

The Way of the Early Church, Part 3: Systems, Policies and Procedures!

Remember, small groups are primarily for growing closer relationships with other believers. We can learn wonderful things in this environment but keep relationships first.

- Make sure everyone knows each other's names. Have everyone share a little about themselves and how life is going right now.
- **The Way of the Early Church**
 - In this series we unlock several powerful eternal principles in order to see God do mighty things!
 - We can't go back. But we can take some of the great things from back then and apply them to now.
- **Part 3: Systems, Policies and Procedures**
- The church continued to grow!
- **Acts 6:1**
 - Here we see that it wasn't just miracles and preaching the Gospel, they also had compassion ministries in the early church. In this case, food distribution for widows.
 - Two interesting things of note:
 - First, this was specifically for people inside the church.
 - I'm sure they helped the needy outside the church, but taking care of their own was considered an important responsibility.
 - What role do compassion ministries generally have in today's church?
 - Second, the system was breaking down.
 - They had systems. Check out **1 Timothy 5:3-16!**
 - They had 12 full time staff and people were falling through the cracks!
 - When the system breaks down it is very dangerous for the ministry!
 - What problems could have come after this system broke down?
- **Acts 6:2-4**
 - It's time to add some staff!! This must have been a big job since they needed seven men!
 - What were the qualifications required to "wait on tables?"
 - What were the 12 going to focus on after they handed this ministry off?
- **Acts 6:5-7**
 - These are mostly Greek names! The Hebrew and Greek Jews chose Greeks! That is a big deal.
 - What was the result? Great increase of disciples! Even priests got saved!!
- So, two "ways" of the early church.
- First, they adapted their church systems and structures to meet emerging needs. How boring is that?
 - No miracle. No great preaching. This great increase came from a staffing adjustment coupled with a change in organizational structure!!
 - We can adapt our structures like the early church did in order to meet various needs.
- Second, they gave food and material support to those inside the fellowship, and they gave miracles and the Gospel message to those outside! I find this very interesting!
 - For example: **Acts 3:1-8.**
 - The crippled beggar didn't need money.
 - He needed a miracle and he needed to learn the ways of God so that he could live in abundant life! That's the promise to Israel that we can receive too! **Deut 28:12-13.**
 - God's plan isn't to subjugate you and keep you dependent. His plan is to set you free from all types of bondage through your knowledge of His ways!
 - This is our motivation for evangelism! To set captives free!
- **Luke 4:17-21**
 - Are you poor? A prisoner? Blind? Oppressed?
 - What do you need?
 - You need to learn the ways of God so that you can have power to overcome!
- Pray for each other before you finish up!