

Neighbourhood Evangelism Centers

“And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.”
Acts 5:42

“And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publickly, and from house to house.”
Acts 20:20

Church Born At Home

Have you ever considered where the Holy Ghost was poured out on the Day of Pentecost? It was an **“upper room.”** ***“And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room...”*** (Acts 1:13) This was a room traditionally set aside by rich people to entertain their visitors. The Holy Ghost was not poured out in the temple or chapel but in someone’s home. With three thousand added to the church on the first day, where do you think they continued to worship? They continued in fellowship both in the temple, on Solomon’s porch, and in their houses. After all Jesus had promised:

How Big is a Church?

“For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” (Matthew 18:20)

When the Gentiles started coming into the church they were not even able to go to the Jewish temple. That was okay because they knew that the building is not the church. People are the church. We can’t hide behind the four walls of our churches but we must get out to where the people are. We must carry out the Great Commission. Telling people to “come to our church and grow with us” does not do this. Rather we must **“Go.”**

Reinhard Bonnke wrote an article entitled, **Observance of the Apostolic Ministry.** In it he states, **“the apostolic ministry can be summed up in one word: ‘Go!’** Our task is no smaller than that of the first apostles nor is it any different. Indeed, we can be sure of one thing: If we go as they went we shall get what they got. The task remains unchanged, and neither has God changed in the slightest degree. God will do for us what He did for the apostles if we do for God what the apostles did, because God never changes.”

We have the **apostolic message** of salvation contained in Acts 2:38, but many times we don’t use the **apostolic methods** of spreading the gospel. What would happen if we started to do what the Apostles did? How did they go about evangelizing the known world? They did it from house to house.

Houses in the New Testament were a place where people could gather to hear the Word, pray, and have fellowship. The church existed for three hundred years without a building, yet they filled Jerusalem with their doctrine and turned the world upside down.

“And DAILY in the TEMPLE and in EVERY HOUSE, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.”
(Acts 5:42)

If this was the Apostolic plan, why is it that we only meet in church buildings on certain days of the week? Why is it that we now feel that we must have a church building before we can have a church? We that live our lives according to the Bible, need to let the Bible methods become our model, pattern, and way of life.

Anthony Tamel reports that when people were asked, **“What or who was responsible for your coming to Christ or church?”** that the people responded with the following percentages:

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|-----------------------------------|-------------|
| 1. A special need | 1% |
| 2. Walked in to the church | 2-3% |
| 3. Pastor | 1-2% |
| 4. Visitation | 1-2% |
| 5. Sunday School | 4-5% |

Cell Ministry

6. Evangelistic Crusade	.05%
7. Church Programs	2-3%
8. A Friend or Relative	75-90%

(Note: Much of Anthony Tamel's materials on the Cell Ministry were studied in preparation for this lesson. He has an excellent cell ministry in his local church and travels around the world promoting this vital ministry.)

From the above list we can see that 75 to 90 per cent of all people coming to Christ or coming to church have come because of a friend or a relative.

People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care!

With house to house evangelism and cell groups we can take the gospel to where the people are and provide more points of entry (soul saving stations) into the Kingdom of God. Houses can become evangelism centers. **Home churches provide for a dynamic neighbourhood evangelism method.** Here we can penetrate Satan's kingdom and bring the light of the gospel into the darkness. Cell groups would cause us to always be looking at meeting the needs of people and reaching out. Through this method you can share Christ with a lost world. In many countries people are not motivated to pay high transport costs to attend churches. They tend to go to the church that is nearest to them; the community church. With the cell church people will not have to travel but they can come to a **"neighbourhood evangelism center."** People are more apt to open up and share their lives with small groups of people they count as their friends. After all, the church is the new extended family of the newly converted believer. The cell church is like an extension cord. When plugged into the power source (mother church) it can be extended to a far distance.

Deacons have been described as men who are responsible for the hands-on ministry of the church. Some pastors require their deacons to plant a new church in order to maintain being a deacon. Deacons and local church leaders can be used in establishing neighbourhood evangelism centers.

The Key To Growth
Multiplication

Addition is something that we learned when we were small children. The next step in mathematical learning is multiplication. In church life, few believers or churches go beyond addition to multiplication.

"But the word of God grew and multiplied." (Acts 12:24)

"And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly..." (Acts 6:7)

God has promised us a great outpouring in the last days and the small church buildings that we now have will not be able to hold the outpouring that God wants to send to us. It is not time for us to think in terms of adding to the church but rather in terms of multiplication.

James Rutz said that, **"the heart of the traditional church is the Sunday service."** We go to church on Sunday morning as a spectator and we leave and forget about church until the next Sunday morning. The traditional church does not provide appropriate care for its entire people; doesn't build people in their own ministry; and does not do a lot to provide fellowship. It has been often said, **"home is where your heart is."** This is a good reason why the gospel should be taken into the homes, where the hearts of the people are.

A home is a more personal or private place to meet than a church building. Like Cornelius in Acts 10 we can invite our friends and relatives and they can hear the words of salvation and church growth can take place.

"Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved. And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning." (Acts 11:14-15)

"And on the morrow after they had entered into Caesarea. And Cornelius waited for them, and had called together his kinsmen and near friends." (Acts 10:24)

Look at some other Scriptures that point to cell groups, house to house evangelism, and small groups as being a Biblical method of evangelism.

Neighbourhood Evangelism Centers in Acts and the Epistles

- **“Like wise greet the church that is in their HOUSE.” (Romans 16:5)**
- **“The churches of Asia salute you. Aquilla and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their HOUSE.” (1 Corinthians 16:19)**
- **“Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church which is in his HOUSE.” (Colossians 4:15)**
- **“And to our beloved Apphia, and Archippus our fellow soldier, and to the church in thy HOUSE.” (Philemon 1:2)**
- **“And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy HOUSE.” (Acts 16:31)**
- **“And when he had considered the thing, he came to the HOUSE of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together praying.” (Acts 12:12)**
- **“...There came many to him into his LODGING; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus...from morning till evening.” (Acts 28:23)**
- **“And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired HOUSE, and received all that came in unto him, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.” (Acts 28:30-31)**

Have you ever noticed that the Acts of the Apostles closes with Paul preaching the gospel in his own **Neighbourhood Evangelism Center**?

Cell groups are also called home fellowship groups or care fellowship groups. In a broader

sense they could be considered as preaching points, church plants, or satellite works. They meet once a week, usually at a time when church is not scheduled. You can make up Bible Studies of your own, or use Portable Bible School lessons, or small group lessons are available. Besides teaching the Word of God you would have fellowship, and a time of praises, worship, and prayer.

The Principle of the Neighbourhood Evangelism Center
“...As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”
(Joshua 24:15)

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What did Jesus promise in Matthew 18:20? _____
2. Who is the church? _____
3. What do some pastors require their deacons to do? _____
4. How long did the church exist before they started having church buildings? _____
5. What were houses used for in the New Testament church? _____
6. What was the Apostolic (Biblical) plan for evangelizing the world? _____
7. Where is the Apostolic (Biblical) plan of salvation located? _____
8. How does the largest percentage of people come into the church? _____
9. How does the lowest percentage of people come into the church? _____
10. People don't care how much you know until what happens? _____

11. What is the key to growth? _____

12. Give two Scriptures that speak about churches being in houses. _____

13. Why are cell groups or neighbourhood evangelism centers considered to be a good, effective ministry? _____

14. How many people does it take before Jesus promises that He will be in the midst of them? _____

15. How many people do you think you must have before you can start a church?

16. Reinhard Bonnke claims that the apostolic ministry can be summed up in one word. What is it? _____

17. What needs to take place in order for God to do for us what He did for the Apostles? _____

Additional Notes