

Life Group Notes 10/26/2025 Mark

Warren Sacred Order Week 4: A Healthy Church

No doctrine is a given unless it has been found in the Word given by the Holy Spirit and received by you. If you have observations or questions, feel free to send me an email with your comment or observations at tbeachhead@comcast.net. Thank you for taking the time.

– Pete Mehegan, the Scribe.

Remember: Be good to one another. Be sensitive and kind. Let God heal our heart and guide our discussions.

Leaders: please pre-read these notes and choose the direction that is appropriate for your group. Scan the detailed questions that follow the AI-generated study questions, to see if you want to add any more detailed questions.

Be cognizant of your group's time and be sensitive. *Some groups would like to dwell on a single idea. Let the Spirit be your guide. Never feel obligated to complete this study.*

Note: I have highlighted suggested discussion questions that Pastor Mark has raised this week, 10/5. Let's allow the Holy Spirit to guide all our discussions, using the highlights as trail blazes. ***The purpose is to minister to one another***

Important: At [the very end of these notes](#), I've included passages that were mentioned in this week's message for deeper study using SOAP journaling to help further your study during the week.

Footnotes are added to supply detail, and to enhance the study. Use at your discretion, and know any questions are welcomed. This week's footnotes cover:

1. [On devoting oneself to something.](#)

The new format begins with a summary of the notes, followed by study questions. This week, notes in full detail can be found beginning on page 3:

Section I: Summary

Here is "co-pilot's" AI summary of the Sermon Lifegroup Notes below in Section III:

Theme

The document is a set of Life Group notes for a sermon series titled "Sacred Order Week 4: A Healthy Church," focusing on what it means to be a healthy church, based on biblical principles and the early church model from Acts 2.

Key Points

1. **Definition of a Healthy Church**

- A healthy church is not defined by buildings or coffee, but by transformed lives and authentic relationships.

- The church is the people, not the structure.
- 2. **Transformation & Family**
 - The church is a spiritual family where healing and growth happen.
 - Success in relationships is measured by transformation into the image of Jesus.
- 3. **Early Church Model (Acts 2:42-47)**
 - Devotion to teaching, fellowship, breaking bread, and prayer.
 - Sharing possessions, meeting needs, and living in unity.
 - Experiencing awe, miracles, and daily growth.
- 4. **Six Marks of a Healthy Church**
 - **Devotion to God's Word:** Regular study and application, not just information but transformation.
 - **Authentic Community:** Genuine relationships, sharing life, and meeting needs.
 - **Worship & Prayer:** Daily worship and prayer as the church's "oxygen."
 - **Living on Mission:** Attracting others through transformed lives, not marketing.
 - **Maturing & Multiplying:** Discipleship, spiritual growth, and reproducing mature believers.
 - **Walking in the Power of the Holy Spirit:** Dependence on the Spirit's power and gifts.
- 5. **Self-Assessment**
 - Participants are encouraged to rate themselves on each mark (1-5 scale) and reflect on their spiritual growth.
- 6. **SOAP Journaling**
 - Suggested daily scripture readings and journaling using the SOAP method (Scripture, Observation, Application, Prayer) for deeper study.
- 7. **Application & Prayer**
 - Encouragement to pray for maturity and multiplication in the church.
 - Reflection on personal next steps and needs.
- 8. **Footnotes & Further Study**
 - Explanation of "devoting oneself" from the Greek word προσκατερέω (proskartereo), meaning to persevere and be diligent.
 - Additional scripture passages for study throughout the week.

Overall Message:

A healthy church is built on transformed people who are devoted to God's Word, authentic community, worship, mission, spiritual maturity, and the power of the Holy Spirit. The notes encourage reflection, discussion, and practical application within Life Groups. [\[10-26-2025...thy Church\]](#)

Section II: Study questions

General Reflection

1. What does it mean to be a healthy church?
2. Who is the church, according to scripture and your experience?
3. Which question comes first for you: "What is a healthy church?" or "Who is the church?" Why?

Family & Transformation

4. Have you learned aspects of real family life from the church? How?
5. Have you ever participated in a Life Group focused on "Emotionally Healthy Relationships"? Can you share a testimony?
6. How is success measured in a relationship within the church?
7. How are people being transformed into the image of Jesus Christ in your church? How is that measured?
8. Do you ever take an inventory of spiritual growth? What have you seen?

Early Church Model (Acts 2:42-47)

9. What stands out to you about the early church's devotion, unity, and generosity?
10. Have you ever experienced anything similar in your church or group?
11. What practices from Acts 2 are present in your church today? What is different?
12. Where did the "sense of awe" come from in the early church? Who participated?
13. What is missing from today's church compared to the early church? Is there anything you can supply?

Devotion to God's Word

14. Are you regularly devoting yourself to God's Word and the apostles' teaching? Rate yourself (1-5).
15. What tools did the early church have for teaching? Who was qualified to teach?
16. What changed on Pentecost regarding who could teach?
17. Are you building your life on the Word, as described in Matthew 7:24-27?
18. What does it mean to pursue transformation, not just information?

Authentic Community

19. What does authentic community look like in your group?
20. Are you living isolated or connected, in committed relationships where you are known, seen, and understood? Rate yourself (1-5).
21. What does it mean to "devote yourself" to others? How does this change your relationships?

Worship & Prayer

22. How is worship and prayer like "oxygen" for the church?
23. Is worship a lifestyle for you throughout the week? Rate yourself (1-5).
24. How does worship enable "prayer without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)?
25. Are you focused on God's presence or your own preferences?

Living on Mission

26. What is the fruit of a healthy church? Why?
27. How do transformed lives attract others to the church?
28. Do you see yourself as a missionary in your daily life? Who is hearing the gospel through you? Rate yourself (1-5).

Maturing & Multiplying

29. Are you at a place where you can say, "Follow me, as I follow Christ"? Explain.
30. Are you multiplying the transformation Jesus has done in your life? Is there someone you're walking with?
31. What is the cost of discipleship? What happened in Galatia when they strayed from Paul's teaching?
32. Where are you in your spiritual growth? Rate yourself (1-5).

Power of the Holy Spirit

33. What is the Promise of the Father in Acts 1:8? What power did believers receive?
34. Is there any limit to the power of the Holy Spirit in your life? Who sets those limits?
35. How many gifts of the Spirit have you witnessed in operation? What limits would you place on these gifts?
36. Where is the Holy Spirit in your life? Rate yourself (1-5).

Application & Prayer

37. What do you see as your biggest need for growth?
38. What is your next step in becoming part of a healthy church?
39. How is your church doing in building on transformed people rather than talent or programs?
40. Pray: "Lord, mature your church. Make us spiritual fathers and mothers who raise up new disciples. Fill us with Your spirit to live your sacred Order—growing, multiplying and glorifying your Name. Amen."

Section III: Complete study notes

Pastor began by asking, "Do you know what it is to be a healthy church?" and he added, "First of all, who is the church?"

1. Answer him. What is a healthy church?
2. Who is the church?
3. Which question comes first in your mind?

Reviewing the last three weeks, and especially remembering the messages on the family, Pastor said, "I know some of us are in families that don't look like the model. But the good news is, we get to be adopted into this family, where we learn to heal and grow, and we learn how to relate to one another as a family."

1. Have you learned aspects of real family life from the church?
2. How? Can you explain?
3. Have you ever been a part of the Life Group entitled, "Emotionally Healthy Relationships?" Can you share a testimony?
4. How is success measured in a relationship?

Pastor says, the sign of a growing church is transformation.

1. How are people being transformed into the image of Jesus Christ?
2. How is that even measured?
3. Do you ever take an inventory? Can you share what you have seen?

Look at what the early church looked like in Jerusalem right after Pentecost in Acts 2:⁴²*They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.* ⁴³*A sense of awe came over everyone, and the apostles*

performed many wonders and signs. ⁴⁴All the believers were together and had everything in common. ⁴⁵Selling their possessions and goods, they shared with anyone who was in need. ⁴⁶With one accord they continued to meet daily in the temple courts and to break bread from house to house, sharing their meals with gladness and sincerity of heart, ⁴⁷praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

1. What do you see? Have you ever experienced anything like this?
2. What are those things they did that you are doing today?
3. What were they seeing in each other that you are seeing today?
4. What is different today?
5. Where did the “sense of awe” come from? Who was participating with the apostles?
6. Mark says this is a model of what the early church looked like when it was birthed. Have you ever seen anything like it?
7. What is missing? Make a list.
8. Is there anything missing that you can supply?

Pastor Mark continued, “As much as we love great coffee, as much as we love a nice building, that is not the evidence of a healthy thriving church.”

1. Do you agree?
2. How good does the coffee have to be?
3. How many church buildings have you attended? What do you look for in a healthy, thriving church?

Pastor suggests, “The evidence is in how we are living out our care for one another...how well we are becoming an imitation of the essence of this passage of scripture.”

1. What does that mean?
2. How are we doing?
3. Why is growth so difficult?
4. Why is emotional growth even more difficult?
5. Have you ever tried a new diet, and it worked?
6. Pastor says, “So you start on Monday, and you fail on Tuesday?” Do you have a testimony? Do you have a positive testimony, where you did not fail?

He continues, “We’re not going to see transformation overnight, but we should be pursuing a level of transformation and a level of growth in our own lives as it relates to how we are in the church.” He says there are six points he wants us all to grade ourselves on, on a scale from one to five where one (pastor says he’ll always give us a one) is “I barely got going on this one...” and five is “I’m not going to have a problem with this one.”

✦ **A healthy church is devoted to God’s Word**, taken from verse 42 above, “*They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching...*” The early church wasn’t scrolling through the reels. They intentionally, purposefully and consistently remained in the teaching of the apostles.

1. What tools did the early church have to teach with?
2. Who was qualified to teach? Who else?
3. What is different today?

4. What changed on that first day of Pentecost? Who were the teachers prior to that day?
 5. Why were they no longer qualified to teach?
 6. Rate yourself. Are you regularly devoting yourself to God's Word and the apostles' teaching?
 7. Review Matthew 7: "²⁴Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. ²⁵The rain fell, the torrents raged, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because its foundation was on the rock. ²⁶But everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. ²⁷The rain fell, the torrents raged, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell—and great was its collapse!" Are you building your own life and practices on the Word?
 8. Pastor says, "Remember we're talking about transformation and not information." What does that even mean?
 9. Are you engaging in Journaling groups...do you use the SOAP passages [listed below](#)?
 10. Do you seek discipleship in our life groups? Do you have a testimony?
 11. Do you allow the Word of God to transform you? Tally your score.
- † **A healthy church lives an authentic community.** Look back again to Acts 2: ⁴²...and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. ⁴³A sense of awe came over everyone, and the apostles performed many wonders and signs. ⁴⁴All the believers were together and had everything in common. ⁴⁵Selling their possessions and goods, they shared with anyone who was in need.
1. Analyze what you see. Who was making the rules?
 2. Who decides who gets the keys to the Mercedes?
 3. How does this work practically?
 4. Can you make it work practically?
 5. What does it mean to "devote yourself" to something. (See [footnote 1, below](#).)
 6. Pastor says, "When we devote ourselves to each other, it means, 'I know what you need. I see you. I'm in your life, and I know how to pray for you.'" Does this match the definition given [below](#)?
 7. What changes when we look each other in the eyes, and realize that we're on the same journey?
 8. On the scale: Are you in a small group, living isolated or connected, in committed relationships where you are known, seen and understood? Tally your score.
- † **A healthy church is devoted to worship and prayer.** Look at verse ⁴⁶With one accord they continued to meet daily in the temple courts and to break bread from house to house, sharing their meals with gladness and sincerity of heart, ⁴⁷praising God...
1. What do you see? What was happening daily?
 2. Imagine together what this looked like practically?

3. What about those who did not live in Jerusalem, but had come in obedience to the Law for the feast of Pentecost?
4. Who was noticing their change in behavior? What was the result?
5. Mark says, "Worship and prayer were like the church's oxygen." Explain.
6. How is it still the church's oxygen today?
7. Do you, as Pastor Mark says he does, sing the worship songs from Sunday's service throughout the week?
8. Look at 1 Thessalonians 5:¹⁶*Rejoice at all times.* ¹⁷*Pray without ceasing.* ¹⁸*Give thanks in every circumstance, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.* How does worship enable "prayer without ceasing."
9. Pastor asks, "Is worship a lifestyle, you find yourself engaged in throughout the week." Rate yourself.
10. Are you focused on God's presence, or on your own preferences? Tally your score.

✠ **A healthy church lives on mission.** Acts 2:⁴⁷...*and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.*

1. What is the fruit of a healthy church? Why?
2. What happens when the church is attractive?
3. Have you ever experienced or studied a revival that went global?
4. What happened? Do you have a story?
5. How do you explain the revival?
6. Pastor says, "The early church didn't need clever marketing. The church today doesn't need more marketing..." What do we need?
7. How did the Holy Spirit work with the apostles to make the church attractive?
8. What is He doing today? Explain.
9. Mark says, "A transformed life is salt and light to the world." Explain.
10. Is any of this attraction about how knowledgeable anybody is? Explain.
11. Pastor asks, "Do you wake up on a Monday morning saying, 'I am a missionary.'" Answer him.
12. Who is hearing the gospel through your own life and words? Tally your score.

✠ **A healthy church matures and multiplies.**

1. Pastor asks, "Are you at a place where you can say, 'Follow me, as I follow Christ.'" Answer him.
2. Are you multiplying the transformation Jesus has done in your life? Is there someone you're walking with?
3. Who has heard the gospel recently from you? Can we take a moment to pray specifically for them?
4. Look at Acts 16:¹*Paul came to Derbe and then to Lystra, where he found a disciple named Timothy, the son of a believing Jewish woman and a Greek father.* ²*The brothers in Lystra and Iconium spoke well of him.* ³*Paul wanted Timothy to accompany him, so he took him and circumcised him on account of the Jews in that area, for they all knew that his father was a Greek.* Explain how Paul began discipling Timothy. What steps did he take?
5. What steps did Timothy take?

6. What do you know of their relationship?
7. What was the fruit of their relationship?
8. Look at what Paul tells Timothy in 2 Timothy 2: ¹*You therefore, my child, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.* ²*And the things that you have heard me say among many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be qualified to teach others as well.* What do you see? At this point in Timothy's story, what had Timothy already heard and seen?
9. Where had he traveled with Paul?
10. What have you heard and seen?
11. Explain how the gospel spreads authentically? What happens if it's inauthentic?
12. Examine Ephesians 4 in this light: ¹¹*And it was He who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers,* ¹²*to equip the saints for works of ministry and to build up the body of Christ,* ¹³*until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God, as we mature to the full measure of the stature of Christ.* What does a healthy church look like?
13. How does it get there? What is the "work of the ministry?"
14. Who are the ministers? Name their offices as listed above.
15. How does an evangelist become one? ...a prophet? ...a pastor?
16. Look at this, as Paul encourages Timothy in 2 Timothy 2: ³*Join me in suffering, like a good soldier of Christ Jesus.* ⁴*A soldier refrains from entangling himself in civilian affairs, in order to please the one who enlisted him.* Does this encourage you? Explain. What is the cost of discipleship?
17. Pastor asks, "Are you growing up? Or are you merely showing up?" Answer him.
18. Is that question uncomfortable or mean-spirited? Explain.
19. At what point in a disciple's walk does transformation begin? At what point does it end?
20. Pastor says, "Programs attract people. But only mature believers reproduce disciples." Explain.
21. Why can a program not reproduce disciples?
22. Look at what Paul told the Galatians, who had strayed from his teaching: Galatians 4: ¹⁹*My children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you,* ²⁰*how I wish I could be with you now and change my tone, because I am perplexed about you.*
23. Describe the cost of discipleship to the discipler.
24. Can you explain this crisis in Galatia? What had they done?
25. What program did they start to follow? To whom had they listened, after Paul had left?
26. Where are you in your growth? Tally your score.

✠ **A healthy church walks in the Power of the Holy Spirit.**

1. Review the Promise of the Father from Acts 1: ⁸*But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be My witnesses in*

Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

What exactly is the Promise?

2. What power did believers receive on the day of Pentecost?
3. Was that power limited by day or time?
4. Was it limited only to a small group of people?
5. How do you know?
6. How many were in the upper room on the day of Pentecost?
7. Look at how Paul describes what was happening in Galatia, despite man's efforts to limit God's work there: Galatians 3: *⁵Does God lavish His Spirit on you and work miracles among you because you practice the law, or because you hear and believe?* What were the Galatians experiencing?
8. What was the Holy Spirit doing among the Galatians, even when Paul was no longer around?
9. Answer Paul's question. Why were the miracles in Galatia and why was the power so present, even without the apostle's presence?
10. What was being lavished on the Galatians? Is He being lavished on us as well?
11. Pastor says, the important point is simple: How much are we depending on the power of the Holy Spirit to get us through the day?
12. Do you have a testimony? Have you ever asked the Spirit what our next step is, and been shown that next step?
13. Is there any limit to the Power of the Holy Spirit in our lives? Explain?
14. If there is a limit, who is limiting Him today?
15. Look at how Jesus put this in Mark 16: *¹⁶Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. ¹⁷And these signs will accompany those who believe: In My name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; ¹⁸they will pick up snakes with their hands, and if they drink any deadly poison, it will not harm them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will be made well.*" Looking at each promise, what limits would you place on these promises?
16. Why?
17. Looking at the gifts of the Spirit given to the church as described in 1 Corinthians 12: *⁷Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. ⁸To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by the same Spirit, ⁹to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, ¹⁰to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in various tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. ¹¹All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, who apportions them to each one as He determines.* Looking at each gift, what limits would you place on each?
18. Who places any limits? Explain why limits exist and where they come from.
19. How many of these gifts have you witnessed in operation?
20. To what degree is the character of the Spirit in us, as expressed in His fruit?
21. What limits would you place on the Fruit of the Spirit? Explain.

22. Examine again what Paul told the Corinthian church in 1 Corinthians 2:

¹When I came to you, brothers, I did not come with eloquence or wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. ²For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. ³I came to you in weakness and fear, and with much trembling. ⁴My message and my preaching were not with persuasive words of wisdom, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, ⁵so that your faith would not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power. What did the Corinthians see that Paul brought with him?

23. What have you seen? Is there a difference between what you've seen and what the Corinthians saw? Explain.

24. What is your own faith in? Do you rely more on men's wisdom for answers? Or God's power?

25. How do you know? What do you expect to see when you pray?

26. Rate yourself. Where is the Holy Spirit in your life? Tally your score.

Pastor concludes, "The good news is, that the Holy Spirit is at work. He will not be limited. All it takes is for us to come to Him and say, 'I'm willing. Send me.' A yielded heart begins the transformative work." Isaiah put it this way in the first chapter, "¹⁹If you are willing and obedient, you will eat the fat of the land."

1. What was your score?
2. What do you see as your biggest need? What is your next step?
3. "A healthy church is not built on talent or programs. It's built on transformed people." How is your church doing?
4. Pastor calls us to continue to yield to the work of Jesus Christ in our life.
5. If we are Christ's body in this world today, what are His hands and His feet doing?
6. How are His hands and His feet doing?
7. Say this prayer together: "Lord, mature your church. Make us spiritual fathers and mothers who raise up new disciples. Fill us with Your spirit to live your sacred Order—growing, multiplying and glorifying your Name. Amen."

Take the time to pray.

Follow up application:

1. Use the **Soap study below** to pursue your own understanding.
 2. Ask the Holy Spirit to make your next step clear. Right down His answer.
 3. Read the above, concluding prayer every day this week. Write down thoughts and ideas.
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Footnotes:

1. **On devoting oneself to something**—When Luke says the early disciples were devoting themselves to teaching and fellowship, he uses the Greek word, προσκαρτερέω, *proskartereo*. Strong's defines this word like this: *From pros and kartereo; to be earnest towards, i.e. (to a thing) to persevere, be constantly diligent, or (in a place) to attend assiduously all the exercises, or (to a person) to adhere closely to (as a servitor) -- attend (give self) continually (upon), continue (in, instant in, with), wait on (continually)*. Now, given this definition, rate yourself on your own devotion.
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For further study:

Take a moment each day this week to apply the **SOAP method** (**S**cripture—Copy the scripture. / **O**bservation—Write what you see. / **A**pplication—Write what God is saying. / **P**ray—Write what your response is.) to some of the scripture we looked at this week:

Monday: Acts 2:42-44
Tuesday: Acts 2:45-47
Wednesday: Matthew 7:24-27
Thursday: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18
Friday: Acts 16:1-3
Saturday: 2 Timothy 2:1-2
Sunday: Ephesians 4:11-13

Once again, some passages suggested here have more than the usual number of verses. This is not to increase the burden but to provide clarity of context. Pick the verses that speak to you most clearly, and run these through the SOAP steps.