

**Word notes Sunday 06/01/2013 Tony Hodge
Resolutions**

Summary (read this bit out to remind cell members what was said on Sunday)

Key Text: Acts 2:42-47

In a recent poll of top New year's resolutions the usual suspects came out top - 53% wanted to be more financially secure by saving or getting out of debt, 58% wanted to address their health by getting fir, giving up smoking or alcohol (+6% wanted to give up chocolate?), 25% wanted to change their work habits by changing job or working less and just 7% wanted to invest more in relationships. All good objectives but surely as Christians we can find something more spiritual, more in line with our faith and relationship with God?

The early church responded to the Good News by devoting themselves to teaching, fellowship and relationship with those outside. The result was that with God's blessing and grace they grew in numbers daily. How might we phrase these supposed 1st Century Resolutions into 21st Century aims for ourselves?

- 1) Study and use God's Word. (Acts 17:11 & 2 Tim 2:15).
Getting into The Word is not just about listening to a sermon, it's about testing what we hear, finding spiritual understanding and using God's word as the Sword of the Spirit for:
 - a) Ourselves - Knowing who you are in Christ, what He has called you to and the life he wants you to lead.
 - b) Dealing with Sin, the World and the Devil. How will you keep a straight line when there are so many conflicting views on "hot potatoes" – even from Christians?
 - c) Taking the words of life and truth to others.
- 2) Commitment to Fellowship (Heb 10:23-25).
Fellowship results from relationship. We are all one family of God, all His children, all heirs. In the "*one anothers*" of the various letters of Paul and others they encourage us to:
 - a) Love and honour one another as Jesus commanded us with the love that fills us from God and as he first loved us.
 - b) Meet and greet in hospitality, serving and encouragement.
 - c) Build each other up in harmony, acceptance and unity.
- 3) Share the Good News (Matt 28:18-20, Rom 10:14 & 1 Cor 9:19-23)
The great evangelist Dwight Moody was once criticized for his evangelistic methods. He replied: "I like my way of doing it better than your way of not doing it." In the letter to the Corinthians, Paul is clear that he will step into anyone's shoes in order to bring them the gospel. He's careful to point out that he doesn't compromise the message but is willing to accept restrictions on himself in order to win lost souls.

Are those three resolutions fitting for us as individuals and as a fellowship for 2013?

Application (this is the bit where cell members get to participate. Lead discussions around these points)

What has been your most spectacular New Year's Resolution ever? Did you succeed or fail?

The early church "devoted themselves" to some things – does that sound like "resolutions" to you? What prompted them and what might be seen as the measure of success or failure? Apart from their commitment, what/who was responsible for their success?

The order of actions and result in Acts 2:42-47 is crucial. What does this tell us about what is important in seeing the Church grow?

When criticised for his evangelistic methods Dwight Moody asked the critic how she did it – "I don't" was the answer that resulted in his famous quote (in 3 above). What would your answer be to the question?

In whose shoes will you be walking this year in order to win them to Christ?

Witness (this is the bit where the cell talks and prays about how to share the Good News)

See the last 2 questions.