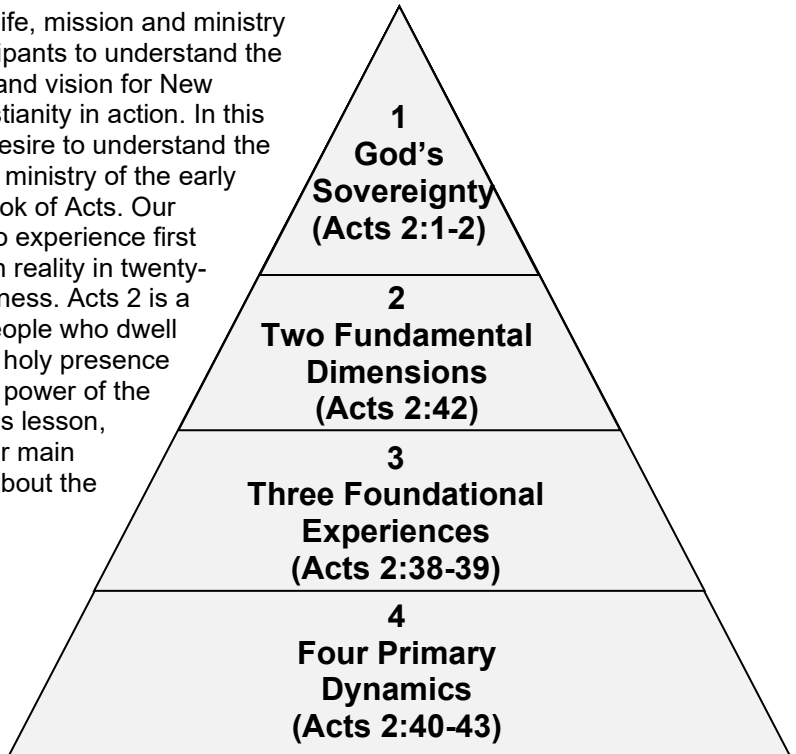


The Apostolic Mission and Vision of Northgate

The Key Functional Role: Apostle First Pillar: The Whole Counsel of God

Congregational life, mission and ministry require its participants to understand the biblical mission and vision for New Testament Christianity in action. In this first lesson we desire to understand the life, mission and ministry of the early church in the Book of Acts. Our commitment is to experience first century Christian reality in twenty-first century realness. Acts 2 is a description of people who dwell in unity in God's holy presence and move in the power of the Holy Spirit. In this lesson, let's observe four main considerations about the early church.



I. One Key Truth: God Is Sovereign (Acts 2:1-2)

In this first lesson, we want to emphasize that everything we do as believers and as a church is all about **GOD** and His divine sovereignty.

When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, God in His sovereignty ushered in the birth of the church in the power of the Holy Spirit. The dynamics of the early church centered on their discovery of the love of God through Christ Jesus and living life under the sovereign rule of God.

Acts 2:1-2 – *“When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven (HEAVEN) as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house (EARTH) where they were sitting.”*

The first truth of covenant in the Bible is the truth of GOD and the issue of DIVINE SOVEREIGNTY. Everything starts with God. We define **“Divine Sovereignty”** as, all of life discovers its ultimate meaning when focused upon the sovereignty of God, rests under the ultimate control of Jehovah, and is lived unselfishly for His glory. God is ultimate, He is the ultimate cause, and to Him is the ultimate glory. We desire to live under the sovereign hand of God the Father, the authority of the Son, and the power of the Holy Spirit. Faith is all about God.

We believe the **First Century** Spirit-filled Church continues to be a model for the **Twenty-first Century** Spirit-filled Church. Acts 2 is a description of people who dwell in unity in God’s holy presence and move in the power of the Holy Spirit. The early church was a dynamic community of faith and experienced a synergistic relationship of heaven and earth. Notice the “heaven”–“earth” correlation in the following verses.

Acts 2:25-26, 28 – David prophetically said: *“I foresaw the Lord always before my face, **for He is at my right hand** (HEAVEN) that I may not be shaken. 26 Therefore my heart rejoiced, and my tongue was glad; moreover **my flesh also will rest in hope**” (EARTH). The benefits for humankind are: 28 *“You have made known to me the ways of life; You will make me full of joy in Your presence.”**

Acts 2:30-33 – *“God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, **He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne** (HEAVEN) 32 This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. 33 Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, **He poured out this which you now see and hear**” (EARTH).*

Acts 2:34-35 – *“For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself: ‘The Lord said to my Lord, **‘Sit at My right hand** (HEAVEN), 35 till I make your enemies **your footstool** (EARTH).’”*

Acts 2:41-42 – “Then those who gladly **received his word** (HEAVEN) were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were **added to them** (EARTH). And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.”

Jesus is faithful to build His church as His church is faithful to lift Him up. Jesus said, **"I will build My church"** (Mt. 16:18). In Acts 2 the church was born having an initial membership of 120 members in the upper room and soon mushroomed to something more than 3,000 plus men and women.

A **local church** is the regular assembling and jointly participation of baptized believers in worship to God through Jesus Christ, celebrating the Lord's Supper, being mutually exhorted from the Word of God under the guidance of God-appointed servants, doing the work of ministering the life of Christ, and advancing the Kingdom of God.

II. Two Fundamental Dimensions

Eph 2:19-20 – We are “...fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, 20 having been built on the foundation of the **apostles** and **prophets**, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone.” NKJV

1 We are an Apostolic Church. The apostles were single-minded in the mission of Jesus Christ.

Matt 28:18-20 – “Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 Go therefore and **make disciples of all the nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’” NKJV

Acts 2:42 - “And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship...continuing daily with one accord....”

Disciples are a people committed to the Great Commission as the command to extend the Kingdom of God. At Northgate, we lead disciples to embrace the disciplines of the Christ-centered life and in turn to make other disciples! We are a people of single-minded mission as defined and exemplified by the apostles of Christ Jesus. (Acts 2:41-47). They taught and held to the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27). We seek to be a people of purpose and mission.

As we have seen, they were of "one accord" or "one mind" together as they continued daily "in the temple." It was in the temple courts where the apostles taught the large crowds. That doesn't mean that we always have to agree with each other on everything. There's room for friendly, loving disagreement on "non-essential" things within the body, but on the essentials we are united. We are involved in the same mission.

Acts 2:48 – *"They continued to meet together in the temple courts...and from house-to-house."*

The early church had a fundamental agreement with one another in thought and heart toward one another, and this was demonstrated even when they gathered together. The early believers were a people with Christ-centered purpose and apostolic mission.

2. We are a Prophetic Church. The early church assembled for praise and worship.

Acts 2:40-41 – *"40 And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation." 41 Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them." NKJV*

Acts 2:46-47 – *"46 ...continuing daily with one accord in the temple,...with gladness and simplicity of heart, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved." NKJV*

We are to be worshippers that exalt God and to obey Him and His will with all our heart! Following Jesus' vision, Northgate seeks to be a "house of prayer for all nations."

This is the heart and core of being a prophetic people, and such heart orientation leads to a desire to assemble for the kind of praise, worship and prayer that stirs the heart, informs the mind and inspires the obedience that honors God. Disciples are a people who actively worship God. The early church was comprised of people who "believed." They were together in praise and worship to God, praying and giving thanks to His Name.

Romans 15:5-6 -- *"Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus, that you may with one mind and one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." NKJV*

The early church experienced worship, praise, prayer and thanksgiving toward God when they were together with one another. Our times together are opportunities to lift up thankfulness to God and to worship God in spirit and in truth (John 4). Christ, who calls us together and facilitates our relationship with God, is honored, praised and exalted to the glory of God (Eph. 1:6, 12, 14; Acts 2:47; Rom 15:6, 7).

The early church met together with one accord in large groups (temple courts) and in small groups (house to house). They did not neglect meeting together (Heb 10:25). Corporately in larger meetings and in small groups, the early believers were people who actively praised God.

III. Three Foundational Experiences (Acts 2:38)

Acts 2:38 – *“Then Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’ NKJV*

Three foundational issues were embraced as normal in the early church. The early believers were a people of repentance, identified fully with the name of Jesus in baptism, and walked in the power of the Holy Spirit.

1 Repentance from Sin

Acts 2:36-38 – *“Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.” Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” Then Peter said to them, “**Repent ... every one of you.**”*

Luke 24:47 – *“Repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.”*

In a true New Testament church, people give evidence that they are believers. They have trusted Jesus as Savior and Lord and have been adopted into the family of God through faith (John 1:12, 13). Not only is repentance essential for the new birth, but it should characterize the stance of the true believer as a principle for life.

“Repentance” (metanoēō) means “to have a change (Gk: *meta*) of mind (Gk: *nous*).” It does not mean perfect sinlessness, only that we are walking in a new direction for God’s glory. There is initial repentance and continuous repentance. Repentance is a change of mind (mind-set) that leads to a change of attitude (heart-set) that results in a change of habit or action (life-set).

2 Baptism in Jesus' Name

Acts 2:38, 41 – *“Then Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.’ Then those who gladly received his word were baptized.”*

True disciples are followers of Christ Jesus and express this initial decision to follow Christ by the act of being **baptized**. Jesus defined in Matt 28:19 that the way to make disciples was by *“baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Spirit...and teaching them.”* This uniform practice in the early church called “everyone” to baptism in the name of the Father, Son and Spirit.

Baptism is a very decisive act — one in which we publicly and permanently “pledge allegiance,” as it were, to Jesus; and one in which we let everyone know that we are committed be His followers from now on, to the end of our days. Baptism is a symbolic picture of the death, burial and resurrection of Christ Jesus.

3 Filled with the Holy Spirit

Acts 2:1, 4 – *“When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. 4 **And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit** and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”*

Acts 2:38-39 – *“Then Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and **you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.** 39 For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.” NKJV*

Peter and the apostles received the **EMPOWERMENT** of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-13). Peter refers to Joel 2:28-29 as the prophetic promise being fulfilled. Now, Peter tells these who heard the gospel that they too were to receive the Holy Spirit.

Acts 2:17-18 – *The prophet Joel: “17 And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams. 18 And on my menservants and on my maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; and they shall prophesy.” NKJV*

Acts 2:38-40 – *“38 Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and*

you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call. 40 And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation."

Therefore, at the very center of our life as a congregation are the above three fundamental issues: a lifestyle of repentance, identification with Christ Jesus, and empowerment in the Holy Spirit, each essential as a key to expressing in real earth dimensions the realities of heaven's government and rule.

III. Four Primary Dynamics (Acts 2:42)

Next, we want to look at four primary dynamics of the apostolic, New Testament church. As the Lord added to the church, the believers continued steadfastly in four primary activities, all of which are important to contemporary believers. This occurred on a day-by-day basis.

Acts 2:42 — *"And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers."* NKJV

The early church developed in four specific areas: doctrine, fellowship, breaking bread, and prayer. These four basic dynamics provide a New Testament pattern for a local congregation. A corporate, gathered community of believers must aim to be a mature reflection of growing love, unity of faith and steadfast hope (I Thess. 1:3).

1. The Dynamic of Doctrine – The Whole Counsel of God

Acts 2:42, 5:28 -- *"They devoted themselves to the apostles' doctrine. Day after day, in the temple and from house to house, they never stopped teaching ...and filled Jerusalem with their teaching."* NKJV

The early Christians continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine. Jesus gathered twelve disciples around Himself. He taught them truths about the kingdom and promised that the Holy Spirit would bring all things that He taught them to their remembrance.

At Northgate, we seek to train followers in the Word of God and to embrace biblical faith! We are a people of kingdom discipleship. We are committed to the declaration and exhortations of the Word and teaching its significance for life. We were born anew through the living and abiding word of God (I Peter 1:23) and our life in Christ is preserved not by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God (Matt 4:4).

Bible study and learning are important for personal growth. Hosea said, "My people are being destroyed for lack of knowledge." The early church was involved in personal, devotional and group Bible study. They enjoyed the preaching and expository teaching of the Scriptures. The early believers sought to be a people of kingdom disciples and Christ-like maturity, powerful in the Word.

1 John 2:24 – *"Therefore let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father."*

John 14:25-26 – *"These things I have spoken to you while being present with you. 26 But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you."*

The Holy Spirit enabled the testimony of the early leaders to be written down and recorded; we have it today in the Bible. A faithful local church holds on to and teaches the doctrines of the apostles as recorded in the pages of Scripture.

"Doctrine" is the teaching presented by the apostles of Christ Jesus. It involves instruction and comes from a root word "to learn" as another "teaches." Doctrine has the idea of substantive teaching that is meant to be learned and which guides action.

We can observe in the Bible a number of abbreviated teachings such as Jesus' Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5-7) and messages preached by the apostles (Acts 2:14-39; 7:2-53; 17:22-31). Jesus said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God."

Luke 24:25-27 – *"Then He said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! 26 Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?" 27 And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself."* NKJV

Many of Jesus' words recorded in the Gospels are direct quotations from the Old Testament. Every book in the New Testament reflects a dependence on the Old Testament Scriptures. Jesus taught authoritatively about the Old Testament message and that it was being fulfilled in Himself.

Luke 24:44-45 – *"Then He said to them, "These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms*

concerning Me." And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures." NKJV

The content of the apostles' teaching was the gospel that we see in Peter's message in Acts 2. Apostolic teaching has been preserved in the New Testament Scriptures for our instruction.

Acts 2:22-23 – *Peter declared that Jesus had been divinely accredited by the Father: "Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man clearly attested to you by God with powerful deeds, wonders, and miraculous signs that God performed among you through him, just as you yourselves know – this man, who was handed over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you executed by nailing him to a cross at the hands of Gentiles."*

Acts 13:12 – *Paul spoke with such authority about Christ Jesus that "the proconsul saw what had happened, he believed, because he was greatly astounded at the teaching about the Lord."*

2 Tim 3:16-17 – *The apostles preached the Word and declared that, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work."*

The bottom line at Northgate is simple. We are a people who seek to grow into a developed and reproducing faith. We coach people to become mature disciples and to turn to become disciplers who reproduce faith and life in others! All believers should be "elder brother/sisters" to "younger brother/sisters" helping and encouraging them to grow to maturity.

Acts 2:42-45 – *"They continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. 43 Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. 44 Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common."* NKJV

2. The Dynamic of Fellowship - Practical Care for Each Other's Needs

In addition to holding to the apostles' doctrine, the early church continued steadfastly in the apostles' fellowship." The Greek term for *fellowship* is "*koinonia*" which carries the basic idea of something in common, to share together in a common interest. Jude (verse 3) speaks of our "common (*koinē*) salvation" referring to a salvation known and shared by all believers. The best way to bring the meaning of *koinonia* into English is to speak of joint participation in something.

Acts 2:44-45 – *“Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need.”*

Biblically, “fellowship” is a “partnership” -- something like “what-is-in-common-ship.” When Acts 2:44 says they “had everything in common,” the word for “common” is related to the word “fellowship” in verse 42. As the church of Christ, we are active “partners” together in the common cause of Christ in one another’s lives, joined together in decisive community. The definite article “the” before the word *koinonia* makes it “the fellowship.”

In a practical way, as the newly-born Jerusalem church fellowshiped together, they shared material goods with one another.

Acts 4:32, 34-35 – *“Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common. 34 Nor was there anyone among them who lacked; for all who were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of the things that were sold, 35 and laid them at the apostles' feet; and they distributed to each as anyone had need.” NKJV*

Fellowship also speaks of the biblical call for all believers to meet together regularly for mutual instruction and edification. Doctrine (revelation) and fellowship (relationship) are linked together.

Heb 10:24-25 -- *“And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.”*

Later, we note that the apostle Paul felt the need for gathering together with the saints.

Rom 1:11-12 -- *“For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift, so that you may be established – that is, that I may be encouraged together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me.”*

Prov 18:24 -- *“A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there a friend who sticks closer than a brother.”*

To have good friends requires us to be good friends. We share with one another and contribute our talents and abilities to help one another.

Gal 6:6, 10 – *“Let him who is taught the word share (Gk: koinoneo) in all good things with him who teaches. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.”*

Rom 12:12-13 – *They “continued steadfastly in prayer; distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality.”*

Phil 4:15 – *“Now you Philippians know...no church shared with me concerning giving and receiving but you only.”*

Fellowship in the New Testament means joint participation in areas of practical aid or help to one another. Fellowship is not the goal or end in itself, but is a by-product of common goal of loving and serving one another. The more the believer discovers the salvation common to all other believers the more fellowship occurs.

At Northgate, we call God’s people to embrace service and send workers to touch others with God’s love! We are a people of humble servanthood. In simplicity of heart, we care for the practical needs of each other. Servanthood is a demonstration of grace and humility. In the early New Testament, deacons were appointed to the ministry of tables and caring for the widows (6:1-6). We urge you to seek a practical area of service to others.

3. The Dynamic of Breaking Bread – Hospitality in Each Other’s Homes

Acts 2:43, 46 -- *“They devoted themselves ...to the apostle’s fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. They broke bread in their home and ate together with glad and sincere hearts.” NKJV*

Next, the early church devoted themselves to the breaking of bread (Acts 2:43, 46). Two viewpoints emerge from this phrase. (1) They regularly observed the corporate experience known as observing the Lord’s Supper. (2) They came together to eat, share meat and break bread in each other’s homes. True

disciples do both, participate in the corporate Lord's Table and in home fellowship.

First, Observing the Lord's Table. We meet together to commune together at the Lord's Table in reverence toward Christ, examining our lives (Mt 26:26). This is also referenced in Mk 14:22, Lk 22:19, and further expanded in I Cor 10:16, 11:23-26.

***Mt 26:26** -- "While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after giving thanks he broke it, gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take, eat, this is my body."*

This corporate experience is intended to help us remember, in a solemn and reverent way, the sacrifice He made for us on the cross. Those commands from the Lord were given in the construct of plurality suggesting that we are to remember His sacrifice together as a group.

Secondly, Eating in Homes. We gather to share meals together from house to house. What makes sharing meals so significant? What meals have you had recently with your brothers and sisters in Christ? What makes it difficult for you to extend hospitality to church guests and friends? How could these barriers be overcome?

***Acts 2:46** – They were "breaking bread from house to house, sharing their food with glad and humble hearts" (Acts 20:46).*

***Acts 27:35-36** – "And when he had said these things, Paul took bread and gave thanks to God in the presence of them all; and when he had broken it he began to eat. 36 Then they were all encouraged, and also took food themselves."*

This was not a communion service. The early church expressed wholehearted hospitality and meals in each other's homes. Community life and sharing are so important. In the early church, they gave to anyone as he or she had need. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts.

***Luke 24:30, 35** – "30 When he had taken his place at the table with them, he took the bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them 35 Then they told what had happened on the road, and how they recognized him when he broke the bread." cf. Acts 20:7, 11.*

Participating the Lord's Table publicly and sharing a meal privately are perhaps the most intimate forms of fellowship one can have with fellow believers. Now, let's expand the concept of fellowship.

Thirdly, Entering into Other's Lives. Pastorally, we seek to ground believers in covenant love and help them assimilate into and enjoy genuine community! Relationship is at the heart of pastoral community. A true disciple is a person of genuine friendship to others. In the early church, they gave to anyone as he or she had need. All the believers were together and had everything in common.

Acts 4:32 – *“All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had.”*

They knew where each other lived; and they loved having each other over all the time. They enjoyed their times together with "gladness" or "rejoicing." It was the highlight of their day to be together. They were happy together, and had fun together. The early believers were a people of genuine friendship and overflowing love.

Fourthly, Regular Flock Bible Study and Prayer. The early church daily met together with one accord in large groups (at the temple courts) and in small flock groups (house to house). They were fully involved in **F**riendship, **L**ove, **O**utreach, **C**are and **K**ingdom growth (F.L.O.C.K.). Corporately in larger meetings and in small groups, the early believers were a people who actively praised God.

Luke 12:32 – *“Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.” NKJV*

4. The Dynamic of Prayer – Intimacy with God

True disciples devote themselves **“to the prayers”** (Acts 2:42). This is the general Greek word for prayer (*proseuche*). In the original it is actually plural with the article: "the prayers," suggesting times of scheduled, corporate prayer. There is something uniquely powerful that happens when we join together in congregational prayer. There should be prayers of thanksgiving, praise, petition, confession and intercession.

Acts 3:1 – *“Now Peter and John went up together to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour.”* → Apostles and people regularly went to pray.

Acts 4:23-24, 29-31 – *“23 They went to their own companions, and 24 ...they raised their voice to God with one accord... 29 Now,*

Lord, ... grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word, 30 by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus. 31 When they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.” → They all prayed at the same time with one accord.

James 5:16 -- *“The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.” → Fervent prayer is essential to building our hearts and our faith.*

Matthew 21:13, 16. *“My house will be called a House of Prayer. Jesus said, ‘From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise.’”*

The early Christians understood the importance of coming before the Lord in prayer in seeking His leading and blessing. Jesus had ascended to heaven and they could no longer see Him, touch Him or talk to Him face to face, but they could still talk to Him through prayer, and He would still communicate to them through the Apostles' doctrine and the moving of the Holy Spirit who now indwelt them.

Community life together involves duly appointed leaders. The early church experienced the guidance of the apostles and, through them, the appointment of deacons, overseers and elders. Paul appointed elders in all the churches (Acts 14:23); he gave instruction about the qualifications of deacons and elders in 1 Tim 3 and Titus 1; and he said that Christ had given the five-fold ministry to equip the saints for ministry (Eph. 4:1,12).

Bottom Line: Joyfulness and Simplicity of Heart

Acts 2:41-47 - *“41 Then those who gladly received his word were baptized.... 42 They continued steadfastly.... 43 Fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done.... 44 All who believed were together, and had all things in common. 46 They ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart.... 47 Praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.”*

We reach people through authentic living that is characterized by joyfulness and simplicity of heart! Disciples are people who really love people, who love one another. In fact, people will know we are Christians by our love for one another. The early Christians had favor with all the people experiencing an *esprit de corp*.

The Results of the New Testament Church

- *“But many who heard the message believed, and the number of men grew to about five thousand” (Acts 4:4).*
- *“All the believers were one in heart and mind” (4:32).*
- *“Nevertheless, more and more men and women believed in the Lord and were added to their number” (5:12-14).*
- *“At this time ... the number of disciples were increasing” (6:1).*
- *“So the word of God spread. The number of disciples ... increased rapidly. A large number of priests became obedient to the faith” (6:7).*
- *“So the church ... was strengthened; and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, and grew in numbers, living in the fear of God” (9:31).*
- *“The Lord’s hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord” (11:21).*

Pillar Number One

THE WHOLE COUNSEL OF GOD

The first pillar truth Northgate embraces is the Whole Counsel of God.

Acts 20:20-21, 27 – *Paul: “20 I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house, 21 testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God” (NKJV).*

- Bible Orientation and Order
- Inerrancy of the Scriptures
- Importance of Correct Doctrine
- Kingdom of God Values

The original apostles were discipled directly by Jesus and were the appointed guardians of the Messianic message. It is our conviction that the Bible is both inspired and authoritative and is the sole rule and basis for what we believe about faith and practice. We are a “Bible-oriented” people. We base our ministry style in a serious search for a proper understanding of Scripture. We seek to establish our worship patterns, our teaching material, our doctrinal understandings and our interpersonal relationships in that we believe to be biblical order.

We are reluctant to embrace methodologies and doctrines, which have no significant biblical basis. Thus, we strive to seek Biblical justification for our actions, beliefs and structure. We are determined to live by the revelation that God has delivered through His word. We are suspicious of man’s opinions and dogmas. Our understanding of biblical truth is redemptive and restorative in nature. We seek to embrace doctrine that is action-response oriented more readily than the passive-acquiescent style of merely “accepting” truth. Because of this, we call for specific commitment to Christ validated by a visible, ongoing response to the work of God in our lives.

Let us intelligently evaluate all traditions, opinions and sentiment in the light of clear biblical meaning. The Scriptures are the basis of evaluating our life style, congregational order, personal morality and ways of serving. The interpretation of scripture should follow proven principles of hermeneutics and not the whim of hyper-spirituality and subjectivity.