

# WHY DID THE EARLY CHURCH GROW

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## INTRODUCTION

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- A. TEXT: *“Now in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying...And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem exceedingly;”* (Acts 6:1; 7.
- B. SETTING: The growth and spread of the church just before the death of Stephen.
- C. One thing that all religious bodies have in common, is “They want to grow”.  
1. This is one of the reasons for the changes that we see in what the world calls the church.  
2. The feeling is that all kinds of changes must be made to accommodate modern man.  
3. All kinds of ideas, things, practices, etc. have been introduced in an effort to attract more people.
- D. THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH GREW....NOT ONLY GREW BUT IT **MULTIPLIED.**  
1. HOW?  
2. What caused the New Testament Church to grow?  
3. If we do what they did, we will also grow. Let's see what they did!
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## STEADFASTNESS

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- A. *“And they continued steadfastly...”*(Acts 2:42)  
1. The expression denotes the idea of endurance and perseverance.  
2. A hindrance today is the “on again, off again” status of many members.
- B. A great need in the church today is steadfastness.
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## FAITHFULNESS

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- A. *“And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine....”*  
1. Not only were they steadfast, but it is important *how* they were steadfast.  
2. They were faithful in doctrine.
- B. Paul admonished Timothy: *“take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee”*(I Tim. 4:16).  
1. The early church valued the truth.  
2. Their emphasis on “the apostles doctrine” did not keep them from growing.  
3. They maintained their convictions, yet they grew.
- C. IT IS UNFORTUNATE THAT SOME TODAY FEEL THAT IF WE PREACH THE TRUTH, WE WILL DRIVE PEOPLE AWAY.
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### UNITY

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- A. *"And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul..."* (Acts 4:32).
1. There was a common purpose that held the disciples together.
  2. Could there be a higher compliment paid to a church today?
- B. In to many places today we find division and fragmentation.
1. All too often the problem is caused by works of the flesh: jealousy, envy, anger, and pride.
  2. We must learn to *"be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment"* (I Cor. 1;10).
- C. ISN'T IT STRANGE:
1. That UNITY was one of the principles that caused the early church to grow....
  2. The religious world today thanks God for the divisions that we have.
  3. JESUS TAUGHT: *"that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us: that the world may believe that thou didst send me."* (John 17:21).
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### BENEVOLENCE

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- A. *"Neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own"* (Acts 4:32).
- B. Further they did good "unto all men" as they had opportunity (Gal. 6:10; II Corinthians 9:13).
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### DISCIPLINE

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- A. Ananias and his wife, Sapphira.
1. The story.
  2. "Great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things.
- B. Might think all would be afraid of the church thereafter.
1. But the text records that *"believers were the more added to the Lord"* (Acts 5:14).
  2. We sometimes forget that God's plan works.
- C. DISCIPLINE is correction, and instruction and if necessary withdrawing of fellowship. It is necessary for at least five (5) reasons: (1) to demonstrate to the world that the church does not tolerate sin; (2) to warn those within against sin. (3) to keep the church pure; (4) to restore the erring; (5) to be obedient to scriptural teaching.
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### DAILY EMPHASIS

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- A. *“And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart”* (Acts 2:46).
- B. The early disciples carried their faith with them on a day-to-day basis.
1. The tendency today is to be “Sunday-oriented” or “building-oriented.”
  2. That is we confine our religious emphasis to assemblies on the Lord’s day or to occasions when we meet at the church building.
  3. *“And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach Jesus as the Christ.”* (Acts 5:42)
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### COMMITMENT

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- A. After the apostles had been taken before the council and ordered not to speak in the name of Jesus, they were beaten and released.
1. We are told *“they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name”* (Acts 5:41).
  2. *“If any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf”* (I Pet. 4:16).
- B. After the death of Stephen...
1. *“They therefore that were scattered abroad, went about preaching the word.”* (Acts 8:4).
  2. **Commitment....not Compromise!**
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