

# reACT

catching up with the spirit

daily devotions for week 5

SAINTS AROUND THE EDGES



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## MONDAY – Life among the believers



**Acts 2: 43 -46** *Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home...*

Can you define the word “saint”? Does it make you think of someone who is so heavenly minded that they are no earthly good? Do you think of a biblical character? Do you think of a modern day saint? Or do you consider that you may be one of God’s saints today?

Reading the book of Acts, it’s easy to think that the main characters in this story are Peter and Paul. It looks very much like a story of two heroic people who were essential for the growth and survival of the young church.

But this was a church much like ours today, comprised of many different people, cultures and colours, some more educated than others, some bold, some not so bold. A group of spirit filled people who were committed to living a life of community.

Journey with us this week as we look at some of the believers who were learning to live according to

the Spirit, learning to worship together, to care, to share, to be saints in their community.

Let’s take a look into some of these ordinary people, people just like ourselves and see just how much of a contribution they made to this new community. Hopefully we will be encouraged to follow in Christ’s footsteps ever more closely.

### Reflection:

**Is God calling me to be a saint?**



**Prayer:** God we long for your Spirit to fill us anew each day. Teach us to be open to your spirit’s guidance and love filling our hearts and minds.  
AMEN

Holy Spirit rain down:

<https://youtu.be/t6K7lqvCIt0?list=P L755F5860246FF471>

## TUESDAY – 120 people in an upper room



**Acts 1: 12-14** *Then the apostles returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day's walk from the city. When they arrived, they went upstairs to the room where they were staying. Those present were Peter, John, James and Andrew; Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew; James son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.*

A group of about 120 people gathered waiting for the Spirit, waiting to see what God would do next which is evidence of their trust and commitment. In his book *"Catching up with the Spirit"* Matthew Skinner says the following: 'Christians can look at insurmountable challenges and believe that God will not abandon them. Death is not the last word. God's encouragement manifests itself in places and people where most observers see only hopelessness.'

How would we have been in those circumstances? Excitement, high hopes and terror were most likely some of their emotions. They had seen Jesus executed and He had told them they were to be his witnesses in the world.

One of the most compelling aspects of Christian faith is its ability to perceive reality differently from the world. We believe that God will not

abandon us. This was the mindset of the 120 people. They hadn't fully arrived but there they were, waiting as an act of faith and obedience.

We are waiting on God for answers to our current situation, how are we waiting - in impatience and hopelessness or in trust and in hope?

### **Reflection:**

**How good are you at waiting?  
How does the thought that God will not abandon you resonate with you?**



**Prayer:** God, Your word teaches us that You will never abandon us. Help me to trust in that. AMEN

Thula Sizwe:

<https://youtu.be/VKn2yHTyObo?list=RDLVaefaVKTIoCU>

## WEDNESDAY – The generous community



**Acts 2: 46–47** *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, praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.*

Acts chapter 2 tells us about a new community of fellowship, worship, unity and charity. An ordinary group of people going about their everyday lives but living in such a way that they were committed to one another. We need to remember that these were ordinary people, people just like us. They were not perfect, they must have experienced difficulties, they probably argued, explained and preached. It sounds a lot like community life today, but behind everything that they did was the fact that they were convinced that God was doing something new and that their lives were a part of this.

One of the people celebrated by the community was a woman named Tabitha. She is also known as Dorcas. She was a much-loved member of the community, a bridge builder, a woman who clothed the widows amongst them. She helped knit the community together, literally clothing the people with protection, beauty, dignity and love. Then Tabitha/Dorcas died and the

people turned to Peter who raised her back to life.

Tabitha wasn't restored to life as a reward for her good deeds, her restoration to life validated the value of her work. She had the opportunity to live again and model for us the charity that should be at the centre of every Christian community. A saint restored, an everyday person, only once mentioned in the bible, but a saint nevertheless.

### **Reflection:**

**A new perspective on saints?  
How do we measure up?**



**Prayer:** Thank You God that we are all saints in the making. Help us by Your Spirit to be Your people in every way. AMEN

Ukholo lwami

<https://youtu.be/G4JDVkBAlQo?list=RDMM>

## THURSDAY – The son of encouragement



**Acts 11 20-24** *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. The Lord's hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord. News of this reached the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. 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. He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and a great number of people were brought to the Lord.*

Barnabas, commonly known as the son of encouragement – what a lovely description of a generous heart!

In Acts 4: 36-37 Barnabas offers the proceeds of a land sale to the believers in Jerusalem. In Acts 9: 26-27 he vouches for Saul, now known as Paul.

Because of his character, he is sent to Antioch to help grow the church there. He was a unifying answer to keeping the new believers – both Jews and Gentiles worshipping and growing together.

Barnabas sees the gifts that other believers possess and he makes sure that they are used. He is an inclusive personality. His encouragement and friendship laid the groundwork for ministry to expand and through his actions the church's story changed and grew.

Barnabas, an ordinary person but a builder of community, an encourager to those who may not have recognised their gifting, a person who offered friendship and inclusion as he interacted with new believers. Another saint on the edges of the church!

### **Reflection:**

Could I encourage others in our community in the use of their gifts?



**Prayer:** Jesus, help me to be an encourager and a friend to all as I recognise gifts in our community. AMEN

Onse Vader

<https://youtu.be/aefaVKTloCU>

## FRIDAY – A diverse community of believers



**Acts 13: 1-3** *Now in the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen and Saul. While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.*

The church in Antioch was comprised of people from different cultures, styles of clothing, skin colours and accents. Teachers would have told stories about their experiences of God’s faithfulness in different cultural settings, within different kinds of family systems and inherited traditions. Perhaps they looked a little like our church today?

Perhaps because of this wonderful diversity the church was confident in sending Saul (Paul) and Barnabas away.

This appears to be a community who have taught themselves how to appreciate their differences and to listen to God’s Spirit.

Saul (Paul) and Barnabas knew that this type of church would welcome and receive all sorts of new members. They would be willing to embrace the challenges of increased diversity and would do their part in preparing their church and those who were part of it to be

the kind of community who reached out, who were willing to learn, listen and receive the wisdom of a cosmopolitan group.

As we close this week, let us reflect on how diversity enriches our church. Let us be welcoming and embracing of challenges that can grow us into a community where all are welcome. Arise saints of God, there is work to be done!

### **Reflection:**

**How inclusive are we as a body of believers?**



**Prayer:** God of all the ages, teach us how to live in Your Spirit, teach us how to love and to draw all people into Your community of faith and grace.  
AMEN

May we be a shining light to the nations

<https://youtu.be/DP9qxN4ib5A>