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| **SERIES** | RALLY |
| **BIBLE** | Acts 2:41-47 |
| **TITLE/TOPIC** | We are a spiritual family |
| **OVERVIEW** | After a crazy year and a half, a full summer, and the threat of the delta variant, we are back in another school year. Through all the crazy of this season, it’s easy to forget who we are and what we’re doing. This series is calling us to rally together and push into our calling- to be a family of love that cooperates with God to make fully devoted, fruitful followers of Jesus.  This first week is a call to rally as a family. In the Bible there are many metaphors for the church- body, temple, flock, and many more. The most common metaphor for the church, however, is Family.  “Church” has meant many things during this past year and a half to us. Today we are remembering what the church truly is.. a spiritual family that loves God, loves each other, and impacts the world. |
| **SCRIPTURE BREAKDOWN** | **INTRO:**  ILL –Ask people to honesty think of the word church. What comes to mind? Be honest.  Read the scripture  Does this story look like the word church to you? It doesn’t to most people. Most of us think of a building. We drive by and say, “that’s a beautiful church.” Often, we specifically mean that church is an event that occurs in a building. “Come to church with me” means, come to the 1 hour Sunday morning activity that occurs in the building called the church.  That is not what we find in these verses or in the New Testament in general. To be invited to church was to be invited to put your faith in Jesus as Lord and join His spiritual family.  This spiritual family was not the same as other families. It relates in love upwards to God, inwards towards each other, and outwards toward the world.  UP- Loving God  OUT- Loving the world  IN- Loving each other  **1. Up – A Family that loves God**  First and foremost, this “first” church is a family that loves Jesus their Lord. They believe the message and are baptized (41). They are devoted to the word of God, remembering Jesus’ sacrifice in the breaking of the bread, and prayer (42). The power of God is evident amongst them (43), and they are found praising Him and breaking bread privately and publicly (46- 47). Above all, we are called to be a family that loves God and has Him at the center.  **2. In – A Family that loves each other**  The family doesn’t just learn about God, pray, take communion, sing some praise songs, and then live separate lives. On the contrary, one of the most striking features of this passage is how they truly loved each other. They have great time hanging out (42), are together and have everything in common, showing such radical generosity that they even sell their property to make sure there is no need amongst them (44-45). They don’t just show up Sunday, but they are in each other’s lives all the time (46). They didn’t “go to church”. They lived as a true family of love.  **3. Out – A Family that loves the world**  Finally, this was not just a Holy social club. They were called with a purpose to love the world. This is evident both in Peter’s initial call to repentance, faith, and baptism (41) as well as the favor they have with outsiders (47). It is clear that the way they lived, loved, and neighbored made and impact on their communities. Even if the authorities end up persecuting them, the people like them. In both word and deed, they were a family that loved the world. The result of this is that “the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved (47)”. |
| **GOSPEL** | This is our call. To love God, love each other, and love this world. God is inviting you into His family. Whatever your background, your own family story, etc., He is right now inviting you in. Through Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection we now are free to join His family, a family that is for all eternity. What are you waiting for! Our next steps will show you how. |
| **NEXT**STEPS | Begin | Connect | Engage | Grow | Disciple  Begin – God is inviting you to Hs family. Just as there is a physical birth into a family, there is a spiritual birth. Through repentance, faith, and baptism, we fully join and identify with the spiritual family of God. Let someone show you how through the blue book!  Connect – Like any large extended family, it’s tough to be close to everyone but it is important to be close with several people. The best way to do that is to join a small group. Another great way is to commit specifically to this expression of the family through membership.  Engage- Another great way to experience the family is to serve together with others. You have a unique contribution to the family. Join in! (Possibly offer the red book as a class?).  Grow – Maybe you are just a baby in this family and you need to learn to eat, talk, etc. Check out our Green Book and begin to grow up into maturity in the family. God loves you as you are, but He doesn’t want you to be a newborn forever!  Disciple – God has called us to grow the family! Learn how to help others on their journeys by becoming a mentor for someone else. Don’t know how? We have a great resource for that! Check out the purple Disciple book. |