

## WHY DO WE WANT THE CHURCH TO GROW?

*Open with prayer for God's wisdom.*

*The question is not one that most Christians find difficult to answer. Jesus calls us to go into all the world with the gospel to make disciples of all nations. Jesus wants the world to be saved! This statement beats in the hearts of most Christians. One church growth study, from the Episcopal Church of America, came to this conclusion: "While there are commonalities in church growth, one apparent reality is that each church must find its own way to church growth. A church cannot reproduce what another church has done in its context. All contexts are different and each church must build to its own calling and uniqueness."*

*So, we focus on church growth in order to be instruments for Christ's saving activity. How are we to do that? The answer: each church is to find and fulfill its way under the leadership of Christ. Acts 2:38-42 gives us the major thrusts and we must fill in the details to exercise our uniqueness: proclaim and give witness to the gospel; baptize in the name of Christ; study and educate; engage in shared life together; share the Lord's supper together; and pray and worship (see Acts 2:36, 42, especially).*

*Read Acts 2:37-42*

*Discuss with your family or consider on your own the following: What should be your prayer focus for church growth? How do you see your particular calling and witness and contribution to church growth?*