



## 1 Thess 1:2-7

2 We always thank God for all of you and continually mention you in our prayers. 3 We remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

4 For we know, brothers and sisters loved by God, that he has chosen you, 5 because our gospel came to you not simply with words but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and deep conviction. You know how we lived among you for your sake. 6 You became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you welcomed the message in the midst of severe suffering with the joy given by the Holy Spirit. 7 And so you became a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia.

## Ekklesia - God's key to showing the world the Kingdom of God.

### Matt 16:16, 18-20

*Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."*

*18 And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. 19 I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." 20 Then he ordered his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.*

### Matt 18: 17-20

*If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector.*

*18 "Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.*

*19 "Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. 20 For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them."*

## Ekklesia

Jesus only speaks three times about the community, the church.

What Jesus meant by Ekklesia was a pagan custom, known to the Jewish people. Where two or three Romans were together, the Roman Empire was represented by the people. There the group could make decisions as representatives of their empire. They had been given power by the Roman emperor to carry out these decisions.

Consider for a moment Paul who was taken to prison without judgement (Act 16:22,37). This was not allowed under Roman law.

The Ekklesia could meet anywhere, in companies, the army, the school, the family and so on. Jesus instituted something revolutionary. So He was not talking about the temple where there was worship and the ark in the most holy place. Nor did He mention the many synagogues where the Torah was taught. Jesus said that the Ekklesia would be where people would gather in the name of the King. It was not only the priests who could serve God, but now it was everyone, the common man.

The Holy Spirit was not poured out in the temple or the synagogue. He was not poured out on the High Priest or the priests. But in the upper room where laypeople were gathered together by the command of Jesus.





### Characteristics in the Book of Acts of the Ekklesia.

1. They met regularly to fellowship, usually around meals.
2. There was a lot of prayer.
3. They followed the apostles' teaching about the Kingdom of God

### How was the Ekklesia known by the people?

1. Signs and miracles were normal. Healings, deliverances, forgiveness of sins. Raising the dead, and angels were normal happenings.
2. Care of widows, orphans and the needy. Men and women were appointed to care for the needs of the community, especially those who were poor and without provision.

### How did the Ekklesia pray?

1. Proclamation of **Jesus as King** of the Kingdom on Earth. Jesus said where He or His disciples were, there the Kingdom of God had come. The disciples followed this example. Wherever they were they proclaimed the Kingdom and Jesus as King.
2. **The empty seat.** The disciples knew the principle of the man/woman of peace. They were always open to go by the Spirit to people of influence. Think of Lydia and Cornelius (Acts 10,16) By meeting these people, a new area of influence opened. They understood that spirits influence people and areas. By introducing the right people to the Kingdom of God, they became the open door for the Spirit of God in their area of authority.
3. Jesus taught **to bind** the gates of Hades and the influences of the kingdom of darkness and **to loose** the blessings from heaven.
4. Blessings from Abraham. Jesus and the apostles knew that if you lived in obedience to God, the favor of God would come on your life. That is why Paul writes that we are joint heirs with Abraham, our father in obedience to God. The blessings that God gave to Abraham also come through Jesus in our lives, our families, company, training institute, neighborhood, sports association, street, etc.

### What is the teaching that the apostles gave so that entire cities and areas changed?

Like Jesus, the apostles understood that you cannot bring people at home with God the Father if you are not at home with God the Father yourself. That is why Jesus and the apostles speak a lot about God as Father. Relationship, being together and experiencing God together is the way to learn and live apostolic teaching.

The apostles chose people everywhere to follow them. Paul especially had disciples he took with him from almost every city he went to. On the road together, learning together, experiencing together and doing together.

In the teachings of Jesus and later of the apostles we see that they always speak about the Kingdom of God. And they demonstrated this too. Their teaching was mainly focused on hearing first and then applying. It was not classroom learning but applying in practice what was taught.

### Three Stages of Discipleship

**FOLLOW-** In the first phase, voluntary Follow was the hallmark of Jesus' call. There was no compulsion or obligation. This was for the masses. The teaching was often simple about what the Kingdom of God actually was. Jesus was not even very specific about it. Leaders like Jesus showed their followers something better, something worth following.

**DISCIPLE-** In the second phase, Jesus chooses men and trains them more directly. We know that many men and women followed His group regularly. At this stage Jesus asks not only to follow Him but to apply what He taught. Hear, watch and do was His motto.

**SERVE-** In the final stage, Jesus gives His authority and power (Serve) to go, preach and perform miracles. He also gives his Holy Spirit to go with His disciples to do these things.

### **PRINCIPLE**

*Ekklesia is the key that God gives to reach cities, tribes and nations with the good news of His Kingdom. In Ekklesia people come together for relationship, prayer and teaching about the Kingdom of God. Together they experience the King on earth there.*

