

Multiplication

Acts 12:24-13:15 This passage in Acts reveals some of the secrets of multiplying the church through the spread of the gospel. The first verse says, "But the word of God grew and multiplied."

One of the secrets to causing an increase in the spreading of God's Word and multiplying the members of the body of Christ was fasting and praying. We see this in Acts 13:2-3. "As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, 'Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.' Then having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away."

To be effective in spreading the gospel, we have to recognize that our first ministry is to the Lord, not our own ministry. We minister to the Lord through fasting and prayer, and it is at those times that we receive clear direction about what to do and when to go. This is exactly what happened in the early church. Several men gathered together and began to fast and pray, and they received clear direction from the Holy Spirit. The church today is just now coming into the understanding of how fasting affects the spread of the gospel and the coming of revival. The last revival in the United States occurred because men met together to pray and fast. We now are seeing a new interest in prayer and fasting, and many in the body of Christ are fasting and praying for revival in the United States. Jesus gave us a command to pray for laborers for the harvest. As we participate in praying for laborers for the harvest, we also become laborers because prayer is labor. No new births ever occur without the labor of prayer preceding them.

Another secret of spreading the gospel is separation. Once a person is discipled, it is time for him to separate himself from that disciple and disciple someone else. This is what

happened to Barnabas and Saul. Both had a similar call, and until this time of prayer and fasting, they always worked with the other men as a group in the spread of the gospel. The Holy Spirit spoke to those praying and told them it was time to send Barnabas and Saul out on their own. They would be a gospel team no longer attached except through prayer to those other men. Barnabas and Saul could have refused to separate themselves from this fine group of prophets and teachers because they enjoyed such wonderful fellowship with them. Don't we sometimes see that attitude today in some churches? People get satisfied with their little fellowship, and no one is being sent out with the gospel. We can become so attached to the church that we forget the purpose of the church—to disciple many nations. Jesus told Peter to feed His lambs and His sheep if he truly loved Him. We have the same commission. We run the risk of becoming spiritual gluttons by not fulfilling the Great Commission.

**READ: 1 Kings 20:1-21:29; Acts 12:24-13:15; Psalm 137:1-9;
Proverbs 17:16**