

## • KEYS FOR A SUCCESSFUL 2023

- These keys will help each of us individually and to have a successful year and they will help the church also be successful.

- Let us consider some keys to having a successful 2023!

- **Acts 2:41-43 (ESV)** 41 So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. 42 And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. 43 And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles.

### I. MAKE PRAYER A PRIORITY

- The context of this verse is that Peter had preached his great sermon on the day of Pentecost. 3,000 people gave their lives to Jesus and they were immersed into the kingdom of God. This was the beginning of the church.

- One of the things that the early church did was devote itself to prayer.

- **Notice we are told "they", that is the people who were a part of the church were devoting themselves to prayer.**

- This was something they did all the time!

- **Prayer was such a vital part of the success of the church** that in Acts 6 when the church leaders were being overburdened with taking care of the physical needs of the church, look at what they did.

- **Acts 6:4 (ESV)** 4 But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word."

- **The leadership wanted to devote time to prayer.**

- **If we are going to succeed, prayer is one of the keys. Without prayer, we are without power. Jesus spent a lot of His time in prayer to the Father during His ministry.**

- Was Jesus busy? Yes. Too busy for prayer? NO. Are you busy? Yes. Too busy for prayer? NO!

- Why did Jesus spend so much time in prayer? Because it was important. If Jesus made time for prayer, I think I better do so also.

- **Prayer needs to be a central part of your life and the life of the church.**

- **1 Thessalonians 5:17 ( ESV ) 17pray without ceasing,**

- I hope that we all will commit to making prayer a priority in our lives. Leadership should take time to pray together. Let's make this a priority.

## **II. BUILD ON THE FOUNDATION OF GOD'S WORD**

- Acts 2:42 says the church was also devoted to the Apostles teaching. This was the word of God.

- Look at what Jesus says in Matthew.

- Matthew 28:20 ( ESV ) 20teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

- Matthew 7:26 ( ESV ) 26And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand.

- We MUST be people of the Word! The Word must guide our lives and decisions!

- The church must be built on the foundation of the Word. The Word of God is our authority. When we step outside of it, we have no authority.

- One of the keys to success in your life is know the Word of God and putting it into practice in your life.

- We need to know God's word. What we think does not matter unless it lines up with the Bible.

- I hope that all of us on an individual basis will devote ourselves to study of the Word!

## **III. BUILD A STRONG SENSE OF COMMUNITY (FELLOWSHIP)**

- Our Acts passage says they devoted themselves to fellowship. What is that? The word means to "have something in common" or "to strive for a common goal." To be one in action.

- Do you know how many people out there are lonely?



- Do you also realize that many people who start coming to church do so to connect with other people?

- We need to build a strong sense of community with people when they come to our church. We want them to belong. When they feel a sense of community, they will see us live our lives and they will want to believe what we do, then they will behave like God wants them to.

- We must be careful not to put behavior first.

- **If we make sure our church is a place where everyone feels welcome, they will eventually believe and behave.**

- This church is FULL of wonderful, loving people. Let us commit to spending more time together this year.

- **Spending time together** is something that gets people to want to study together and come listen to the preaching. When people see we really care for them, they will want to be a part of the kingdom of God.

- I want to ask each of you to commit to getting more involved in each other's lives this year. Not only will the church benefit, but you will benefit greatly.

- **Hebrews 10:24-25 (ESV)** 24And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, 25not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

#### **IV. HAVE A VISION FOR WHAT GOD CAN DO**

- This last key is not in the text, but I think it is very important. I want to ask you, when you look around what do you see?

- As you look at your life right now, what do you see?

- I tell you what I see. I see a church that is positioned to take this community by storm. I look out here and I see a lot of loving people, I see a lot of gifted people. I see a lot of people who care for each other.

- I see a church that could reach 2 to 3 times its' current size because of the untapped potential of each of you.

- When I look out I see what God can do with each of you.

- I am speaking of seeing things for what they can be, not the way they are!
- Don't be tied to the way things are now, see them for what they could be with God!
- Let's make prayer a priority, let us build our foundation on the Word. Let us build a strong sense of community and let us have a vision for what God can do with us!