

Acts 13

What A Prayer Meeting!



Acts 13:2

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."



Antioch—after Rome and Alexandria, Antioch is the third great city of the Roman empire. Antioch is multi-cultural and cosmopolitan, and the new church reflects this. All three of Paul's missionary journeys begin from here. The city was well-connected to roads and trade routes as well as a good harbor 16 miles away.



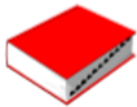
Perhaps around 45 AD.



The first multi-cultural church—Antioch.



A new breed of church leader at Antioch reflecting the cultural diversity of the city: Simeon called Niger—perhaps Jewish and African, Lucius of Cyrene—North African, Manaen—brought up with Herod as a foster brother. He would be elderly and part of elite, upper class. Barnabas—a Grecian Jew, and finally Saul, a Hebrew of Hebrews.



Prophet—in the New Testament, one who A. Foretold (predicted) and B. Forthtold (preached) under the direct inspiration of the Spirit. They provided special guidance from the Lord as needed.

Teacher—One gifted and equipped by God to systematically provide information and understanding for Christian living, using Scripture.



Ephesians 4:11-12

11 It was he who gave some [gifts] to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, 12 to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up...

God's Word gives clear guidelines here (Acts 11:27-30) on how we should respond to the needs of other Christians.

1. God-directed _____
2. Christians helped Christians _____
3. Free will _____
4. In proportion to individuals' resources _____
5. With accountability _____

A church is usually like its leaders. Barnabas has a testimony of generosity (Acts 4:36-37). How have you been influenced by those who lead you?

Antioch is a church abundant in active gifts and deeds. List some of them:

Acts 13:1

In the local church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul.

Cross-cultural fellowship is not easy. It requires grace and mutual submission. Consider the church life and fellowship of Lighthouse as you read about the Antioch church. Do you help or hinder the church as it grows?

Acts 13:2

While they were worshiping/ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."

Consider the atmosphere and what was occurring as the Holy Spirit spoke to them.

The church's ministry and activity does not come out of a planning session. It comes out of a prayer meeting—God directs His church. Think of what happens when people pray:

Hebrew 11:6he rewards those who sincerely seek him.

Psalms 63:1 O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you...

Matthew 7:7-8 7 "Keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks, receives. Everyone who seeks, finds. And to everyone who knocks, the door will be opened.

Hebrew 4:15-16 15 This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same testings we do... 16 So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most.

Ephesians 6:18 Pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all believers everywhere.

Philippians 4:6 Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything.

1 Thessalonians 5:17 Never stop praying.

James 5:16 The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results.

Acts 13:3-4

3 Then, after they had fasted, prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them off.

4 Being sent out by the Holy Spirit....

Make sure you know God is directing you.

Go in the confidence of knowing you are directed by the Holy Spirit.

Identify with those who minister from your church or group.

Hold on to God more than you hold on to people.

Generously and freely release others into ministry.