



Ps. Nate Conant — Indio Campus

SEPTEMBER SERIES: I LOVE MY CHURCH

September 6, 2026 — Week One

***Core Theme:** Building a Stronger Church Through Community, Service, Giving, and Sharing.*

***Primary Goal:** Turn the 80/20 rule upside down by helping every attendee discover the joy, growth, and purpose of active church involvement.*

GET CONNECTED: *The Power Of Community*

And I tell you, you are Peter [Greek, Petros—a large piece of rock], and on this rock [Greek, Petra—a huge rock like Gibraltar] **I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH**, and the gates of Hades (the powers of the infernal region) shall not overpower it [or be strong to its detriment or hold out against it]. — **Matthew 16:18 (AMPC)**

The Church isn't a building you visit — it's a family you belong to and a mission you carry.

42 All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord's Supper), and to prayer. **43** A deep sense of awe came over them all, and the apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders. **44** And all the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had. **45** They sold their property and possessions and shared the money with those in need. **46** They worshiped together at the temple each day, met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity— **47** all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved. — **Acts 2:42–47 (NLT)**

"You can have many acquaintances, but you only have a few friends. It's the same with church; you can attend many services, but you only belong to a family."

— Adapted from Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Life Together

OPENING

When Jesus first used the word "church"—the Greek Ekklesia (ἐκκλησία) is a formal assembly or gathering of various citizens.

EKKLESIA literally means "CALLED-OUT ONES (PLURAL)."

It's a collective term. It's not about you, and it's not about me. It's about us.

"Great fear seized the whole church (*ekklesia*) and all who heard about these events."
— Acts 5:11 (NIV)

"Now when they had come and gathered the church (ekklesia) together, they reported all that God had done with them, and that He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles." — Acts 14:27 (NKJV)

ILLUSTRATION - TSHIRTS

Christian theology has consistently pushed back against hyper-individualism, emphasizing that the church is an interconnected organism—the "Body of Christ"—rather than a collection of isolated believers.

We live in a culture that screams, "What can I get out of this?" Consumer Christianity has become the norm with a selfish desire of how the church can serve "ME". But the early church didn't start with "what can I get?" They started with "how can we serve?" They didn't gather to receive; they gathered to represent.

If we view church as something centered on our personal experience, we miss the point entirely. Church isn't a spectator sport or a personal service; it's a living, breathing body. Today, we're going to tear down the idea that church is about you, and step into the truth of what it means to be us. Because the Church isn't a building you visit—it's a family you belong to, and a mission you carry.

WE ARE THE CHURCH

MY SON RECRUIT, MATTEO

"The Bible knows nothing of solitary religion. The gospel of Christ knows of no religion, but social; no holiness but social holiness. 'Faith working by love' is the length and breadth and depth and height of Christian perfection." ~ John Wesley (Hymns and Sacred Poems)

"The Christian needs another Christian who speaks God's Word to him. He needs him again and again when he becomes uncertain and discouraged, for by himself he cannot help himself without falsifying the truth... The Christ in his own heart is weaker than the Christ in the word of his brother; his own heart is uncertain, his brother's is sure." ~ Dietrich Bonhoeffer (Life Together)

In United States Marine Corps recruit training, recruits are strictly forbidden from using first-person pronouns like "I," "me," or "my."

Erasing civilian individualism: The primary objective of boot camp is transforming civilians into a unified fighting force. Eliminating self-referential language strips away personal ego and reinforces that the individual is no longer the center of attention.

Building a unit-first mindset:

1. THE CHURCH WAS MADE FOR WAR

“And I tell you, you are Peter [Greek, *Petros*—a large piece of rock], and on this rock [Greek, *petra*—a huge rock like Gibraltar] **I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH**, and the gates of Hades (the powers of the infernal region) shall not overpower it [or be strong to its detriment or hold out against it].” — **Matthew 16:18 (AMPC)**

3 “For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. **4** The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds.” — **2 Corinthians 10:3-4 (NIV)**

The Church was never designed to be a country club for saints or a museum of religious tradition; it was designed to be an army for the Kingdom. When Jesus declared in Matthew 16:18 that “the gates of hell shall not prevail” against His Church, He was giving us a tactical directive: gates are defensive structures. They don't attack; they try to keep people in. That means the Church is called to be on the offensive, storming the gates to rescue the lost and set the captives free.

We aren't here to play defense, protecting our own comfort and waiting for the end. We are here to advance. Spiritual warfare is not a distraction from our mission—it is the context of our mission. If we aren't fighting for the souls of those in our Oikos, we aren't just losing territory; we're forgetting who we are.

We are soldiers, not civilians. It's time to stop treating the Church like a spectator sport and start taking our place on the frontlines. The battle is real, the stakes are eternal, and victory is promised to those who don't retreat.

2. THE CHURCH IS A FAMILY, NOT A FACILITY

“Those who believed what Peter said were baptized and added to the church that day—about 3,000 in all.” - **Acts 2:41 (NLT)**

The Believers Form a Community

“All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching, and to **fellowship**, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord’s Supper), and to prayer.” — **Acts 2:42 (NLT)**

Greek Word Study — *κοινωνία* (*koinonia*) -expresses active participation in a common life

The word translated “fellowship” in Acts 2:42 is *koinonia*.

*It doesn't mean coffee and small talk in the lobby. It means partnership, shared life, common ownership — the kind of bond where what's mine is available to you and what's yours is available to me. Luke doesn't just use the word and move on — he shows you what it looked like two verses later: “All the believers were together and had everything in common” (Acts 2:44), and again in Acts 4:32, “no one claimed that any of their possessions was their own.” That's the same root word in action. *Koinonia* isn't proximity. It's investment.*

*You can sit three feet from someone in a pew for ten years and never have *koinonia* with them. Fellowship isn't about being in the same room. It's about being in each other's lives.*

In Acts 2, right after 3,000 people got saved on the Day of Pentecost, Luke doesn't say they found a great building. He says they devoted themselves to four things: the apostles' teaching, fellowship, the breaking of bread, and prayer (Acts 2:42).

They worshiped together at the temple each day, met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity — Acts 2:46 (NLT)

Notice verse 46 — they were together in the temple courts every day, but the breaking of bread happened house to house. The early church was born in a family room before it ever had a sanctuary.

Jesus defines His family by obedience:

"Pointing to his disciples, he said, 'Here are my mother and my brothers. For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.'" — Matthew 12:49–50 (NLT)

Family should be a priority:

"Therefore, whenever we have the opportunity, we should do good to everyone—especially to those in the family of faith." — Galatians 6:10 (NLT)

Family is both Public & Private:

"You know that I have not hesitated to preach anything that would be helpful to you but have taught you publicly and from house to house." — Acts 20:20 (NIV)

"The church is not a place you go, but a people you become."

3. THE CHURCH GROWS IN HOMES, NOT JUST TEMPLE COURTS

"All the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved. — Acts 2:47 (NLT)

Acts 5:42 (NIV) says it again: "Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching."

Acts 20:20 records Paul telling the Ephesian elders, "I have not hesitated to preach anything that would be helpful to you but have taught you publicly and from house to house." Public and house to house — not one or the other.

The temple courts were the row. The house was the circle. Luke never treats them as competitors — but he never lets the temple courts stand alone, either.

Rows are great for a lot of things. You can see the stage from a row. You can worship from a row. You can take notes from a row. But nobody in Scripture was ever disciplined from a row — they were disciplined house to house. Rows face forward. Circles face each other.

That's exactly what we see in Acts 12. When Peter is thrown in prison, the church doesn't gather at the temple to pray for him — Acts 12:12 says they were praying in a house, the home of Mary the mother of John Mark. That house-circuit had

enough power in it that when Peter showed up at the door after his miraculous release, the people praying inside couldn't even believe it was really him. That's what happens when you're actually

"Small groups are not a program of the church; they are the church in action."

4. THE CHURCH IS A PLACE TO BE HEALED

12 The apostles performed many 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. **15** As a result, people brought the sick into the streets and laid them on beds and mats so that at least Peter's shadow might fall on some of them as he passed by. **16** Crowds gathered also from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing their sick and those tormented by impure spirits, and all of them were healed. — **Acts 5:12–16 (NIV)**

PHYSICAL HEALING

- **Healing of Bodily Infirmities:** People brought the sick on beds and mats into the streets, expecting to be healed by the apostles' presence (Acts 5:15–16).
- **Healing through Proximity:** The text specifically notes that people believed that even Peter's shadow falling on them would be enough to restore their physical health (Acts 5:15).
- **Signs and Wonders:** The apostles performed "many signs and wonders" throughout the community, which served as tangible, public proof of God's power moving through the early church (Acts 5:12).

MENTAL & SPIRITUAL HEALING

- **Deliverance from Torment:** The passage specifically mentions that those "tormented by impure spirits" were brought to the apostles and healed (Acts 5:16). This indicates freedom from spiritual oppression, fear, and mental anguish, not just physical illness.
- **Restoration of Peace and Awe:** By witnessing these miracles, the community was filled with awe (as seen in Acts 2:43 and implied in the "highly regarded" status of the believers in Acts 5:13), replacing the anxiety and hopelessness that often accompany physical or spiritual affliction.

CALL TO ACTION CHALLENGE

This week, take one step off the row and into a circle. Specifically:

- Sign up for a Life Group before you leave today - via the church app
- Be a Barnabas — invite one person from your row to join you this week, and personally walk them in like Barnabas did for Saul.
- Get three names. This week, learn the names of three people sitting near you and actually use them.

This is your Covenant Harvest step for the week — a small, specific act of obedience that God multiplies. Family isn't formed by good intentions. It's formed by shown-up Tuesdays.
