

Every team needs a game plan before they compete in a match. On this Confirmation Sunday, we look at Acts 2:42–47 to get a window into God’s game plan for His Church on Earth.

God’s game plan has five aspects: teaching, fellowship, worship, service, and witness. And the first three lead to the last two. In other words, **TEACHING, FELLOWSHIP, AND WORSHIP WITH JESUS LEADS TO HIS SERVICE AND WITNESS.**

First, I. Jesus feeds Christians through teaching, fellowship, and worship. Our first verse tells us a lot about how the early church did things, and how we can follow in their footsteps. Acts 2:42 reads, **“And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.”**

Jesus feeds Christians through the Apostles’ teaching. Earlier this month I got coffee with a youth leader at a big local church and he said that of the eighty middle school and high school youth who attend his Wednesday night he said twenty don’t identify as Christians and another twenty identify as Christians but can’t explain the Gospel.

You need to know the Apostles’ teaching to be a Christian. I am thankful that I’ve had over fifty hours of teaching with Jake in junior confirmation to teach him what the Bible teaches and what it means to be a Christian. It’s certainly not all there is to know, but he understands the basics.

One of the things I learned about Jake is that he is a Kansas City Chiefs fan. They didn’t win the Superbowl just by being the most athletic. Each of them knows the rules by heart. They have spent countless hours watching tape of their opponents. They needed head knowledge to play the season they played and ultimately to beat the Eagles.

As Christians, we devote ourselves to the Apostles’ teaching because it is Christ’s teaching. When we study God’s Word in Bible class or in personal devotions, when we read a theology book, or when we listen to a pastor in the sermon, we are devoting ourselves to the Apostles’ teaching. You need to know the Jesus who you believe in, and devoting ourselves to the Apostle’s teaching is a first step to a spiritually healthy lifestyle.

Christ is our shepherd. He is our savior. He is our Lord. However, we never grow out of Jesus being our teacher.

Next, Jesus feeds Christians through fellowship. Acts 2:42 tells us that the first Christians devoted themselves to the fellowship. To continue our sports analogy, a good sports team is more than the sum of its parts. The big news is Aaron Rodgers being traded to the Jets. We’ll see how he does next season. There’s more to football than skill, teamwork makes a good team great.

In the same vein, Christians need the fellowship of the Church. There is no such thing as a lone wolf Christian. When I talk about fellowship, I don’t just mean more potlucks. It’s about having a crew that you know has your back. It’s men helping out men when one locked his keys in his car. It’s women driving women when one of them starts feeling too sick to drive. It’s us confessing our sins to one another and asking for help when we need it.

In Acts 2:42, I count three things the Christians devoted themselves to. The Apostle's Teaching, the prayers, and the fellowship that is the breaking of the bread. True fellowship finds its basis in the breaking of the bread which is a shorthand for Holy Communion. We view the Lord's Supper not just as a fellowship with God, but a fellowship with one another which is why we only admit to the altar those who are at peace with their fellow Christians and those who are in harmony with the Apostles' teachings.

This is an exciting day as Jake gets to be admitted to the fellowship of communion. There is a real blessing in receiving the Lord's Supper. Watching the live stream of the service is a blessing for those who can't make it, but it is as big of a difference between watching the Chiefs victory parade from a television and being there for the real thing in Kansas City.

Finally, Jesus feeds Christians through worship. Acts 2:42 tells us that the earliest Christians devoted themselves to the prayers. Part of the reason why the Chiefs won the Superbowl is that practice wasn't optional. No amount of tape watching and play review can replace time on the field and in the gym.

Here is my radical proposition: if every member of this congregation treated worship attendance with the same seriousness and devotion as high school football coaches treated practice attendance, this congregation would be bursting at the seams as not only would we be transformed by Christ's forgiveness, but so would those with whom we come into contact as that love of Christ spills over to others.

One person once asked me why we sit and stand so much during the worship service. The reason why you stand and sit so much is that you're not just a spectator, you are a participant. In football games the fans in the stands are called the twelfth man. But in worship, the role is reversed. You're not here to see me, I'm here to see you. I'm the twelfth man, you're the team. I'm a mini-Christ figurine who is here simply to deliver to you the gifts of Jesus won for you at Calvary.

I'm here to give you Christ's forgiveness in the confession and absolution. Christ's forgiveness as I preach to you and absolve you in the sermon. Christ's forgiveness as I feed you with the very body and blood of Christ in the fellowship that's the breaking of the bread. Christ's blessings as I pronounce a blessing upon you in which the Lord truly blesses you and keeps you, shines His face upon you, and gives you peace.

As the Lord feeds you through teaching, fellowship, and worship, II. Jesus leads Christians to his service and witness. As the early church feasted on this diet of Word and Sacrament, the results were nothing short of miraculous. We see significant acts of service. **“And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need.”**

The point of course is not that we in our modern day need to live in a kind of commune. The point is that Christ's Easter victory leads us to acts of service.

In November 2020, Actors Ryan Reynolds and Rob McElhenney (Mac-El-Henney) purchased a minor league soccer club in Wales, Wrexham AFC. Wrexham has a similar population to La Crosse, but it has fallen on hard times as blue-collar industries moved out of town. A key part of Reynolds and McElhenney's vision in buying the club

was to give back to the community. Soccer is more than just kicking a ball. For the people of Wrexham, a successful soccer team means jobs. It means fellowship with fellow fans. It means youth programs to keep them off the streets and keep them healthy.

Just this week, Wrexham won the league, meaning their team is promoted from the semi-professional national league to the professional League two. Wrexham locals know this means more jobs, more tourism, and more funds which the football club can spend on ways to improve the community.

We can appreciate and applaud team owners who have a goal of improving the communities in which their teams play. But wouldn't it be exciting to see the Church as an organization greater than a soccer team to improve the lives of those in our community?

An LCMS church in the inner city of Fort Wayne, Indiana was going to be affected by a construction project that would hinder people's access to the building. The city had a public hearing about it, and a bunch of neighbors showed up and talked about how the city couldn't do this to *their* church.

The pastor was dumbfounded at the hearing because he didn't know those people who came up to speak. They weren't members. They didn't worship there. Yet through the service programs of the church, those individuals identified with the church and claimed it as their own. Were that we were such a congregation to our neighborhood!

Finally, the result of Jesus spiritually feeding us is witness. Our text concludes, **“And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.”** As the Holy Spirit worked in the hearts of the Christians to do everything described in our text, the result was growth.

Even deep in Packer's territory, Jake would love to give you reasons to start cheering for the Kansas City Chiefs, or maybe he'd just tell you you'd have to go to Arrowhead Stadium to meet the fans and feel the atmosphere.

Jake is about to take a serious vow today. A promise to face death rather than deny Jesus. It's a promise that we can only say yes to by the grace of God. As the Holy Spirit fills us through teaching, fellowship, and worship, we can't help but witness to everything Jesus has done.

One of the earliest Christians, Polycarp, was taken to an arena, not a football arena, but a gladiator arena to be executed. Given the option of denying Christ or being burned at the stake. Polycarp said, “For eighty-six years I have been his servant, and he has done me no wrong. And how can I now blaspheme my king who saved me?” Dear Christian friend, Christ has been good to you all the years of your life. He has fed you through the Apostles' Teaching, the fellowship that is the breaking of the bread, and the prayers. Jake, my prayer for you today is that you see that Christ has been good to you and will continue to be good all your days.