



BAPTIST CHURCH

The “Do More” Challenge
“Connect More”
Acts 2:36-47

Introduction

Cary First exists to demonstrate the love and share the good news about Jesus everyday, everywhere, with everyone.

If Cary First is going to accomplish our purpose and impact lostness in our town we must “Do More!”

Lostness— Refers to a person who is far from God. Anyone that does not have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ is spiritually dead, separated from God, does not have the hope of eternal life and is destined for ruin, destruction and death.

The **“Do More Challenge”** is a compelling task calling people to utilize their uniqueness, gifts, abilities, and resources to advance God’s Kingdom on the earth.

The **“Do More Challenge”** is a challenge to:

Dream More

Pray More

Read More

Serve More

Give More

Connect More

Have More Gospel Conversations

Today we are going to talk about the importance of connections.

Scripture

“Therefore let all the house of Israel know with certainty that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah.”

37 When they heard this, they were pierced to the heart and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brothers, what should we do?”

38 Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, each of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

39 For the promise is for you and for your children, and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call.”

40 With many other words he testified and strongly urged them, saying, “Be saved from this corrupt generation!”

41 So those who accepted his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand people were added to them.

42 They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching, to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to prayer.

43 Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and signs were being performed through the apostles.

44 Now all the believers were together and held all things in common.

45 They sold their possessions and property and distributed the proceeds to all, as any had need.

46 Every day they devoted themselves to meeting together in the temple, and broke bread from house to house. They ate their food with joyful and sincere hearts,

47 praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. Every day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved. CSB

Quote of the Day

“It’s crazy, if you think about it. The God of the universe— the Creator of nitrogen and pine needles, galaxies and E-minor— loves us with a radical, unconditional, self-sacrificing love. And what is our typical response? We go to church, sing songs, and try not to cuss.” — Francis Chan

Sullivan Strong Testimony Video

According to **Acts 2:47** “. . . praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. Every day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.” CSB

Churches that impact lostness in their community have two things in common:

1. They enjoy the favor of all the people

The word translated “**favor**” comes from the Greek word “**Charis**” which is the word grace and in this context refers to a winning quality or attractiveness that invites a favorable reaction, graciousness, attractiveness, charm, winsomeness.

Churches that impact lostness in their community have two things in common:

2. People are being saved on a consistent basis

Two questions every follower of Christ should ask themselves:

A. What am I doing on a personal level to cause the Church to be attractive and favorable?

B. What am I doing on a personal level to cause people to come to faith in Jesus on a consistent basis?

Acts 2 describes the Day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came from heaven and filled the disciples of Jesus.

On that day Peter preached with Holy Spirit power and boldness and 3,000 people repented and were baptized.

This newly formed group of people connected together and became the **Church**— “**Ekklesia**” the called out ones.

From that day until now the Church is alive and thriving all over the world sharing the Good News about Jesus!

What does the influence of the Church really look like?

The Church represents the greatest hope of the World!

The world we live in is corrupted and broken by Sin. Sin separates us from God and leaves us devastated and seemingly without hope. Because of Jesus, we are not left to stagger blindly in our sin and brokenness— Jesus died and rose again so that everyone who trusts in Him can have eternal life.

This morning in **Acts 2:36-47** we are going to discover the power and importance of being connected.

Being “**Connected**” in the context of **Acts 2** means people are linked together in the name of Jesus to accomplish the task of Making, Baptizing and Training disciples.

Connections are important and powerful because we can do more together than we can do alone.

Because the first Church was so well connected they began what has become the greatest force for good in the history of the world.

Throughout every generation the presence of the Church has influenced the world with the Good News of Jesus.

Every day approximately 60,000 commit their lives to Christ while in that same day 175,000 people die without the hope of Jesus.

The Church will always be a thriving force for good because Jesus said in **Matthew 16:15-18** “But you,” he asked them, “who do you say that I am?” 16 Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” 17 Jesus responded, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah,, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but my Father in

heaven. 18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and **on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overpower it.**” CSB

Today in **Acts 2:36-47** we are going to discover Nine Connection Points that cause the Church to Function and Flourish.

Nine Connection Points that cause the Church to Function and Flourish:

- 1. Connection to Jesus**
- 2. Connection to Spiritual Development**
- 3. Connection to the Fellowship**
- 4. Connection to Breaking Bread Together**
- 5. Connection to Prayer**
- 6. Connection to Unity**
- 7. Connection to Giving**
- 8. Connection to Serving**
- 9. Connection to a Lifestyle of Praise and Thanksgiving**

Nine Connection Points that cause the Church to Function and Flourish:

1. Connection to Jesus vv.36-41

“Therefore let all the house of Israel know with certainty that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah.” 37 When they heard this, they were pierced to the heart and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brothers, what should we do?” 38 Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, each of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise

is for you and for your children, and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call.” 40 With many other words he testified and strongly urged them, saying, “Be saved from this corrupt generation!” 41 So those who accepted his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand people were added to them.” CSB

The single most important Connection Point in the Church is a personal relationship with Jesus— the One and only Son of God.

John 3:16-18 “For God loved the world in this way: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. 18 Anyone who believes in him is not condemned, but anyone who does not believe is already condemned, because he has not believed in the name of the one and only Son of God.” CSB

Jesus is the One and only Son sent by God to Seek and Save those who are far from God!

Jesus is One and only Son of God who lived a sinless life and freely gave Himself and died on the cross as a ransom to pay the price of sin for all of humanity.

Jesus is the the One and only Son of God who rose from the dead, who lives, who is seated at the right hand of God in heaven and is coming back in great power and glory.

The Church must never lose sight of this.

The Church must never be Connected to or Connected by the less than important things:

Routines, Traditions, Unbiblical Expectations, Structures/ Buildings, Political Correctness or false teaching.

The Church is called to be the collective representation of Jesus Christ on the earth. The Church is called to be the eyes, the ears, the heart, the voice, the feet and the hands of Jesus in this corrupt, broken and lost world.

Philippians 2:5-11 “Adopt the same attitude as that of Christ Jesus, 6 who, existing in the form of God, did not consider equality with God as something to be exploited. 7 Instead he emptied himself by assuming the form of a servant, taking on the likeness of humanity. And when he had come as a man, 8 he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death—even to death on a cross. 9 For this reason God highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow—in heaven and on earth and under the earth — 11 and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” CSB

Nine Connection Points that cause the Church to Function and Flourish:

2. Spiritual Development v. 42a

“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching, to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to prayer.” CSB

The word translated **“devoted”** comes from the Greek word **“Proskartereo”** which means to continue to do something consistently with intense effort even in spite of difficult circumstances.

2 Peter 2:2 “Like newborn infants, desire the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow up into your salvation,” CSB

Romans 12:2 “Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God.” CSB

2 Timothy 3:16-17 “All Scripture is inspired by God, and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, 17 so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.” CSB

When the Church is connected through Spiritual Development the Church becomes strong in the Word of God— A church that is strong in the Word of God will be a collective force for God!

Here at Cary First we have plenty of opportunities and options for Spiritual Development: The Preaching of God’s Holy Word, the Bible Reading Plan, Life Groups, Focus Studies, Discipleship Groups and the Light For Living Podcast.

Nine Connection Points that cause the Church to Function and Flourish:

3. Fellowship v.42b

“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching, **to the fellowship**, to the breaking of bread, and to prayer.” CSB

The word translated “**fellowship**” comes from the Greek word “**Koinonia**” which is the essence of Christian life.

Koinonia happens when followers of Christ seek to have a personal connection with God and other Christ followers through: **Worship, Serving, Accountability, Encouragement, Partnership and doing life together.**

Nine Connection Points that cause the Church to Function and Flourish:

4. Breaking Bread Together v.42c

“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching, to the fellowship, to the **breaking of bread**, and to prayer.” CSB

The phrase translated “**Breaking of Bread**” refers to eating meals at home with each other and a possible reference to the observance of the Lord’s Supper.

Great things happen when people get together around the table.

We talk, we laugh, we cry, we get to know each other, Breaking bread is a blessing!

Nine Connection Points that cause the Church to Function and Flourish:

5. Prayer v.42 d

“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching, to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread, **and to prayer.**” CSB

Matthew 18:19-20 “Again, truly I tell you, if two of you on earth agree about any matter that you pray for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. 20 For where two or three are gathered together in my name, I am there among them.” CSB

Powerful and Amazing things happen when God’s people pray!

Tony Campolo tells about the time he was asked to speak at a Pentecostal college. Before the service, eight men had him kneel so they could place their hands on his head and pray. “I was glad to have the prayer, but each of them prayed a long time, and the longer they prayed the more they pushed on my head. It seemed the longer they prayed the more their prayers began to wander. One of the men didn’t even pray for me, he prayed for some guy he was concerned about. He began to pray and said something like this: ‘Dear Lord, you know Charlie Stoltzfus. He lives in that silver trailer down the road a mile. You know the trailer, Lord, just down the road on the right-hand side.’ I wanted to interrupt and tell him that God already knew where the guy lived and didn’t need directions, but I just sat there trying to keep my head upright. The prayer went on: ‘Lord, Charlie told me this morning he is going to leave his wife and three kids. Please step in and do something, God! Bring that family back together.’ With that, the prayer time ended and I went on to preach at the college chapel service. After the chapel service I got in my car and began to drive home. As I drove onto the Pennsylvania Turnpike, I saw a hitchhiker and felt compelled to pick him up. When the hitchhiker got in the car I said: Hello my name is Tony Campolo what is yours? He said, ‘My name is Charlie,’— I couldn’t believe it so I asked are you Charlie Stoltzfus? He said “yes I am.” A few miles down the road at the next exit I got off the turnpike and

headed back the other direction. At this point Charlie started getting a little uneasy. He said: 'Hey Mister, where are you taking me?' I said, I'm taking you home! He narrowed his eyes and asked, 'What are you talking about?' I said, 'Because you just left your wife and three kids right?' That blew him away, 'Yeah, yeah, that's right.' With shock written all over his face, he plastered himself against the car door and never took his eyes off me. Then I really did him in as I drove right to his silver trailer. When I pulled up, his eyes seemed to bug out of his face as he asked, 'How did you know I lived here?' I said, God told me!

When he opened the trailer door his wife exclaimed, 'You're back!' He whispered in her ear and the more he talked, the bigger her eyes began to bulge in her face. I said with boldness and authority that only comes from God and said, the two of you sit down. I'm going to talk and you are going to listen— and did they listen. . . That afternoon Charlie and his wife committed their life to Christ! Citation: emailmeditations.wordpress.com/.../165-led-by-the-spirit-to-charlie Stoltzfus.

When we pray with faith believing we understand that God knows our heart, He hears our prayer and moves on our behalf!

Nine Connection Points that cause the Church to Function and Flourish:

6. Unity v.44

“Now all the believers were together and held all things in common.” CSB

God calls His people to live in unity with one another, therefore it is important to make every effort to live together in harmony with everyone.

2 Corinthians 2:11 “Finally, brothers and sisters, rejoice. Become mature, be encouraged, be of the same mind, be at peace, and the God of love and peace will be with you.” CSB

Acts 4:32 “Now the entire group of those who believed were of one heart and mind, and no one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but instead they held everything in common.” CSB

I Corinthians 1:10 “Now I urge you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree in what you say, that there be no divisions among you, and that you be united with the same understanding and the same conviction.” CSB

In the article by Amia Srinivasan, “**What Termites Can Teach Us**,” she writes about termites and the significance of unity.

Termites may be hard to love, but they’re easy to admire. Termite mounds can reach as high as thirty feet. Based on their tiny size, that’s the equivalent of humans building something twice as tall as the 2,722-foot Burj Khalifa, in Dubai. The interior of a termite mound is an intricate structure of interweaving tunnels and passageways, radiating chambers, galleries, archways, and spiral staircases.

To build a mound, termites move vast quantities of mud and water. In the course of a year, eleven pounds of termites can move about three hundred and sixty-four pounds of dirt and thirty-three hundred pounds of water. The point of all this construction is not to have a place to dwell—the colony lives in a nest six to seven feet below the mound—but to be able to breathe. The mound acts as a lung for the colony, managing the exchange of gases, leveraging small changes in wind speed to inhale and exhale.

Termites appear to do all this without any centralized planning: there are no architects, engineers, or blueprints. The termite mound isn’t just a building. It’s much more like a body, a self-regulating organic process that always reacts to its changing environment. Scientists claim that individual termites are not very intelligent. They lack memory and the ability to learn. Put a few termites into a Petri dish and they wander around aimlessly. But put enough termites together, in the right conditions, and they will build you a cathedral. Citation: Amia Srinivasan, “What Termites Can Teach Us,” [The New Yorker \(9-17-18\)](#)

Great things can be accomplished when God’s people work together in unity.

Nine Connection Points that cause the Church to Function and Flourish:

7. Giving v.45a

“They sold their possessions and property and distributed the proceeds to all, as any had need.” CSB

In this life we have an opportunity to connect with other followers of Christ to participate in the greatest movement in the history of the world— The Advancement Of God’s Kingdom On The Earth.

Good Stewardship is the wise use of God given resources for the advancement of God’s Kingdom.

“Stewardship: It’s not about money it’s about me.”

When the creator of the heavens and the earth fearfully and wonderfully made us He placed us here in this world not as an owner but a steward—It is therefore our responsibility to manage our Time, Ability, Passion, Resources and Relationships to advance His kingdom on the Earth.

Proverbs 18:16 “A person’s gift opens doors for him and brings him before the great.” CSB

What we do with the resources God has blessed us with— is a clear indicator of what we value in this life.

Matthew 6:21 “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” CSB

Nine Connection Points that cause the Church to Function and Flourish:

8. Serving v.45b

“They sold their possessions and property and distributed the proceeds to all, as any had need.” CSB

Proverbs 11:24-25 “One person gives freely, yet gains more; another withholds what is right, only to become poor. 25 A generous person will be enriched, and the one who gives a drink of water will receive water.” CSB

Nine Connection Points that cause the Church to Function and Flourish:

9. Lifestyle of Praise and Thanksgiving vv.46-47

Every day they devoted themselves to meeting together in the temple, and broke bread from house to house. They ate their food with joyful and sincere hearts, 47 praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. Everyday the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

God’s people live a different life!

It’s a life that models the fruit of the Spirit.

Galatians 5:22-26 “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, and self-control. The law is not against such things. 24 Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit. 26 Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.” CBS

When followers of Christ live a life that reflects the fruit of the Spirit 1.the results are obvious:

The Church will enjoy the favor of all the people

People will be saved on a consistent basis

I Corinthians 10:31-33 “So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God. 32 Give no offense to Jews or Greeks or the church of God, 33 just as I also try to please everyone in everything, not seeking my own benefit, but the benefit of many, so that they may be saved.” CSB

