

## 4. Passing the Torch

*Psalm 145:4 NLT -Let each generation tell its children of your mighty acts; let them proclaim your power.*

The faith of the early church was lived out in their homes among their family. Their children had first-hand experience in living a life that fully integrated faith and there was ample opportunity for them to hear about the mighty acts of God. If we live out our faith in our homes, our children will see and hear God's mighty acts as well.

*Our families can sometimes be the most difficult to reach with the Good News. Not all of us live in a home with our children, but at New Life we are surrounded by five generations of attenders. Some come from families that did not know God. They may have never heard what God has done and still does for His people. Consider some opportunities you have to share God's mighty acts with those from the next generation- you might introduce yourself to someone between services who is not in your generation, and when you make the connection let God be the center of your conversation or volunteer in KidsMin to work with our children in Sunday School (we have many ways to serve our kids).*

### WRAP-UP

God took a small group of believers and spread His message across the whole world, and 70 years ago He took a little group in Grover City and enlarged us to spread the good news in our area. As a church we are strongest when we do what the early church did; devote ourselves to teaching, fellowship, breaking bread together and prayer. When we live out our faith daily the next generation will see and hear the Mighty Acts of God.

### Memory Verse

*Let each generation tell its children of your mighty acts; let them proclaim your power.*

*- Psalm 145:4 NLT*

### PRAYER (20 MIN)

Ask your group to pray for you regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life: \_\_\_\_\_

Pray for your group members' needs: \_\_\_\_\_

*Challenge- Tell someone what mighty things God has done for you this week.*

## “Celebrate the Mighty Acts of God”

### Chapters #4

### INTRODUCTION

Over the past 70 years New Life Church has grown from a small group of believers meeting in homes to a vibrant congregation with well over a thousand worshipers gathering each weekend. As we enter the next chapter of our church's history, we should reflect on not only how our church has grown, but how God took the small group of believers in the early church and multiplied them to the greater “church” of believers worldwide. And He is not finished yet! Today we both celebrate the mighty acts that God has done and anticipate even greater things He is yet to do!

### Ice Breaker (Optional—8 min)

When did you first start attending New Life Church?

### STUDY QUESTIONS (45 MIN)

#### 1. Communion with Others

*Acts 2:42 NLT - 42 All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord's Supper), and to prayer.*

In the second chapter of Acts we witness the birth of the Christian church as God's Holy Spirit descends on believers after Christ has ascended into heaven. This is the beginning of the church in simplest terms. The first verse in this passage tells us what the believers were ardently and continuously devoted to.

*What four things were all the believers dedicated to pursuing together?*

The Apostles were sent to teach the good news of Jesus (gospels) and instruct the believers in how to live out their faith with one another

(epistles). That collection of teachings contained in Gospel accounts and letters to the churches make up the New Testament.

The first thing the early church did was to learn more about God through what the Apostles taught.

*What are your sources for learning about God through the study of His word? Do you have any favorite authors, study guides, or devotionals you want to share with your group?*

The second thing the believers pursued is *koinonia*. We translate that word as fellowship but there is no simple English equivalent. Its meaning includes elements of community, communion, joint participation, and intimacy.

*What are some things you feel are evidence of true koinonia among believers? What are some things we can do to deepen our bonds to one another?*

The third observance of the early church was breaking bread together. It is interesting that such a simple practice is mentioned alongside teaching and prayer. In verse 46 we find they both took communion and shared meals together in each other's homes.

*Has your group ever taken communion together? If not, you might discuss doing that in a future meeting, maybe on a night you hold a potluck.*

The final practice mentioned is prayer. Communal prayer leads us jointly into the presence of God. It is there we can give thanks and praise, and it is there we make our requests known.

*We should always take time to join with one another for prayer. If you haven't already done so, be sure to gather and pray over prayer needs in your group.*

## **2. Communion with God**

The evidence of God's presence amongst the believers were signs and wonders.

*Acts 2:43 NLT - 43 A deep sense of awe came over them all, and the apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders.*

Sometimes we forget that God is supernatural, that is He is not limited by the same natural laws we operate under. After all, that is what it means to be God. So, we shouldn't be surprised when the evidence of God's presence among His believers is revealed in miraculous ways.

*There are many expressions of God's presence in the midst of His people today. We need to remember and celebrate all the things that can only be attributed to God in our lives individually and as a church. What are some ways you have witnessed God move that you and your group can celebrate together?*

## **3. Expression of Community**

*Acts 2:44-47 NLT - 44 And all the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had. 45 They sold their property and possessions and shared the money with those in need. 46 They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity-- 47 all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved.*

As the church community grew together, they expressed a selflessness recorded in the above passage. As they opened their hearts, they also opened their hands, and they lived like they were family. The New Living translation uses "generosity" to describe their actions, but the original text indicates the source of their giving was a sincere heart; the very source of their physical and spiritual lives.<sup>1</sup>*αφελοῦτες καρδιά*

*The early church gave of themselves in many ways. It involved an investment of their time, their personal space (opening homes), their possessions and their emotions. Which of these have you personally received from your "family of believers"? Which of these do you feel God is prompting you to be more generous with and how would you do that?*