

1 Churches in the New Testament

John and David were excited as they talked to their former teacher. “For the past two weeks we have preached in the square at Gane and 20 people have accepted the Lord as their Savior. Now we must start a church for the new believers. We want to be sure to do it right so we’ve come to discuss it with you.”

“Starting a new church is a wonderful responsibility,” Brother Eyo replied. “The church was planned in the mind of God, started by the Lord Jesus, and is directed by the Holy Spirit. Let’s talk about what your responsibility in starting a new church really means.”

Perhaps you have found yourself in a similar situation, or you know that soon you will want to start a new church. This course will help you follow the scriptural plan for starting new churches. The first lesson will give you God’s plan for the beginning of His church. It will help you understand more clearly God’s plan for the church, and appreciate fully the work of the Holy Spirit in the mission of the church.

lesson outline

The Pattern of the Church

The Ministry of the Church

The Planter of the Church

The Power of the Church

lesson objectives

When you finish this lesson you should be able to:

1. Indicate the New Testament church's guide for establishing churches.
2. Describe how the ministry gifts relate to starting new churches.
3. Identify spiritual qualities of a church planter.
4. State basic elements of a church planter's message.
5. Describe the Holy Spirit's work in church planting.

learning activities

1. Carefully read the preliminary section in this independent-study guide and each Scripture as it is mentioned in the lesson.
2. Study the lesson outline and lesson objectives. These will help you identify the things you should learn.
3. Check the glossary at the end of the study guide for definitions of any key words you do not understand.
4. Read the lesson and do the exercises in the lesson development. Most of your responses can be made in this study guide. However, where longer responses are required, write your answers in a notebook. Check your answers with those given at the end of the lesson.
5. Take the self-test at the end of the lesson and check your answers carefully with the answers given in the back of this textbook. Review any items you answer incorrectly.

key words

Understanding the key words listed at the beginning of each lesson will help you as you study. You will find them defined in alphabetical order in the glossary that is in the back of your study guide. If you are in doubt about the meaning of any of the words on the list, you may look them up now or when you come across them in your reading.

characteristic	fellowship	nurture
community	guidelines	pattern
culture	identify	principle
edify	integrate	role
empower	local	universal
evangelism	ministry	
evangelize	multiply	

lesson development

In the sight of God, all the people who believe in Christ are in one spiritual fellowship. The Bible calls this fellowship the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12–13, 27). The Bible uses the word “church” when referring to people who believe in Christ. The church is a fellowship of believers, those who have been born again, redeemed from their sins through Christ’s sacrifice on the Cross. They believe in the death of Jesus as the sacrifice for their salvation and live in obedience to God. In the New Testament the term “believers” and “church” used in the same context refer to followers of Christ (Acts 14:21–28; 15:2–3).

The word “church” is used to describe different elements of the body of Christ:

1. *The local church, or the church gathered.* This is a group of individual believers who meet to worship God and study the Bible (Acts 11:22; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 1 Thessalonians 1:1; Philemon 2). In one place it may be thousands of believers gathered. In another place believers may gather in small groups (Matthew 18:20). Both are examples of the church gathered.
2. *The church worldwide.* This is the fellowship of all believers around the world. Every true believer is part of this worldwide fellowship that is often called the church universal.

THE PATTERN OF THE CHURCH

Objective 1. *Indicate the New Testament church’s guide for establishing churches.*

The church we read about in the New Testament was the model for all future growth of the church. Paul wrote to the Ephesians that God’s people, the church, are “members of God’s household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone” (Ephesians 2:19–20). With this great foundation, what kind of church does God want us to build today? The beginning of the church teaches us several key principles for building the church in any culture, place, or time.

The Beginning of the Church

Following are six key principles which are found in studying the work of the New Testament church.

First, believers are responsible for taking the gospel to their own community. The disciples followed Jesus' command to begin in Jerusalem to preach the gospel. They not only preached the gospel but also witnessed the gospel by their manner of living. Read Acts 2:42–47. Let us study these verses of Scripture and notice how the testimony of the church was strengthened by the way the believers lived.

Verse 42 shows that the believers were strengthened in their faith by devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and were encouraged by the fellowship of eating and praying together. Also, they helped each other by sharing their goods and possessions with those who were in need (v. 45).

Everyone was filled with awe because of the wonders and miraculous signs done by the apostles through the power of God. These miracles must have been a testimony to all who saw them, and no doubt attracted many to become believers in Christ. We can assume that many unbelievers were attracted, too, by the joy and happiness of the believers. Verse 46 describes what the people of Jerusalem observed about the Christians: "Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They . . . ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people."

The result of the believers' manner of living was that "the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved" (v. 47). Thus, a local body of believers was formed. And while they were an encouragement and strength to each other, they made a significant impact of witness in their community.

Individuals can witness the gospel in their community, but the most lasting and effective witness is through a body of believers living their new faith in love and joy in their community. A strong local group of believers was established in Jerusalem. Then the church began to grow quickly in the surrounding areas of Judea, and Samaria, and within a short time to the provinces beyond.

Second, the gospel was preached to the unsaved where they were. The apostles did not confine themselves to a building where they preached the message of salvation. They went out every day and met together in the temple courts (Acts 2:46) where the people were who needed to hear their message. Even after the apostles were jailed and flogged, they continued: “Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Christ” (Acts 5:42). The principle expressed here is that they took the gospel to where the sinners were. They did not wait for the sinners to come to their local group. We should follow their example.

Third, the New Testament church identified and sent out those whom God called to take the gospel to other areas. While it is the responsibility of every believer to witness in his or her community, there are those who have the ability and call to go out to new areas. An example of this was shown by the church at Antioch in sending out Barnabas and Saul after they had been set apart by the Holy Spirit (Acts 13:1–3). Later in this course we will study the self-propagation of the church and discuss this principle in depth.

Fourth, New Testament evangelism was directed toward adults. The New Testament pattern was preaching to win family leaders who would bring their whole household to Christ. There are many examples of this principle in the New Testament: Peter preached to the house of Cornelius (Acts 10); Paul called on the Philippian jailer to believe on the Lord, then baptized him and all his family (Acts 16:31–33). In Philippi Paul preached to some businesswomen; among them was Lydia, who opened her heart and responded to Paul’s message. She and the members of her household were baptized (Acts 16:14–15). Other examples are the household of Stephanas (1 Corinthians 1:16), Onesiphorus (2 Timothy 1:16), and Philemon (Philemon 2). Often when adults are won to Christ, they bring their children to accept Him too. In this way whole families become believers.

Fifth, new believers were integrated into the life of the body of the local church. The apostles followed Christ’s command to “make disciples” and then “teach” the new disciples. Those who accepted the message of salvation through Christ were immediately identified with the body of Christ—the church

(Acts 2:41). Then, they were taught by the apostles and nurtured in prayer and fellowship with the other members of the body. In addition to being taught doctrine, the believers “devoted themselves . . . to the fellowship . . . and to prayer” (Acts 2:42).

The New Testament does not give strict guidelines on how the teaching of the new believers and the development of the body fellowship took place. The methods used by Jesus, the apostles, or other believers, varied and were determined by the need. But we do know that there are many instructions about relationships with other believers and their relationship with God. These two relationships cannot be separated. God has designed that it is within the context of the church and through the experiences of relationships with other members of the body that the new believer can grow into a mature, responsible disciple for Jesus Christ.

Application

1 Circle the letter of the TRUE statements concerning the activities of the early church believers as described in Acts 2. If a statement is not true, rewrite it on the following line so it is true.

- a)** The disciples preached the gospel first to the people in Jerusalem.

The disciples preached the gospel

.....

- b)** After Pentecost the believers had to worship in secret because of the hostility of the Jews.

After Pentecost the believers

.....

- c)** Miraculous signs were done by the apostles. Their preaching and the joy of the new believers attracted others to be saved.

Miraculous signs were done by the apostles. Their preaching

..... and

- d)** New converts were baptized after a six-month waiting period.

New converts were baptized

.....



Sixth, the apostles preached salvation through faith in Christ, and not a system of religious beliefs or ceremonies. The believers of the early church were scattered around their known world and soon were preaching to many different peoples. The apostles preached salvation through belief in Jesus as the Savior. They did not preach to set forth a new system of beliefs. They preached with the demonstration of the power of God to meet the needs of people. When sinners saw miracles performed which helped people, they believed that Christ could meet their needs too. When they saw the power with which the gospel message was preached, they gained faith to believe for salvation (1 Corinthians 2:4).

The church everywhere continued to follow the example of the apostles. Other believers in the church began to develop ministries. In each case their ministries were like the apostles' (Acts 6:8; 8:4–8). Demons were cast out; cripples were healed; and there was great joy in the hearts of the people, because they were delivered from sin, diseases, and despair. This is what caused the churches to grow, and new believers were added daily.

The Holy Spirit guided the early church to provide fellowship to meet the needs of the new believers. This fellowship gave them a sense of belonging. As Jesus had prophesied, the church grew first in Jerusalem. Thousands became believers in a short time. Most of them were Jews. Even though they followed Jesus, they were still Jews; consequently, they believed they should continue to follow the ceremonial rules of Jewish worship (Acts 5:20; 24:18). But when non-Jewish people became believers, the Jewish believers wanted them to follow Jewish customs. This problem was discussed at a special meeting of the leaders of the church, and the Holy Spirit used the apostles to change the Jewish believers' minds (Acts 11:1–18; 15:1–20). If the non-Jewish believers had been required to follow Jewish ceremonial rules, they would have believed that salvation rested in part on the observance of religious rituals. It was God's plan, however, that salvation depend on no one but Christ (Acts 4:12), and that all believers are to be baptized into one body—whether Jew or non-Jew, slave or free (1 Corinthians 12:13).

This principle allowed the gospel to spread around the world and gave us the truth that it is only salvation that must be preached, not local ceremonies or customs. What the New Testament church taught was the same everywhere. People may express their faith in different ways. How people worshipped depended on their culture. The gospel of Jesus Christ is the same today; it is just as powerful in Africa or China as it is in Latin America or Europe.

Application

2 Circle the letter in front of the correct sentence completion. The decision of the church described in Acts 15:1–11 supports the truth that

- a)** salvation is only through the acceptance of the grace of Jesus Christ.
- b)** some ceremonies of other religions can blend with Christianity to make it more acceptable to all cultures.
- c)** cultural differences prevent peoples of different national groups from worshipping together.

3 Listed in the middle column are six principles observed by the early disciples. Match the principle with the verses which are a demonstration of the principle.

- | | | |
|--------------|--|---------------------------|
| ... a | The gospel preached first in their own community | 1) Acts 13:1–3 |
| ... b | The gospel preached to the unsaved where they are | 2) Acts 5:12, 25, 42 |
| ... c | Those called to preach identified and sent out | 3) Acts 2:14–41;
4:1–2 |
| ... d | Salvation through faith in Christ without added religious ritual | 4) Acts 2:41–47 |
| ... e | Evangelism directed to adults | 5) Acts 10; 16:31–33 |
| ... f | New believers quickly brought into church fellowship | 6) Acts 15:1–20 |



The Purpose of the Church

Jesus commanded His disciples, “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:19–20).

Jesus’ command can be divided into two parts: 1) Go make disciples and 2) teach them to obey everything Jesus commanded. These are the two primary ministry functions of the church: evangelism and teaching.

An example of how the early church obeyed this command is found in Acts 14:21–22.

They preached the good news in that city and won a large number of disciples. Then they returned to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch, strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith.

In this example, the apostles Paul and Barnabas made many disciples in Derbe (evangelism). Later, on the same journey they returned and strengthened (teaching) the new disciples. This was in direct obedience to Christ’s command in Matthew 28:19–20.

These two functions explain the reason why God has placed the church in the world. What does God expect His people, the church, to do when they come in contact with the unbelieving world? The answer is, “make disciples.” What does God intend to happen to believers as they meet as members of the body of Christ? The answer is to edify or build up one another in faith.

Application

4 Opposite each Scripture below write 1) if it represents a function of evangelism and 2) if it represents a teaching function of the church.

... **a** Acts 3:6–7

... **b** Acts 8:36–38

... **c** Acts 15:24–29

... **d** Acts 16:28–31



The Importance of the Church

Jesus knew His death and resurrection would make salvation possible for everyone. He wanted the news of salvation to spread around the world, but He did not preach everywhere. He preached only in Palestine.

He knew God's plan for the salvation of the world. To help accomplish this, He did four things: 1) He chose a group of men to whom He revealed himself as Savior; 2) He gathered these disciples together in a group around Him; 3) He taught them concerning the kingdom of God; and 4) He instructed them to follow His example by teaching other disciples as He had taught them. As He left His disciples, He gave them the command in Matthew 28:19. Jesus knew His disciples could be effective in making new disciples only if He taught them. The best way for Him to do this was to gather them into a group. In this way He could instruct them together so they, in turn, could help and inspire one another. When the disciples began their ministry, they would continue this process of making disciples and gathering them together for teaching.

Today, we refer to groups of believers that meet together for these purposes as *local churches*. The functions of evangelism and teaching generally will be found in spiritually healthy local churches. The individual believer can evangelize, but usually evangelism is more effective when the believers who are trained in an established church collectively carry out this function. The

local church provides training and a place where new converts can be brought together for worship, instruction in the Bible, and Christian fellowship. Churches which provide adequate training for new disciples will prepare them for extending the church's ministry through evangelism and teaching.

Application

5 Circle the letter in front of TRUE statements describing the church's role in God's plan of evangelism.

- a)** The church is the place where the unsaved are brought to meet believers and observe a worship service.
 - b)** New believers come into the church where they learn about living the Christian life. Then they go out and win others to Christ.
 - c)** The primary role of the church is to conduct outdoor public evangelistic services.
 - d)** The church accomplishes its evangelism role through a continuing cycle of making and teaching new disciples.
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THE MINISTRY OF THE CHURCH

Ministry Has Two Functions

Objective 2. *Describe how the ministry gifts relate to starting new churches.*

KINDS OF MINISTRY GIFTS

When Jesus left His earthly ministry, the Holy Spirit came. He gave gifts of ministry to the church, and these ministry gifts help the church to fulfill its God-given mission. But how does this happen? Who performs which tasks in the church's ministry? Read the following Scriptures which discuss the nature and purpose of the ministry gifts which were given to the church: Romans 12:5–8; 1 Corinthians 12:27–31; 1 Timothy 3:1–10; and Ephesians 4:11–12.

These Scriptures give examples of the kinds of gifts of ministry God gives to the church. We can classify these gifts according to the place where they are primarily used.

1. Ministry gifts used primarily in the church body: Prophets, pastors, teachers, elders, deacons, administrators, diverse tongues.
2. Ministry gifts used primarily outside the church: Apostles and evangelists.
3. Ministry gifts used inside and outside the church: Exhorting, miracles, giving, gifts of healing, showing mercy, helps.

Although this listing gives the primary use of these ministry gifts, all of them may be used inside the church body when needed, and all of them may be used outside the church body to meet whatever needs are present. For example, the evangelist may teach those within the church how to evangelize. The pastors may preach and witness to those outside the church as well as those within the church. The purpose of making a classification of ministries is to challenge us to see that every believer has a work to do, and that God equipped us to accomplish that task.

Application

6 Read the following verses in your Bible, then write the name of each gift mentioned in each verse.

- a)** Romans 12:6
- b)** Romans 12:7
- c)** 1 Corinthians 12:8–10
- d)** Ephesians 4:11
- e)** 1 Timothy 3:10
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PURPOSE OF MINISTRY GIFTS

Paul lists five ministry gifts which are intended to provide leadership in the church. Do only certain believers possess ministry gifts to be used in performing the ministry of the church? No! All believers are to exercise gifts listed in 1 Corinthians 12:4–6 as part of the body; however, not all

believers will be called to leadership. Ephesians 4:11–12 explains the reason why: Jesus “gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.” So God’s ministry gifts to the church are given to do two things: 1) prepare God’s people for works of service, and 2) build up the body of Christ. Notice that Christ gave ministry gifts to the church to help the church fulfill His own command in Matthew 28:19. This becomes clear when we compare the two verses of Scripture:

Ephesians 4:12	Matthew 28:19
“works of service” “the body of Christ may be built up”	“go and make disciples” “teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you”

So Ephesians 4:12 shows that Christ gave ministry gifts so the church could properly carry out His command in Matthew 28:19. Ephesians 4:12 also explains this process. These ministry gifts are given to strengthen the church.

Application

7 Read 1 Corinthians 12:6, 27 and Ephesians 4:11–12, and write short answers to the following questions.

a) To what part of the local church are the ministry gifts given?

.....
.....

b) For what two purposes are ministry gifts given to the church?

.....
.....

c) List three ways in which you have seen ministry gifts used in your church.

.....
.....

- 8** New churches are started as ministry gifts are used by the church
- a)** to evangelize, then to build up new believers, who then are able to evangelize and bring other new believers into the church.
 - b)** within the body of the church since the gifts are only for the benefit of the believers.
 - c)** through the primary gift of apostles, which is necessary for starting new churches.

For a more detailed study on ministry gifts in the church you may take the course Spiritual Gifts. This is part of the Christian Service series you are now studying.

THE PLANTER OF THE CHURCH

Objective 3. *Identify spiritual qualities of a church planter.*

When a farmer plants a seed he cannot make a plant grow. He can till the soil and water it, but the seed grows by itself. The farmer does not have to be there; he simply nurtures what he has planted and provides the best environment possible for it to develop. In much the same way, a believer can witness to a person but cannot make him or her a believer. He can use great skill in telling the gospel, but only God can make the seed of faith grow in the unbeliever's heart. Starting new churches is much like that.

We can gather new believers together into a group. We can teach and encourage them to become strong in their faith, but it is the Holy Spirit who gives them faith to become a strong multiplying church. The farmer must depend on the sun and rain to cause his seed to grow, but at the same time he must work hard and continue to till the soil and water it until the crops are ready for harvest. Those who start churches have the responsibility to nurture believers, praying with them, teaching them God's Word, and leading them to respond to the working of the Holy Spirit. In this way the church will grow and bear fruit. That is why starting new churches is called church planting.

Application

- 9** Starting new churches is spoken of as “planting” new churches because
- a)** the farmer need do nothing after the seed is planted but wait for it to grow. Even so, the church planter can do nothing to help a church bear fruit.
 - b)** the gospel must be preached and the believers nurtured and cared for in order for the church to grow and bear fruit. Similarly, seed must be planted and the crops watered and cared for if they are to produce.
 - c)** seeds will grow wherever they are planted; therefore, churches will spring up wherever the gospel is preached.
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A Church Planter Sets a Good Example

Who can be a church planter? A church planter is a believer to whom God has given the opportunity to establish a church. Church planting is the result of a believer’s determination to present Christ to the lost, win converts, and then help form these converts into a local church.

What are the qualifications of a church planter? Study of the New Testament and of the lives of the early church leaders shows that the qualifications of a church planter are those required of anyone who wants to be used of God. God will lead us into certain tasks that are suitable for our personalities and talents, but a desire to be used of God is a basic requirement, whether it is to plant churches or any other phase of the work of God.

What are the qualities of one who desires to be used of God? First, and most importantly, a church planter is a servant (Philippians 2:4–7). Jesus assumed the role of a servant. He commanded all those who would be leaders to be servants (John 13:14–16). Paul became “a slave to everyone” (1 Corinthians 9:19).

A faithful servant does not base his actions on fulfilling his selfish needs. Rather, he is concerned more about the desires and welfare of those he serves. There is no need to feel competitive with other servants, since self pride and ambitions do not motivate the service rendered. The true servant finds joy in the pleasure of service.

Other qualities of the effective church planter are:

1. The church planter is a man or woman of God, who is born again and lives a Spirit-filled life (John 3:3, Acts 1:8). Paul stated that through the grace of God and the power of the Holy Spirit he preached the gospel. It was his ambition to preach where Christ was not known (Romans 15:18–20). These are some of the reasons Paul was a great church planter.
2. The church planter has a lifestyle of prayer. See Colossians 1:9–11 and Ephesians 3:14–19; 6:18. Prayer is an active involvement in bringing to pass the will of God. These verses of Scripture picture prayer as a vital function, an engagement, in spiritual warfare. Through effective, fervent prayer (James 5:16), the believer influences circumstances and situations involved in planting the church, and thus witnesses victory and blessings in places which might otherwise be failures. Paul serves as a good example. It is also true that prayer molds and fashions the individual so that he is yielded and useful in whatever circumstance God has placed him.
3. The church planter is moved by deep and continuing compassion for the lost (Romans 9:2–3). Jesus illustrated this concern for the lost in His parable of the lost son (Luke 15:11–32). He showed the necessity of self-denying devotion to the lost in His story of the shepherd searching for the lost sheep (Luke 15:3–7).
4. The church planter loves people and must be willing to give time and show concern for their problems (1 Thessalonians 2:7–8).
5. The church planter is an example of mature Christian character (1 Corinthians 11:1, 1 Thessalonians 1:6–8).


The work of God is accomplished because of the vision, love, sacrifice, and perseverance of individuals who gave themselves to the task to which God called them. One such man was working to develop an outstation church several miles from his own church. He walked there regularly to minister to the people. Often it rained at night as he walked home from the services. The hills were so slippery that he had to climb them on his hands and knees. Sometimes he would not reach home until 2:30 in the morning, and he would be covered with mud from head to foot. No one paid him to do this. He was compelled by his love for the people and the work of God. Eventually, he was able to organize the work into a church with one of his helpers as pastor. This man demonstrated the spirit of an effective church planter.

Application

10 Circle the letter of each description showing the characteristics of an effective church planter.

- a) Philip is a new Christian with a talent for public speaking. He feels he should use his talent for the Lord's work. He wants to preach because he feels that public ministry is more rewarding and important than other ministries.
- b) James has worked faithfully in his church since he was saved four years ago. He diligently studies his Bible and witnesses to the lost under the anointing of the Holy Spirit. Frequently he spends Saturdays helping the unsaved and needy people of his town.
- c) The young people in John's neighborhood like to spend evenings in his home. Although it takes much of his time, he listens to their problems, prays with them, counsels them, and gives practical help to solve their problems.

11 In your notebook write the letter of each answer you circled in 10. After each one write the qualities of an effective church planter which are demonstrated by that person.



A Church Planter Brings God's Message

Objective 4. *State basic elements of a church planter's message.*

1. Bible-based message. New churches come into existence as a result of the unsaved hearing the message of the gospel and accepting Jesus Christ as Savior. The new converts will have a firm foundation when that message is based on Scripture. The Scriptures are filled with divine authority. The Word of God is powerful; it convicts of sin and judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart (Hebrews 4:12). Recognizing this power, the apostles referred to the Old Testament Scriptures many times when they preached and taught. They used the Scriptures to show that Christ was the Messiah.

When preaching is based on the Bible, it carries the authority of God and hearers recognize this authority. The unbelieving Jews acknowledged the authority of Jesus' teaching (Matthew 7:29) and were in awe of Him: "No one ever spoke the way this man does" (John 7:46). The power of His Word is available to us today as we preach Bible based-messages. Only a Bible-based message is effective in winning the lost and establishing them in Christ.

2. Christ-centered message. Christ is the center of the message that helps to multiply churches. The good news is that Christ is the Messiah, the One in whom all the ancient prophecies have been fulfilled. He is the One who gave His life on the Cross so people may gain eternal life and forgiveness from sin. The message about the Messiah—the crucified, risen Savior—is the message which helps to make disciples and multiply churches. A great part of the message of the gospel is simply explaining who Jesus is, what He did on earth, the importance of His death and resurrection, and what He is doing and willing to do for those who believe in Him. This message changes people's lives.

3. Need-centered message. The messenger who effectively starts new churches preaches messages that will show hearers that Christ can meet their needs. The person who does not know Jesus often feels alone with no one to turn to for help. Some people are full of fear. Such people feel a need for help from someone or something beyond themselves. This search for help causes them

to take part in all sorts of religious rituals, hoping they will find an answer to their needs. Some worship ancestors. Others seek protection from the spirit world. An example of preaching to meet the needs of such people would be a message that gives a simple explanation of how sin separates from God and how Christ's sacrifice allows people to be reunited in fellowship with God. Fellowship with God gives us the resources to meet all our needs.

An evangelist friend of mine preaches a simple Christ-centered message. Often people who are sick come to hear. He does not claim to be a healer, but he tells the people how Jesus healed the sick. He tells them Jesus still heals today, and will hear them if they pray to Him in faith. Hundreds have been healed and thousands have become believers through this brother's ministry. Many churches have been started because my friend preaches to meet the needs of the people.

The gospel is a message of hope which meets the needs of the human heart. The effective messenger will understand these needs and will show how Christ can meet those needs. A need-centered message reaches people. This is the first step in starting new churches.

Application

12 Some of the topics of the following messages contain examples of qualities which are helpful in starting new churches. Match the quality (right) with the message described (left).

- | | | |
|--------------|--|-------------------------|
| ... a | Focuses on political problems and suggests solutions | 1) Need-centered |
| ... b | Speaks of God's power to heal the sick | 2) Bible-based |
| ... c | Explains Scriptures about God's love | 3) Christ-centered |
| ... d | Criticizes beliefs of other religions | 4) No spiritual quality |
| ... e | Explains salvation through Jesus Christ | |



THE POWER OF THE CHURCH

Objective 5. *Describe the Holy Spirit's work in church planting.*

The Holy Spirit Empowers Church Planters

A few years ago in the capital city of an African country, there was only one evangelical church. In a mountain region of that same country, a Christian man felt that God called him to preach the gospel. This brother had a government job with a high salary. When he quit the job to go to Bible school, his relatives were angry and persecuted him greatly. He had a wife and four small children. It was very difficult to provide for his family in the way he had before he began his studies. When he graduated from Bible school, he went to the capital city to start a new church. He started with only a few believers. Life was difficult for him and his family in the city where prices were high, but he remained faithful. Today the church is large enough to support him, and it is still growing. It is true that he receives only one-fifth of the salary he was receiving from the government, but he feels all the struggle was worthwhile because a new church was planted. Six years ago there was only one evangelical church in the capital city, but other people also followed the Lord's command and became church planters. Today that city has eighteen evangelical churches.

Why would a man leave a good job to start a church? Why would he be willing to suffer persecution from relatives? Because God has spoken to him by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit empowers people to believe God for help in reaching unreached peoples and in starting new churches.

We cannot be effective church planters without the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit. That is why Jesus told the disciples to wait in Jerusalem until they received power. Then they would be effective in His service (Acts 1:4–5, 8). In this course you are studying important methods and principles of church planting, but you will not be an effective church planter unless you are ministering the Word in the power of the Holy Spirit. Faith comes by hearing the Word of Christ (Romans 10:17). Messages anointed by the Holy Spirit will be effective.

Application

13 Read Acts 1:4–5 and 8. Then write the answers to the following questions in your notebook.

- a)** What were the disciples to do first?
 - b)** What was promised?
 - c)** What would happen in a few days?
 - d)** What would this do for them?
 - e)** Where were they to go?
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The Holy Spirit Gives Life to the Church

In addition to using good methods for church planting, it is most important to recognize the work of the Holy Spirit in giving the local church spiritual power. With proper methods and divine power, local churches can effectively multiply themselves by planting other churches. Just as the Holy Spirit enables the individual to believe for salvation so the Holy Spirit gives living, active faith to the church. Powerful evangelism may occur, but good methods combined with the power of the Holy Spirit are necessary to conserve the results and provide the support necessary to promote spiritual vitality and healthy growth.

The following example demonstrates how the Holy Spirit will revitalize a church when the believers commit themselves to prayer and claim His power.

In a Latin American country, there were very few churches and the believers were jealous and suspicious of each other. They were not zealous to do the work of God. Several Christians who were concerned about the poor spiritual condition of the churches began to meet to pray. In one week, 75 believers were filled with the Holy Spirit, and within 18 months about 300 received the infilling of the Holy Spirit. Within two years the number of believers and churches had almost doubled. The gospel was being preached in remote unreached areas of the country by believers who were full of the power of the Holy Spirit and zealous to work for God.

That is the combination of dedicated service and the power of the Holy Spirit we see in the New Testament. Mark observes, “Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it” (Mark 16:20).

Application

14 Read the following verses from the book of Acts. After each one write a brief description of what it shows about the Holy Spirit’s role in helping the apostles’ ministry.

a) Acts 2:14–41

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b) Acts 4:7–10

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c) Acts 6:8

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d) Acts 8:30–31

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e) Acts 13:24

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As we work to obey Christ’s command to make disciples in all the world, we can learn from New Testament examples of the work of the early church. Like early Christians we must work in the power and direction of the Holy Spirit. Then we will build a thriving, dynamic church of the kind Jesus envisioned: “I will build my church, and the gates of Hades

will not overcome it” (Matthew 16:18). May God richly encourage you and fill you with the power of the Holy Spirit as you continue to study methods of starting new churches.

self-test

MULTIPLE CHOICE. There is only one correct answer for each question. Circle the letter of the correct answer.

- 1** To apply an early church principle of church planting one could
- a)** go daily from town to town preaching to as many as possible.
 - b)** preach in an open air service, then gather new believers for teaching.
 - c)** direct most evangelism to children because they have unbiased minds.
 - d)** require new believers to adopt specific patterns of worship.
- 2** Events in the book of Acts show that preaching which helps to multiply churches is
- a)** scripturally based on divine authority.
 - b)** an argument against idolatry.
 - c)** based on requirements of the Mosaic law.
 - d)** used to condemn followers of other religions.
- 3** Which describes a person who allows the Holy Spirit to work in his or her life?
- a)** Joe preaches about the sins of idolatry to a group of people who have never heard the gospel.
 - b)** William is fearful to tell his father that he has become a Christian.
 - c)** John preaches at a village even after the heathen people have burned the new church building.
 - d)** Sarah hears the gospel several times, then decides to wait to decide about giving her life to Christ.
- 4** Pastors, elders, prophets, and administrators are ministry gifts used primarily
- a)** for evangelizing the lost.
 - b)** in the church body.
 - c)** outside the church as a witness.

5 Which pastor is encouraging the church as a body to develop the use of ministry gifts?

- a)** John allows every member to participate in church ministries according to his or her ability.
- b)** Samuel carefully selects those with leadership abilities to participate in ministry.

6 Faith which enables a person to believe for salvation is a result of

- a)** hearing the eloquent preaching of the church planter.
- b)** efficient planning of evangelistic services.
- c)** systematic memorizing of doctrine.
- d)** hearing the Word of God.

TRUE-FALSE. Write T in front of the TRUE statements, and F in front of those which are FALSE.

- ... **7** The primary purpose of the local church body is to hold evangelistic services to preach to unbelievers.
- ... **8** The main purpose for ministry gifts in the church is to enable all members to speak in tongues.
- ... **9** Ministry gifts are in the church to strengthen the believers in faith and knowledge of the Word.
- ... **10** To witness to unbelievers and make disciples is a special calling for only certain Christians.
- ... **11** Accounts in Acts indicate that winning adults to Christ helps to bring families to the Lord.
- ... **12** A church multiplies through the Holy Spirit's power to conserve the work of evangelism and promote spiritual growth.

answers to study questions

The answers to your study exercises are not given in the usual order, so that you will not easily see the answer to your next question ahead of time. Try not to look ahead.

- 8 a)** to evangelize, then to build up new believers, who then are able to evangelize and bring other new believers into the church.
- 1 a)** True
- b)** False. After Pentecost the believers worshipped openly in the temple courts, in homes, and other public places.
- c)** True
- d)** False. New converts were baptized immediately after repentance. See Acts 2:41.
- 9 b)** the gospel must be preached and the believers nurtured and cared for in order for the church to grow and bear fruit. Similarly, seed must be planted and the crops watered and cared for if they are to produce.
- 2 a)** salvation is only through the acceptance of the grace of Jesus Christ.
- 10 b)** James has worked faithfully in his church since he was saved four years ago. He diligently studies his Bible and witnesses to the lost under the anointing of the Holy Spirit. Frequently he spends Saturdays helping the unsaved and needy people of his town.
- c)** The young people in John's neighborhood like to spend evenings in his home. Although it takes much of his time, he listens to their problems, prays with them, counsels them, and gives practical help to solve their problems.
- 3 a)** 3) Acts 2:14–41; 4:1–2
- b)** 2) Acts 5:12, 25, 42
- c)** 1) Acts 13:1–3
- d)** 6) Acts 15:1–20
- e)** 5) Acts 10; 16:31–33
- f)** 4) Acts 2:41–47

- 11** In any order
- b)** Born again, filled with the Holy Spirit, servant, love and compassion for the lost, a mature Christian.
 - c)** Servant, love and compassion for people, man of prayer.
- 4 a)** 1) Evangelism
- b)** 2) Teaching
 - c)** 2) Teaching
 - d)** 1) Evangelism
- 12 a)** 4) No spiritual quality
- b)** 1) Need-centered
 - c)** 2) Bible-based
 - d)** 4) No spiritual quality
 - e)** 3) Christ-centered
- 5 b)** and **d)** are true.
- 13 a)** They were to wait in Jerusalem.
- b)** They would receive the gift of the Father.
 - c)** They would be baptized in the Holy Spirit.
 - d)** They would receive power and become witnesses.
 - e)** They were to go to Jerusalem, Samaria and to the ends of the earth.
- 6 a)** Prophecy
- b)** Serving, teaching
 - c)** Wisdom, knowledge, faith, miracles, healing, prophecy, tongues, interpretation of tongues, distinguishing of spirits
 - d)** Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers
 - e)** Deacons, overseers
- 7 a)** To all believers, or all the body of Christ
- b)** To prepare for service, and build up the body of Christ
 - c)** Your answer. Examples could be teaching, edifying, or leadership

14 Your answer

- a)** The Holy Spirit helped Peter preach a message and many people repented and were baptized.
- b)** The Holy Spirit helped people through the disciples and helped the disciples when they were in trouble with the authorities.
- c)** He helped Stephen do miracles.
- d)** He helped Philip explain the gospel to the man in the chariot.
- e)** He directed people to become involved in special ministry.

