

Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations

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Welcome

When you think about the early church in Acts, what stands out to you as something missing in today's church?



Acts 2:41-47

⁴¹ So those who welcomed his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand persons were added. ⁴² They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

⁴³ Awe came upon everyone because many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. ⁴⁴ All who believed were together and had all things in common; ⁴⁵ they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds^[i] to all, as any had need. ⁴⁶ Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home^[k] and ate their food with glad and generous^[l] hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.



Key Insights

- Historical Context: This is the birth of the Christian church after Pentecost.
- The Spirit-filled community lived radically different from the surrounding Roman culture.
- Theological Themes:
 - Unity in diversity.
 - Radical sharing of resources.
 - Worship rooted in joy and community.
 - Witness that attracts others.



A Spirit-led church transforms not only spiritual lives but also economic, social, and communal realities.

Exegesis of Acts 2:41–47

- **Verse 41:** 3,000 added in one day — the Spirit is moving in big ways. *(Growth through receiving the Word)*
- **Verse 42:** They stayed rooted in teaching, fellowship, meals, and prayer. *(Devotion to teaching, fellowship, breaking bread, and prayer)*
- **Verse 43:** God's power and awe filled the people.
- **Verses 44–45:** They practiced radical economic sharing *(Shared resources, economic justice, caring for the poor)*.
- **Verses 46–47:** Worship, joy, favor with people, and steady growth.

Pentecost,
Power,
People...



WOW

- The Spirit didn't just save souls; God's people built a community that changed social and economic life!

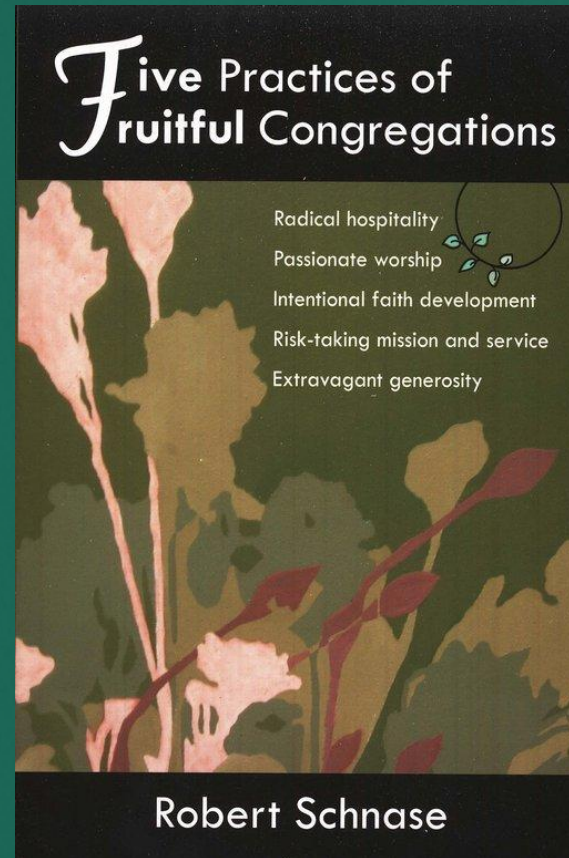
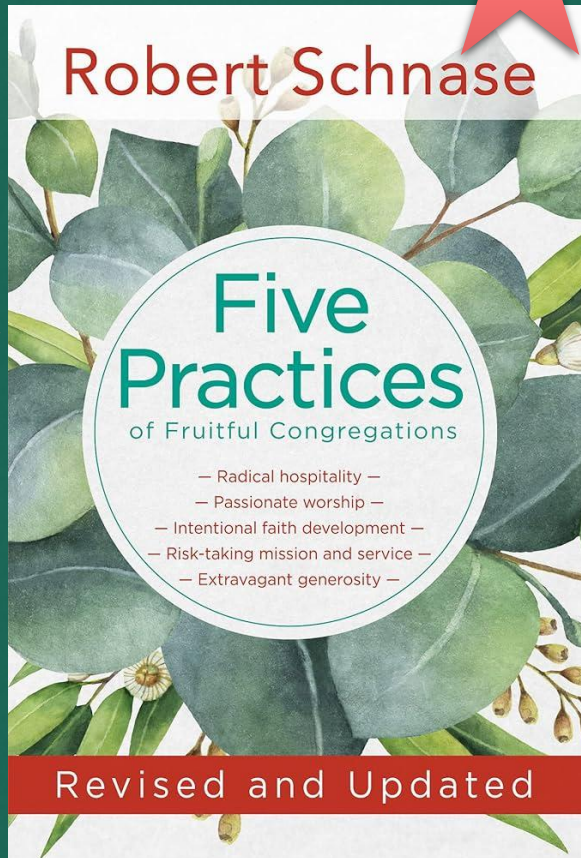
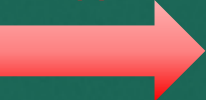
The Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations

- Robert Schnase serves as bishop of the Rio Texas Conference of the United Methodist Church. Prior to that assignment, he served as the bishop of the Missouri Conference from 2004-2016. Schnase is the author of the bestselling books *Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations*, *Five Practices of Fruitful Living*, *Practicing Extravagant Generosity*, and *Seven Levers: Missional Strategies for Conferences*.
- Purchase a copy of the book from Amazon or <https://robertschnase.com/>

The Book



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Five Practices

- **Radical Hospitality (v. 42, 46)** - *They opened their homes and hearts.*
- **Passionate Worship (v. 42, 46–47)** - *They devoted themselves to prayer and gathered daily with joy.*
- **Intentional Faith Development (v. 42)** - *They committed to the apostles' teaching.*
- **Risk-Taking Mission and Service (v. 44–45)** - *They shared all things and ensured no one was in need.*
- **Extravagant Generosity (v. 44–45)** - *They sold possessions and gave to anyone who had need.*

Conclusion

- Which of the five practices is our greatest strength?
- Which one needs the most growth in our church?
- Challenge:
 - Acts 2 shows us that the church grows when it empowers people. What step will you take this week to live out one of the five practices in your home, church, or community?



I Dare You to...Practice 5G

- **Radical Hospitality (GATHER)**
- **Passionate Worship (GLORIFY)**
- **Intentional Faith Development (GROW)**
- **Risk-Taking Mission and Service (GO)**
- **Extravagant Generosity (GIVE)**