



Sermon notes for Vocations Sunday 2026

Text: Acts 2:42-27

Have you ever wondered what it was like for the first Christians just after Pentecost? The ones who hadn't actually met Jesus in person but had heard Peter and the other disciples speaking on the day of Pentecost and been convinced and had rushed to be baptised. What then?

There was no church as we know it, no buildings or musicians or even bibles, just a large crowd of people, three thousand or so, people who lived in Jerusalem and people who had travelled hundreds of miles for the Jewish festival of Pentecost, old and young, rich and poor, who had heard the good news and been baptised.

You can imagine the apostles wondering what on earth to do.

They'd spent the previous month or so gathering to pray, together with the women who had followed Jesus and his brothers; gradually they had collected others who had known Jesus until there were over a hundred of them, but this explosion of followers left them in a quandary. There were too many of them now to fit in the room they'd been using for prayer, too many to gather in any single location without risking the fear and fury of their Roman overlords. Too many to rely on the informal ways that had worked in the past to teach people how to be followers of Jesus.

And so they taught people to commit to four main things (which we might call a rule of life):

1. To learning: to discovering more about this Jesus who they had heard of. They had no New Testament. Someone would hear one of the apostles telling a story about Jesus, and they would go back and tell other people they knew who had been baptised, and they would discuss what it all meant, learning from one another.
2. To one another: our bibles often translate this as 'fellowship,' but the word used, *κοινωνία* (*koinonia*), has a meaning that's not just gathering for coffee, but has a sense of participation, belonging, sharing. They connected with one another in a deep and committed way, in spite of their differences. It's why, when they saw another one of the baptised was in need, they sold things they owned and shared the proceeds – because they were living out Jesus' command to love their neighbours as they loved themselves.
3. To breaking bread: We immediately think of Holy Communion when we see these words, and yes, they probably were breaking bread and sharing wine as Jesus commanded, but it was most likely in the context of a shared meal. Acts says that they broke bread "from house to house": what that probably means is that

those who had more spacious houses invited others to join them for a meal, and in that context they remembered Jesus with bread and wine.

4. To prayers: We have no idea what their prayers were like, other than the prayer that Jesus taught them, which we know as the Lord's Prayer. But the first Christians worshipped each day in the temple, where people prayed and rabbis taught and priests offered sacrifices and Levites chanted psalms.

These four things formed the core of Christian life for those first people who were baptised. And, we're told, every day more people joined them.

But why? What was it that people saw in them that made them want to join this new religion. Remember, it was only a matter of weeks since Jesus had been crucified. Crowds had been there to see him, abandoned, humiliated, disgraced. And for all the rumours that he had come back to life, few had seen him. The only evidence they had was the lives of those who for some unfathomable reason had decided to throw their lot in with him.

Most of what those first Christians did was done fairly quietly. They'd head to the temple early, and in the evenings they might go to someone's house to talk and eat. But in between, we imagine, they simply went on with their lives as usual – as fishermen, doctors, tax collectors, tentmakers, farmers, parents, teachers, soldiers... This wasn't some big crusade or mission. It was Christians living faithfully in a way that was different from those around them.

And God still calls us to live like this: not just to be converted to following Jesus, but to have our whole lives converted, so that our faith makes a difference in everything we do, as we learn and belong and break bread and pray, **and** as we carry that changed life with us into our everyday lives.

Recently, a new edition of the Bible came out: [The Everyday Faith Bible](#), published by the Bible Society in cooperation with the London Institute of Contemporary Christianity. It has notes alongside the text that can help you to connect you read with your life. Sometimes the notes have information about the background of a passage. Sometimes someone talks about how their work helps them understand something in the bible. Sometimes they talk about how they try to live out their faith in their work. And sometimes there are questions that invite you to think about what this might mean for your life.

Paul, a tree surgeon, talks about how important pruning is, and the different ways fruit trees can go bad – cankers, rotting fruit, stress from drought – in response to Jesus using the image of a tree and its fruit (Matthew 12:33-36).

Niamh is a support worker for adults with learning disabilities in a residential setting. Her managers encourage her to cut corners and do the bare minimum to fulfil their legal obligations. But she sees the residents not just as tasks to rush through, but individuals with God-given dignity and worth, who deserve dignity and care. Romans 13:1-6 talks

about being subject to those in authority: that means obeying her managers in terms of working efficiently while still giving generously to help the residents to have fun and to engage in meaningful activities.

Tim, an MP, talks about the challenges of life in rural Cumbria, and what it means to do right in the sight of God (2 Kings 22:1-2). He says “Inspired by Jesus’ love for the vulnerable, I work hard to champion my constituents’ needs. For example, I advocate for social policies that’ll benefit local people, such as calling for disused farm buildings to be converted into local affordable housing or abolishing the two-child cap to reduce child poverty. In doing so, I join in God’s work to provide for the people he’s placed under my leadership.”

Rupert is a former army officer. Reflecting on the story of the battle of Jericho (Joshua 6.16), he talks about the pressures of active service. “Absolute commitment to the collective purpose is demanded of you, and this often requires courage and discipline. When the weight of this pressure feels overwhelming, it’s a privilege and a comfort to know I can rely on God. Whatever you’re asked to do on behalf of your country, as a disciple your ultimate responsibility is to Christ, the King of kings.”

Mariana works for a railway in customer services. She spends her days talking to people who are lost, frustrated, confused or just in need of help. While dealing with complaints all day long might not seem appealing, Mariana doesn’t see it that way. She comes to work every day to wholeheartedly follow God (Joshua 14:8). She does it through being patient with customers when they are grumpy. Being compassionate with those who are angry or upset. Being the light of Christ in that railway station, morning, noon and night, in every conversation and every interaction she has.

These people, and many more Christians know that what they do every day is work that they are called to by God.

Today is Vocations Sunday, a day when we are invited to pay attention to what God is calling us to. And for most of us, that will be primarily about bringing our faith to everything we do: just as the first Christians did, their commitment to learning, to one another, to breaking bread and to prayers providing the fuel for their work, their families, their leisure.

But some of us will find that God’s call leads us to explore a vocation to ministry in the church, to minister with children or young people, to help build a new worshipping community or plant a new church, to minister as a reader or a Deacon or a priest. If that’s the case, talk with your vicar or another clergy person. Have a look at section of the diocesan website on vocations. Contact one of the vocations coordinators listed there.

Whether it’s some new sort of formal church ministry that you hear God calling you to, or to continue bringing your faith to what you do every day, follow the lead of those early Christians, whose lives of faith drew more and more people to know the forgiveness and love of God that we know in Jesus Christ.