

Building A Strong Church Community With Strong Leaders

Acts 11:19-26 (NIV)

“Now those who had been scattered by the persecution that broke out when Stephen was killed traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, spreading the word only among Jews. ²⁰ Some of them, however, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and began to speak to Greeks also, telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus. ²¹ The Lord’s hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord. ²² News of this reached the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. ²³ When he arrived and saw what the grace of God had done, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts. ²⁴ He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and a great number of people were brought to the Lord. ²⁵ Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, ²⁶ and when he found him, he brought him to Antioch. So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.”

Strong church communities are ones that have people who are devoted to the Word of God, have strong fellowship, and pray with and for one another (Acts 2:42)

Strong church communities demonstrate both an ability and willingness to address problems as they arise (Acts 6:1-7).

Strong church communities are built with strong leaders (v.22)

I.

Strong church communities have leaders who care about those considered the least among them.

Acts 4:36-37 (NIV) says, “Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means “son of encouragement”), ³⁷ sold a field he owned and brought the money and put it at the apostles’ feet.”

Strong church communities have leaders with character.

Acts 11:24a says, “He was a good man”

Strong church communities have leaders who are full of the Holy Spirit and faith (Acts 11:24b)

Consider *Ephesians 5:18*

Strong church communities have leaders who bring people to Jesus. (Acts 11:24c)

II.

Strong church communities have leaders who bring others along with them, so they are not doing the work alone.

Consider *Genesis 2:18* and *Exodus 18:17*

Strong church communities have leaders who see in people what others don't (v.25).

Acts 11:25 (NIV) says, "*Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul,*"

Strong church communities have leaders who lend their credibility to others.

Acts 9:26-28 (TLB) says, "*Upon arrival in Jerusalem he tried to meet with the believers, but they were all afraid of him. They thought he was faking!* ²⁷ ***Then Barnabas brought him to the apostles and told them how Paul had seen the Lord on the way to Damascus, what the Lord had said to him, and all about his powerful preaching in the name of Jesus.*** ²⁸ ***Then they accepted him, and after that he was constantly with the believers***"

III.

Strong church communities invest time in their people to help them become fully devoted disciples of Jesus.

Acts 11:26b says, "*and both of them stayed there for a full year teaching the many new converts.*"

Strong church communities take on an identity.

Acts 11:26c (NIV) says, "*The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.*"

What type of identity has people tried to place on you?