



WEEK 21

2ND SEMESTER · DISCIPLESHIP & SERVICE

The Church of Jesus

Faithfulness and responsibility in the local church

SPIRITUAL THEME

The Church of Jesus

PERSONAL THEME

**Faithfulness to the local church
& responsibility**

Leaders: David Kyakulaga · Bernd Broschek

Bwembe Jesus Follower Bible School

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Spiritual Theme: The Church of Jesus

Personal Theme: Faithfulness to the local church and responsibility

Main Bible Passage: Acts 2:42-47

Parallel Passages: Ephesians 2:19-22; Hebrews 10:24-25

Lesson Aim: Students understand that the church is Christ's people gathered around Word, fellowship, breaking bread, prayer, responsibility, and mission.

1. Introduction: The Church Belongs To Jesus

The church is not first a building, a program, a denomination, or a place where people go only when they need help. The church is the people of Jesus, gathered by the gospel, built on Christ, filled by the Spirit, and called to live as God's household in the world.

Many Christians think about church mainly as attendance. But the New Testament shows something deeper. The local church is a family, a body, a temple, a community of disciples, and a witness to the world. A believer should not live as an isolated Christian. Jesus saves us into His people.

A Christian is not saved into isolation, but into the people of Jesus.

2. Reading The Whole Passage Together: Acts 2:42-47

"They continued steadfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and prayer. Fear came on every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. All who believed were together, and had all things in common. They sold their possessions and goods, and distributed them to all, according as anyone had need. Day by day, continuing steadfastly with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread at home, they took their food with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. The Lord added to the assembly day by day those who were being saved." (Acts 2:42-47)

3. The First Movement: Devoted To The Apostles' Teaching

Acts 2:42 begins with devotion to the apostles' teaching. The first church did not build its life on opinions, dreams, entertainment, or personalities. It gathered around the truth given through the apostles concerning Jesus Christ.

This is important for every local church. If the Word of God is weak, the church becomes weak. If the Word of God is central, the church can be corrected, nourished, strengthened, and sent. Bible school students must love the church enough to love sound teaching.

A healthy church is devoted to the Word of God, not to personalities or entertainment.

Practical Application: Come Hungry For The Word

Students should not come to church only to perform a role. They should come hungry to hear, obey, and help others obey the Word. A practical habit is to bring a Bible, take notes, ask what the passage teaches about Christ, and discuss one application after the service.

4. The Second Movement: Fellowship, Breaking Bread, And Prayer

Practical Application: Practice Real Fellowship

Real fellowship begins when believers stop hiding behind religious greetings and begin to carry one another in truth and love. This does not mean everyone must know every private detail. It means church members learn to ask honest questions, listen well, confess sin wisely, pray together, and help one another remain faithful to Jesus.

For students, this can begin in simple ways: sit with someone who is alone, visit a sick member, pray with a discouraged believer, help a younger Christian understand a Bible passage, or ask a leader how to serve. Fellowship becomes strong through repeated small acts of love.

Practical Application: Prayer Must Stay At The Center

A church can have music, preaching, programs, and meetings, yet still be weak in prayer. Acts 2 shows that prayer was not an optional extra. The believers depended on God together. Prayer teaches the church humility because it says, "Lord, we cannot build Your church by our strength."

A practical step for students is to join or start a simple prayer rhythm in their local church: before service, after Bible study, with youth, with families, or in small groups. The goal is not long impressive prayers. The goal is honest dependence on God for holiness, unity, evangelism, and care.

The first believers were devoted to fellowship. Fellowship means more than greeting people after a service. It means shared life in Christ. They belonged to one another because they belonged to Jesus. They also broke bread and prayed. Their life together was worshipful, relational, and dependent on God.

The church is not a spiritual marketplace where people come only to receive. It is a family where believers give, serve, listen, forgive, carry burdens, pray, and grow together. A local church becomes healthy when many members take responsibility, not when a few people do everything.

Fellowship is shared life in Christ, not only friendly greetings.

Sketchnote: The Church of Jesus

5. The Third Movement: A Visible Community Of Generosity And Witness

Acts 2 shows that the believers shared with those in need. This does not mean every church must copy every detail in exactly the same economic form, but it does show a Spirit-shaped community where possessions are not higher than love. Need mattered. People mattered. The family of God cared for one another.

The passage also says the Lord added to their number. Their life together had witness. A faithful church does not only look inward. It worships, learns, loves, serves, and shines outward. The beauty of gospel community supports the message of the gospel.

The church becomes visible when believers love practically and witness faithfully.

Practical Application: Notice Needs And Take Responsibility

Ask students to identify one need in their local church: a lonely member, a poor family, children needing teaching, visitors needing welcome, or leaders needing prayer. Then ask what practical step they can take this week. Responsibility begins when love becomes concrete.

6. Parallel Passage 1: Ephesians 2:19-22

Practical Application: Live As Family, Not As Visitors

If believers are members of God's household, then church is not a place where I remain a permanent visitor. A visitor observes from a distance. A family member carries responsibility. Students should learn to ask, "What does this household need, and how can I help?"

This also challenges tribal pride, social class pride, and personal preference. In Christ, people who might not naturally belong together are built together. The local church should show a new family created by the gospel, where Christ is stronger than tribe, wealth, education, age, or background.

Practical Application: Let Christ Set The Shape

If Christ is the cornerstone, then the church must not be shaped mainly by culture, money, personality, politics, or entertainment. Christ sets the line. His Word corrects our priorities. His gospel defines success. His holiness exposes sin. His mission sends us outward.

A church may be full and still unhealthy if Christ is not central. A church may be small and still faithful if it is built on Christ, teaches the Word, prays, loves, and makes disciples. Students must learn to value faithfulness more than outward impressiveness.

Ephesians says believers are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of God's household. This is powerful. The gospel creates a new belonging. In Christ, people who were far away are brought near and built together.

Paul also says the church is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus Himself as the chief cornerstone. The cornerstone controls the building. This means Christ determines the identity, shape, truth, and direction of the church.

7. Parallel Passage 2: Hebrews 10:24-25

Hebrews commands believers to consider how to stir one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together. This means gathering is not optional decoration in the Christian life. We gather because we need encouragement, correction, worship, and responsibility.

The command is not only, "Attend." It is, "Consider one another." A believer should come to church thinking, "Who can I encourage? Who needs prayer? Who is weak? How can I help someone love and obey Jesus?"

**The question is not only "Did I attend?" but "Whom did I encourage?"*

8. Cultural Background And Application For Uganda

Practical Application: Resist Consumer Christianity

Consumer Christianity says, "I go where the music is best, where the preacher excites me, where I receive the most, and where no one asks much from me." Biblical church life asks a different question: "Where has God placed me to belong, grow, serve, give, submit, and help others follow Jesus?"

This is very practical in places where believers may move from church to church because of conflict, preference, prophecy, opportunity, or offense. Sometimes there are biblical reasons to leave a church, especially false teaching or serious unrepentant abuse. But many times people leave because they do not want correction, patience, or responsibility. Students must learn the difference.

Practical Application: Protect Unity Without Hiding Sin

Faithfulness to the local church does not mean pretending everything is fine. Sin must be addressed. False teaching must be corrected. Abuse must not be hidden. But correction should

happen in a biblical spirit, not gossip, bitterness, or faction-building. Love protects unity and truth together.

Students should practice speaking about church problems in a godly way. Before speaking to many people, speak to the right person. Before criticizing, pray. Before leaving, seek counsel. Before judging motives, ask questions. This kind of maturity protects the church.

In many Ugandan settings, church is socially respected. Many people attend services, crusades, prayers, or fellowships. This can be a blessing, but it can also hide nominal Christianity. A person may be around church activities and still not be committed to Christ or responsible in a local church.

Bible students must learn to value the local church, not only events. Conferences, crusades, and Bible schools can help, but they cannot replace faithful church life. The local church is where believers are known, taught, corrected, encouraged, and given opportunities to serve over time.

9. Practical Training: Faithfulness To The Local Church

Practical Application: Four Marks Of A Responsible Member

A responsible church member is present, prayerful, serving, and teachable. Present means he does not disappear whenever he is tired or offended. Prayerful means he carries the church before God. Serving means he uses his gifts for others. Teachable means he can receive correction from Scripture and godly leaders.

Ask students to evaluate themselves in these four areas from 1 to 5. This is not for shame, but for growth. A student may discover that he loves teaching but is not teachable, or that he attends but does not serve, or that he serves but does not pray. The Spirit can use honest evaluation to produce maturity.

Practical Application: Encourage Before You Criticize

Many people can see weaknesses in a church. Fewer people take responsibility to strengthen what is weak. Teach students to become encouragers. A short word after a sermon, a prayer for a leader, a visit to a sick person, or help with children can strengthen the whole body.

This does not mean ignoring problems. It means the heart posture changes. The student does not ask, "How can I prove I am better?" He asks, "How can I help Christ's church become stronger?"

Faithfulness to the local church includes regular gathering, listening to the Word, prayer, giving, serving, forgiving, submitting to godly leadership, caring for weak members, and protecting unity. These things are not glamorous, but they are deeply spiritual.

Students should ask themselves honest questions: Do I only attend when I am scheduled? Do I serve when nobody sees? Do I speak well of the church or only complain? Do I help younger believers? Do I give? Do I pray for my leaders? Do I pursue peace when conflict comes?

Practical Response Time

Let students write three answers: one way I have been passive in church, one responsibility God may be giving me, and one person I can encourage this week. Then pray for local churches represented in the class by name.

10. Theological Summary

This lesson can be summarized in five truths. First, the church belongs to Jesus. Second, the church is built on the apostolic Word with Christ as cornerstone. Third, the local church is a real spiritual family, not a religious service provider. Fourth, every believer has responsibility. Fifth, faithful church life strengthens witness to the world.

John Stott wrote that the church is central to God's purpose. This is helpful because many Christians treat the church as secondary. But in the New Testament, Christ loves the church, builds the church, gives gifts to the church, and sends the church into the world.

11. Main Application For The Students

Practical Response Time

Give students time to write a church responsibility plan. They should name their local church, one leader to pray for, one weak or younger believer to encourage, one ministry area where they can serve, and one attitude they need to repent of. This turns the lesson from general teaching into obedience.

The teacher can close by praying for the actual local churches represented in the room. This reminds students that the lesson is not about an abstract church. It is about real congregations, real leaders, real weaknesses, real needs, and real opportunities to serve Jesus.

The main application is this: each student must move from church attendance to church responsibility. It is not enough to say, "I go to church." The better question is, "Am I helping my local church become more faithful to Jesus?"

A Bible school student should become a blessing to the local church, not a critic standing far away. Training should produce servants who teach, pray, encourage, evangelize, disciple, give, and strengthen unity. The church does not need more proud experts. It needs faithful servants of Christ.

Faithfulness to the local church means belonging, serving, encouraging, giving, and taking responsibility under Christ.

12. Discussion Questions

1. What is the difference between attending church and belonging responsibly to a local church?
2. Why is devotion to the apostles' teaching important for church health?
3. How can fellowship become practical and not only words?
4. What does Hebrews 10 teach about encouraging other believers?
5. What responsibility can you take in your local church this week?

13. Group Exercise

Divide the class into small groups. Each group chooses one local church area: worship, children, youth, prayer, giving, evangelism, care for the poor, or welcoming visitors. They identify common weaknesses and propose practical ways students could serve faithfully.

14. Memory Statement

The church of Jesus is a Word-centered, praying, caring, responsible people built on Christ and sent as His witness.

15. Closing Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank You for Your church. Forgive us where we have been passive, critical, or disconnected. Teach us to love Your people, listen to Your Word, pray faithfully, encourage one another, and take responsibility in the local church. Build us together on Christ the cornerstone. Amen.

Source Note

Research and background were checked against Acts 2:42-47, Ephesians 2:19-22, and Hebrews 10:24-25, with attention to early church devotion, household/temple imagery, and the responsibility to gather and encourage one another.