

# Fellowship of Believers The Organization

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# What We Will Learn

- Purpose of Fellowship of the Believers
- Organized around the apostles
- Bear witness to resurrection of Lord Jesus
  - Prayer
  - Teaching, healing and miracles
  - God will grant a prayer if the purpose is consistent with his mission

# What We Will Learn, cont'd

- Type of organization
- Communal living
- Whatever belonged to a member belonged to the organization
- Membership: believers only

# What We Will Learn, cont'd

- Success could make enemies
- High priest and Sadducees
  - Crucified Jesus and want him forgotten
  - Instead his followers thrive
  - Perform miracles and healing
  - Jealous and enraged at the believers
- Gamaliel, teacher of the law, saved the day
- Acts 4 & 5

# The Believers' Prayer

- After trial of Peter and John at Sanhedrin
- Believers raised their voice in prayer
- Praised God and asked as follows
- To speak the word with great boldness
- Heal and perform miracles in Jesus' name
- God granted their prayer immediately
- Acts 4:23–31

## Acts 4 (NIV)

23 On their release, Peter and John went back to their own people and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said to them.

24 When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God. "Sovereign Lord," they said, "you made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and everything in them.

## Acts 4 (NIV)

25 You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David: " 'Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain?

26 The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the Lord and against his Anointed One. '

## Acts 4 (NIV)

27 Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed.

28 They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen.

29 Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness.



## Acts 4 (NIV)

30 Stretch out your hand to heal and perform miraculous signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus."

31 After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.

# Understanding the Believers' Prayer

- Both prayer points concern interaction
  - Deliver message boldly
  - Convey God's mercy and glory through healing and miracles
- Asked God to enhance their effectiveness in positive human interaction

# Positive Human Interaction

- Interaction for God's purpose
- Provide for another person's need without expecting reward [Matthew 25:35–36]
- Do things that convey the image of God
  - Others feel God
  - Know more about God
  - Examples: prayer, gospel, miracle, healing, day-to-day living that conveys image of God

# God Grants Prayer for Positive Human Interaction

- You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it [John 14:14]
- “In my name” means “for God’s purpose”
- The believers’ prayer
- Solomon’s prayer for wisdom
- David’s prayer against Goliath
- Each asked to be effective in positive human interaction

# The Organization

- Spiritual purpose
  - Preach and teach the gospel
  - Heal the sick and perform miracles
- Communal living: everything shared
  - Property owners sold the properties
  - Brought the proceeds for common use
  - Distributed according to need
- Acts 4:32–37

## Acts 4 (NIV)

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.

33 With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all.

## Acts 4 (NIV)

34 There were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales

35 and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone as he had need.

## Acts 4 (NIV)

36 Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means Son of Encouragement),

37 sold a field he owned and brought the money and put it at the apostles' feet.



# The Organization cont'd

- Only believers joined the organization
- Acts 5:12–14

## **Acts 5 (NIV)**

12 The apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders among the people. And all the believers used to meet together in Solomon's Colonnade.

13 No one else dared join them, even though they were highly regarded by the people.

14 Nevertheless, more and more men and women believed in the Lord and were added to their number.

# The Organization cont'd

- Ananias and wife Sapphira
  - Sold property
  - Withheld part of proceeds
  - Lied to the organization and to God
  - Paid with their life
- Acts 5:1–10 [Not read in session]
- Disobeyed a core principle of the organization

# The Apostles Arrested

- High priest and associates were jealous
- Were part of the conspiracy to crucify Jesus
- Wished he was forgotten
- Instead his followers thrive
- Preach about his life and resurrection
- Healed the sick and performed miracles
- In his name

# The Apostles Arrested cont'd

- Arrested the apostles
- Put them on trial before the Sanhedrin
- Gamaliel, teacher of the law, cautions
  - Leave the apostles alone
  - They will fail if of human origin
  - But will be unstoppable if of God
- Acts 5:17–42 [Not read in session]

# Lessons from the Apostles' Arrest

- Even for your good work
- People may oppose you
- They have an opposite interest
- Are jealous of your accomplishment
- Think that only they should do the work

# What We Learned

- If you pray to be more effective as God's messenger, he will grant your prayer
- Before joining an organization, be sure you accept its core values
- Don't rely on cheating around the values you don't like
- People may oppose even your good work because they are jealous