

South Bay Church Plant Sabbath School

11 – Church Planting Principles

Introduction

Paul was the most successful church planter in history. We know of at least nine churches that he planted, and at least five more fellowship groups that later became churches. Those churches in turn planted other churches. So powerful was the impact that Paul declared in Colossians 1:23 that the gospel had been preached to “every creature under heaven.”

How do you think the gospel could go to every person today?

In the next two chapters, as Paul finishes his second missionary journey, we will see principles of church planting that are critical to growth.

Acts 18:1-3 #1 Choose good leaders and work alongside them

Who did Paul choose to build relationships in Corinth and why? What role did they play in the early church? **Romans 16:3-4, Acts 18:26, 1 Corinthians 16:19, 2 Timothy 4:19**. They risked their lives for the gospel and tradition says that they were martyred together.

How committed are you to sharing the gospel and to planting a church? How important is it for members of a group to work together outside of Sabbath services?

Acts 18:4 #2 Evangelize through your most natural relationships

Paul consistently used his connections to the Jews and the Pharisees to gain speaking appointments in Jewish synagogues. How could we connect with people we already know to begin the process of sharing the gospel? What other methods could we use to reach receptive audiences?

Acts 18:5 #3 Rely on the Holy Spirit

We have seen this consistently. Rather than relying on his own wisdom, Paul followed the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The word “compel” is the same word used for arresting a prisoner.

How can we be sure that the Holy Spirit is leading in the church planting process?

Acts 18:6-8 #4 Be clear in your vision and your message

Paul makes an appeal, and it leads to persecution. However, the ruler of the synagogue joins the new church plant (Paul even baptizes him – 1 Cor 1:14-16), and many Corinthians are converted.

What was Paul’s message and who did he feel he had to share that with? See also **1 Cor. 2:1-5**

How will we determine our message, vision, and audience?

Acts 18:9-11, 23 #5 Focus on making disciples

How long does Paul stay in Corinth and what does he do there? Why is it important to make disciples and not just members? **Matthew 28:18-20**

What is a disciple? be a disciple is to make Jesus the center of one’s life. This leads a person to be a learner, worshipper, servant, and witness.

Acts 18:12-13 #6 Be prepared to be misunderstood

What accusation was leveled against Paul? How will you handle situations when you are misunderstood by others?

Doing something new is often disruptive to the status quo. Some people will be pleased with what we do, and some will be offended. How can we make sure that we are faithful to our calling, even at the risk of being misunderstood?

Acts 18:24-28 #7 **Maximize people in their spiritual gifts**

What spiritual gifts and attitudes do you think Apollos had? How did Priscilla and Aquila help him? How could we help people maximize their spiritual gifts?

Being able to place people in the right position for their giftedness is critical to the success of a team. How do we identify a person's spiritual gifts? **1 Peter 4:10-11. 1 Corinthians 12:14-18**

“God has not given to everyone the same line of work. It is His plan that there shall be unity in diversity. When His plan is studied and followed, there will be far less friction in the working of the cause... Never is a worker to say, “I do not want to work with such a one, because he does not see things as I do. I wish to work with someone who will agree with all I say, and follow out all my ideas.”. Because of the worker's refusal to accept the help provided by the Lord, the work is made one-sided.”—[Pacific Union Recorder, December 29, 1904](#)

Acts 19:1-7 #8 **Work where God is already at work**

These believers in Ephesus were called “disciples” even though they didn't know Jesus or the Holy Spirit. Why? How can we reach those who God is already working on?

Paul was following a principle that was later identified Henry Blackaby in his book *Experiencing God*. “See where God is working in your world – and join Him in that work.” Jesus said “*My Father is always working, and so am I.*” (John 5:17)

Acts 19:8-10 #9 **Train disciples to disciple others**

For two years, Paul trains and teaches the disciples and apparently sends them out to disciple others, so that “all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus.” What is the fruit of an apple tree? An apple? Not exactly, for inside that apple are seeds and those seeds represent future apple trees - an entire harvest! The purpose of an apple is to be eaten, so that the seeds will fall to the ground and grow into a harvest. In the same way, God creates not just disciples, but disciplers and that is the fruit of the gospel message.

Acts 19:11-20 #10 **Expect miracles**

What was the difference between the miracles of Paul and the attempted miracle of the exorcists?

The great miracle of all is the miracle of a changed life. Paul believed that lives would be changed through the preaching of the gospel and through the power of the Holy Spirit. Do you believe in miracles today? In what way? How can we guard against attempts to manipulate spirituality to produce “miracles”?

Conclusion

Paul, the greatest church planter, teaches us the power of planting churches God's way. How can we adapt these principles to our local church plant? What might need to change in my personal life before I am ready to start doing a church plant?