

Bridgeway Community Church  
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## iHope

### **Fellowshipping with Others to Keep Hope Alive**

The 1st century church had “a commitment of doing religion together, doing a relationship with God together, having a walk with the Lord but also a walk with one another.”

Acts 2:42-47 NIV84

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. <sup>43</sup> Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. <sup>44</sup> All the believers were together and had everything in common. <sup>45</sup> Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. <sup>46</sup> Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, <sup>47</sup> praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Matthew 22:37-39 NIV84

Jesus replied: “ ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ <sup>38</sup> This is the first and greatest commandment. <sup>39</sup> And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’

John 13:35 NIV84

[Jesus speaking] By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.

“The Christian unity was so powerful that those who outside of the Christian church were magnetically pulled toward that kind of unity.”

“The 1st century church was committed to growing together and they discovered that fellowship was key to spiritual growth and Christian unity.”

### **3 Ingredients to spiritual growth that will help you keep hope alive:**

1. The WORD of God
2. The PEOPLE of God
3. The SPIRIT of God

“When we have these three things in our lives consistently, regularly, healthily...it increases our spiritual growth and it helps us to keep our hope alive.”

#### **1. You must have the WORD of God**

“They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching...” (Acts 2:42a)

The apostles were the disseminators of God's word.

These were men who had walked with Jesus and were commissioned by him.

They had the authority as Jesus's direct disciples to fulfill the commission that Jesus himself gave them.

Jesus said to them before he ascended into heaven:

Matthew 28:18-20 NIV84

Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup> Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

The New Testament church didn't have a New Testament.

The apostles' teaching was the word of God because they were called to teach what they had learned directly from Jesus himself.

**If you want to grow spiritually and keep your Christian hope alive, then you must hear, read, meditate, memorize, and study the word of God.**

Think of these **5 ways to engage with God's word**, by thinking about your 5 fingers:

1. Thumb - **HEAR the word** (apostles' teaching; preaching from the men and women of God)

2. Pointer - **READ the word**

Probably NOT the best plan to try and read through it starting in the beginning (Genesis) and reading it all the way through

One passage a day

Use a Scripture reading plan - see attachment at the end of notes

Bible reading apps for your smartphone

Billy Graham plan: 1 chapter of Proverbs, 1 chapter of Psalms

"The one thing you must realize, as you read the word of God, you begin to inform yourself with data, with stories, and with learnings and lessons about the Lord"

3. Middle - **MEDITATE on the word** (repeating God's word in shorter phrases, chewing on it and letting it settle/simmer in your spirit)

"The more you let the word settle into your spirit, the more your spirit will change."

"The more you use your middle finger to remember meditating of God's word, the less you will use that middle finger in naughty ways." 😂

Psalms 119:105 KJV

Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.

Psalms 119:11 KJV

Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.

Psalm 119:15 NIV84

I meditate on your precepts and consider your ways.

Psalm 1:2 NIV84

But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he **meditates day and night.**

Joshua 1:8 NIV84

Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; **meditate on it day and night**, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.

4. *Ring* - **MEMORIZE the word**

Commit a 1 or 2 verses to memory every week & repeat it aloud to yourself

“While meditation allows the word to seep into your spirit, memorization exercises the muscle of the mind for the purposes of recollection.”

It takes discipline to memorize God’s word!

What verse are you going to memorize this week from God’s word?

5. *Pinky* - **STUDY the word**

Go online and study doctrines of the faith to see how passages connect in parallel.

Look at theological subjects with others.

Attend Bible studies at Wednesday Night Alive. - Register under ‘Online Events’ at Bridgeway’s website, Bridgeway.cc. New classes start on April 14th

Check out 10 Bible studies online from June of 2020 on FaceBook page @AndersonSpeaks.

If we are going to grow spiritually and keep our hope alive, then the Word of God is the first ingredient we need.

We have to **HANDLE** the Word. (5 fingers - hear, read, meditate, memorize, & study)

2 Timothy 2:15 NIV84

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.

We have to **STAND** on the Word...as your authority. (feet)

2 Timothy 3:6-17 NIV84

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, <sup>17</sup> so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

We have to **DECLARE** the Word...with our mouths.

Psalms 107:2 KJV

Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy

We have to **WALK** in the Word...by faith

2 Corinthians 5:7 KJV

For we walk by faith, not by sight

“If you work the Word, the Word will work! The Word doesn’t work for those who don’t work it!”

## 2. You must have the **PEOPLE OF GOD**

Acts 2:42 NIV84

They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

**Fellowship** - (Greek: “*koinonia*”) - means to share together in common.

“Understand that fellowship at its core is SHARING together, not just BEING together. Sometimes we think we’re fellowshipping together just because we’re in the same room being together, but it is about SHARING together. Sharing our lives, sharing our stories, sharing our common belief and trust and prayer in Jesus Christ...”

**Communion** reminds us of that union we have in Christ and with each other.

We share in his suffering and will share together in the resurrection of the dead

Philippians 3:10-11 NIV84

I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of **sharing in his sufferings**, becoming like him in his death, <sup>11</sup> and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.

“The 1st century church knew that they needed each other to survive. There wasn't this lone ranger Christian in the 1st century church! They were family!”

“In order to keep hope alive we realize that fellowship and family are often intertwined.”

Acts 4:32-35 NIV84

All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had. <sup>33</sup> With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all. <sup>34</sup> There were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales <sup>35</sup> and put it at the apostles’ feet, and it was distributed to anyone as he had need.

“Sharing is not just about our testimony for Jesus and our relationship with him. But to make sure that if I’m eating and you’re not, then what I have, I will share with you.”

“We’ve become so individualistic I think in our Western culture that we have literally diminished the definition of family to a mom, a dad, and 2.5 children. But in biblical culture, the Middle Eastern culture, African culture and other cultures, defined family in a much broader way. Family included parents, aunts, uncles, cousins, and a tight knit family community, family tribes.”

A part of Keeping Hope Alive is that we are together!

“Hope wanes over time...Hope lives in community!”

**Practical APPLICATION** - Sign up for Bridgeway's campus email for either Columbia or Reisterstown/Owings Mills to stay connected. The link is on our homepage [bridgeway.cc](http://bridgeway.cc). If you don't know where to start, go to the website and send an email saying "Please help me get connected".

### 3. You must have the SPIRIT OF GOD

Acts 2:33 NIV84

Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father **the promised Holy Spirit** and has poured out what you now see and hear.

Acts 2:38 NIV84

Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And **you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.**

Acts 4:31 NIV84

After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And **they were all filled with the Holy Spirit** and spoke the word of God boldly.

Acts 9:31 NIV84

Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace. **It was strengthened and encouraged by the Holy Spirit**, it grew in numbers, living in the fear of the Lord.

We need the Holy Spirit like we need water!

"God is not just calling us to have a Christianity that's UNIFORMED...look alike, speak alike...dress alike...act alike...God is calling us to be UNIFIED."

"We need the power of the Holy Spirit like fire & water to be poured out on us so that we can come together, grow together, and depend on each other. Then, thousands will be added to our numbers who are getting saved daily!"

"Then we will see the miracles of God by the Spirit of God poured out on the people of God, who live & love according to the word of God...all for the glory of God."

**Practical Application:** pray that the Holy Spirit will be poured out on your lives!

Romans 15:13 NIV84

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.