hospitality*. Despite our Surrey embarrassment about inviting people into our homes. God doesn't care about the state of your house [even Pete G's description]; have you got a table?
- Gal 6:10 ...*do good to all people, especially... believers*. Because the church can't give what we haven't got inside the church. The airline oxygen mask analogy: you can't help anyone if you're dead.
- Are Holly and Robby's students going to find a hospitable church? [How about the ones that Pete G prayed for at the start: those who didn't want to wake up; those who have messed their lives up and don't know who to blame?]
- Jesus final speech John 13:35 *By this everyone will know... if you love one another*.
- We are hospitable, it's in our DNA. We have Lighthouses, do Christmas Kindness, '*because the church of God exists in this city*' [Daniel Grothe, talking about radical hospitality]

'Hospitality is... space where change can take place' [Henri Nouwen] where others can grow and thrive without competition.

- Visual aid of a rose, which thrives on mixed soil and an azalea, which needs acidic soil.
- They are very different but growing in the same garden with the same gardener who loves them both and has created space and an environment for them (John 15:1-7).
- You belong in God's garden; the right soil is Collectives! Izwe & Anne have led one for five years and they always have a meal. Join a Collective.
- Church is not measured by numbers but by the hospitality that flows out. *The worship that pleases God is not ceremonial church rituals but a lifestyle that is characterised by extending hospitality and love to those who are in need.* [Toku Adeyemo] [3.]

Serving suggestions:

1. Series context: Foundations 1, Peter Burton: Acts as Luke's sequel to his gospel and a bridge to Paul's later writings; Foundations 2, Adam Heather: everything makes sense if we understand Pentecost.
2. Acts 2:42-44 lends itself to Lectio Divina, in every Collective Leader's toolbox!
3. How does Emmaus Rd, your Collective, fare with the four things Izwe talked about in the passage? Maybe extend that to the other things that feature in the same passage.
4. Have a meal as a Collective. Take communion together. Try 'Kitchen Table Suppers' where everyone in a Collective meets with 2-4 others for a meal (home or restaurant, or even just coffee, walk, playground...) to live life together.