

**22<sup>nd</sup> January 2023**

**Isaiah 58:1-14**

<sup>1</sup> "Shout it aloud, do not hold back.

Raise your voice like a trumpet.

Declare to my people their rebellion

and to the descendants of Jacob their sins.

<sup>2</sup> For day after day they seek me out;

they seem eager to know my ways,

as if they were a nation that does what is right

and has not forsaken the commands of its God.

They ask me for just decisions

and seem eager for God to come near them.

<sup>3</sup> 'Why have we fasted,' they say,

'and you have not seen it?

Why have we humbled ourselves,

and you have not noticed?'

"Yet on the day of your fasting, you do as you please

and exploit all your workers.

<sup>4</sup> Your fasting ends in quarrelling and strife,

and in striking each other with wicked fists.

You cannot fast as you do today

and expect your voice to be heard on high.

<sup>5</sup> Is this the kind of fast I have chosen,

only a day for people to humble themselves?

Is it only for bowing one's head like a reed

and for lying in sackcloth and ashes?

Is that what you call a fast,

a day acceptable to the LORD?

<sup>6</sup> "Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen:

to loose the chains of injustice

and untie the cords of the yoke,

to set the oppressed free  
and break every yoke?

<sup>7</sup> Is it not to share your food with the hungry  
and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—  
when you see the naked, to clothe them,  
and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?

<sup>8</sup> Then your light will break forth like the dawn,  
and your healing will quickly appear;  
then your righteousness will go before you,  
and the glory of the LORD will be your rear guard.

<sup>9</sup> Then you will call, and the LORD will answer;  
you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I.

“If you do away with the yoke of oppression,  
with the pointing finger and malicious talk,

<sup>10</sup> and if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry  
and satisfy the needs of the oppressed,  
then your light will rise in the darkness,  
and your night will become like the noonday.

<sup>11</sup> The LORD will guide you always;  
he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land  
and will strengthen your frame.

You will be like a well-watered garden,  
like a spring whose waters never fail.

<sup>12</sup> Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins  
and will raise up the age-old foundations;  
you will be called Repairer of Broken Walls,  
Restorer of Streets with Dwellings.

<sup>13</sup> “If you keep your feet from breaking the Sabbath  
and from doing as you please on my holy day,  
if you call the Sabbath a delight  
and the LORD’s holy day honourable,  
and if you honour it by not going your own way  
and not doing as you please or speaking idle words,

<sup>14</sup> then you will find your joy in the LORD,  
and I will cause you to ride in triumph on the heights of the land  
and to feast on the inheritance of your father Jacob.”

For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.

## Acts 2:42-47

### The Fellowship of the Believers

<sup>42</sup> They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. <sup>43</sup> Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. <sup>44</sup> All the believers were together and had everything in common. <sup>45</sup> They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. <sup>46</sup> Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, <sup>47</sup> praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

### The Church – Equips (Isaiah 58:1-14 & Acts 2:42-47)

22-Jan-2023

G’Day Church Family

Please have your Bibles in front of you – we’ll be looking at both Bible passages – from **Isaiah 58** and **Acts 2:42-47**.

There’s the usual **outline** for you to **take notes** – if that helps you **concentrate**.

Let me ask **God** for His **help** and **guidance** first – let’s **pray**...

### Intro

This is the **fourth part** of **5-part series** on The **Church** –

The Church

In Greek it is ἐκκλησία

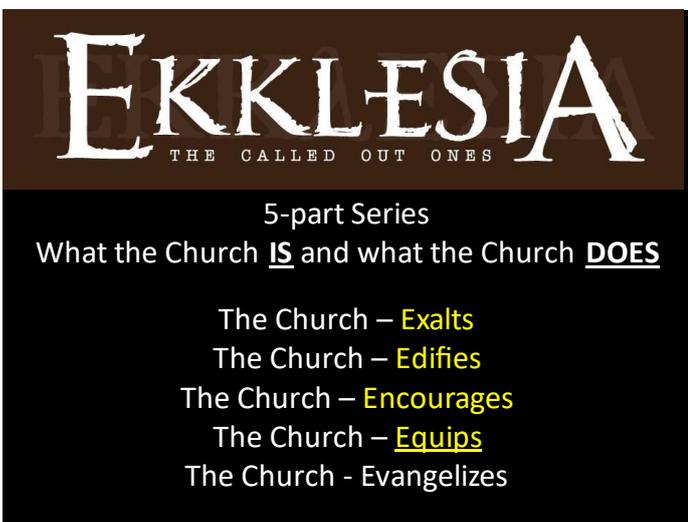
[Slide 1-Called out ones]

# EKKLESIA

THE CALLED OUT ONES

In essence the **Ekklesia** – the **church** – are the “*called out ones*” – called out - to worship God and follow Jesus.

[Slide 1a-5 e’s]



**EKKLESIA**  
THE CALLED OUT ONES

5-part Series  
What the Church **IS** and what the Church **DOES**

- The Church – **Exalts**
- The Church – **Edifies**
- The Church – **Encourages**
- The Church – **Equips**
- The Church - Evangelizes

In our 5-part series we’re looking at how the Church - exalts, edifies, encourages, equips and evangelizes.

In **Part 1** – we saw that - The Church – **EXALTS** God –

In other words, we as the Church – should be **putting God on the highest pedestal** – and **speaking as highly as we can** about God

In **Part 2** – we saw how - The Church –the Ekklesia - **EDIFIES** – the family of God – the Church Family – **Through God’s Holy Word** – and we said that our church has many different Growth Group/Study Groups that we can take part in

In **Part 3** - we looked at how the church encourages people – which basically amounted to **joining together in worship and in fellowship** – not just on Sunday – but in the many ways we meet together – morning tea, lunches and events here at St. David's

Which brings us to **Part 4** – the **Church** – the **Ekklesia** – **EQUIPS** – the family of **God** – the **Church Family**

**WHAT?** (Isaiah 58:1-14 and Acts 2:42-47)

[Slide 2-Defintion]

A simple definition of **EQUIP** – is to *supply what is necessary for a particular purpose*

Which begs the question – what is necessary for our Church Family?

What does our Church Family need?

To get an idea of what God's people need

Let's turn to our **Old Testament** Reading from **Isaiah 58:1-14**

In this passage the people of God – the **Israelites**

They **seem** very **religious**

V2 – they **seek God - day after day** – and seem to be people who haven't given up following God's commands [even though they have]– they ask God to help them and make decisions for them

V3 – They even fast and then complain that God hasn't noticed their fasting

But God says it's **just religious activity** and not heart activity – see the end of v3 – on the day they fast – they also exploit their workers

See v4 – **their fasting includes quarrelling and strife with each other – even turning into a **fist fight** – hardly godly behaviour!**

The **Israelites even make a mockery of the Sabbath Day** – see v13 – the Sabbath was meant to be a day of holiness and rest – but the **Israelites are doing as they please**

[Slide 3-Isaiah 58]

God's point to the Israelites and to us is that being His faithful followers is more than **NOT** eating and **NOT** working on the Sabbath – it's actually committing each day to the work of the Lord.

See V5 – God says being His people is more than just **bowing our heads and saying – Oh look how holy I am** – I fast – I've given up food for you God.

So, **God spells out what true fasting is:**

- See v6 – They are to **loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke – set the oppressed free.** How can the Israelites worship God when they carry on a slave trade and when they turn a blind out to people being oppressed?
- See v7 – They are to **share their food with the hungry – and provide the poor wanderer with shelter – to clothe the naked – and not turn away their own people – and say they can't help**

If the Israelites do that – then **they will be a light and righteousness will shine and be obvious to everyone** (v8)

And they will call on God for help (v9) – and He will help – because they are being fair dinkum and helping those who are in need and oppressed.

God promises blessings for the Israelites – if their “religious” activity is accompanied by “action” not just “lip-service”

Application: In this chapter, God exposed the emptiness of two religious rituals as practiced in Isaiah's day: **fasting and Sabbath keeping**. Both of these are expressions of **not doing things**. In fasting, we don't eat. In Sabbath keeping, we don't work. This chapter is showing us that **what we don't do isn't enough to make us right before God**.

Our walk with God **shouldn't only be defined by what we don't do**. **BUT** – by what do **we do** - for the LORD?

And it seems **equipping others** – is **very important to God!**

Which brings us to our **NT passage** – from **Acts 2:42-47**

It's the same reading we have had now for 4 weeks in a row

[Slide 4-The Church Equips]

And here we see how the early church **equipped** people.

And we're just focusing on the parts of the reading that talk about the Church – **equipping**

Look at the end of v44 – the church family – **had *everything in common***.

And v45 – ***They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had a need***.

The Early Church had everything in common – **first and foremost** they **had their love of Jesus in common** – which made them all part of Jesus' family

And just like any family they looked out for each other

They **sold their stuff to provide to anyone in need**.

Literally to **give people what was necessary to live**.

From both of these readings we see **HOW** the Church **equips** people – inside the church who can the equip people outside the Church- by **supplying what people need**.

We could **summarize** what people **need** into **3 areas**:

1. Spiritual needs
2. Physical needs
3. Emotional needs

### How does the Church Equip?

So, let's look at each of these areas and see what that means for us at St.

**David's practically**

### Spiritual Needs

1<sup>st</sup> – The **Church equips** people **spiritually**

[Slide 5-Spiritual]

We've touchd upon our spiritual needs a little when we talked about the Church EDIFYING its people - in Part 2 – we get a lot of our spiritual needs from God's Word – by spending time **reading, studying and meditating on God's Word** – and then **applying God's Word to our lives**. And **God's Word teaches us why we need Jesus** – because of our sinfulness. And it **teaches us how to be saved for Heaven**

And being part of our Growth Groups/ Bible Study will **help us have a better understanding of God's Word and what He requires of us**

But people also need the spiritual support of prayer

We as a church **can equip people by praying for them – asking God to supply their needs** – asking God to help them through sickness and trials and troubles

And here at St. David's we have our **Prayer Chain** – where we can **request prayer on behalf of ourselves or others** – and we can have a **whole bunch of people praying for the needs of our church family**

[If you'd like to be recipient of these prayers – or to submit a request for prayer – see Christine Warrell – email in the bulletin]

[We also have a Prayer News – to help you pray through the needs of our Church family and beyond]

As the **Apostle Paul says in Galatians 6:2**

Carry each other's burdens, and in this way, you will fulfill the law of Christ [the law of Christ is to love one another]

### Physical Needs

2<sup>nd</sup> – the **Church equips** people **physically**

#### [Slide 6-Physical]

Just like in Isaiah's day

The **Church must share what it has** with each other and the community

We must realize that anything we have – **we only have because God allows it** – **it's His really** – and **He wants us to help those in need and those who are oppressed.**

In our Church – it looks like this

- It looks like - **personal sharing** and **giving** of their **possessions** and **money**
- It looks like - **weekly offerings** for the work and ministries of our Church

- It looks like -the giving of food items to **Presbyterian Aid Toukley (P.A.T.)** – so that P.A.T. can give to those in need in our community
- It looks like - giving to our **Mission Partners**
  - **Mick Alley** in Kenya
  - **Bible Society**
  - **Mobile Mission Maintenance**
  - **Rumginae Medical Centre** in Papua New Guinea
  - Colin and Alison Morrow – **Presbyterian Inland Mission**
  - **Nungalinya Bible College** in Northern Territory
  - **Allowah Presbyterian Children’s Hospital**

The support of our Mission partners - **equips and enables the Gospel** [Good news of Jesus] to go into Australia and overseas

- It looks like - **giving to other social and economic causes**
  - We had an example yesterday - in our **Ukraine Aid Concert** – and we have **other concerts** throughout the year
  - And there’s the support we give to the **social justice arm of our denomination called – Jericho Road** – flood/bushfire appeals etc.

### Emotional Needs

3<sup>rd</sup> – the **Church equips** people emotionally

[Slide 7-Emotional]

In our Church it looks like:

- **Conversations** at church/morning tea and lunch
- It looks like - **listening to others** as they share their burdens with us

- It looks like - **phone calls** of encouragement
- It looks like - **sending cards** – get well, sympathy, encouragement
- It looks like - **visits** – at home, hospital and Aged Care
- It looks like - **Pastoral Care** – Jenny Carson coordinates pastoral care for those in Aged Care, housebound and in hospital – as well as ensuring all our church family are cared for – and as well as equipping and mobilizing others to pastorally care for our Church family.
- Jenny will be running a **Pastoral Care workshop on 22<sup>nd</sup> March** – so watch out for this being advertised – it’s another way of the Church equipping others in pastoral care – and remember – **we can all be pastoral carers in our own way** – through conversations and phone calls.
- It looks like - **Funerals** – supporting those who are grieving by having the service here – by providing morning tea – by talking and praying with them

As **Ecclesiastes 4:9-10** says:

*<sup>9</sup>Two are better than one,*

*because they have a good return for their labor:*

*<sup>10</sup>If either of them falls down,*

*one can help the other up.*

*But pity anyone who falls*

*and has no one to help them up.*

And **Proverbs 27:17** says:

*As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.*

## WHY?

So, we've seen what equipping is – we've seen how we equip people

But WHY should we equip people

[Slide 8-Why?]

Well – the simple answer is **the Bible is full of it**

We've seen in **our two readings this morning** from Isaiah 58 and Acts 2

The **Apostle James** reminds us in **James 2:14-16**

*<sup>14</sup> What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? <sup>15</sup> Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. <sup>16</sup> If one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? <sup>17</sup> In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.*

Jesus gave this command in **John 13:33-34**

*<sup>34</sup> "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. <sup>35</sup> By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."*

And how did Jesus show He loved us – He died for us – sacrificial love on a cross.

So, our love to others should be sacrificial too – sacrificing our **time**, our **energy** and our **possessions/money**.

As Jesus says in **Matthew 25:40**

*Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me*

And do you know what our Vision for our Church is here at St. David's?

It's in the bulletin each week:

***Our vision is by the year 2030 to transform our community with the love of our Lord Jesus.***

In showing the love of Jesus to people – **we are doing it for Jesus– and we are equipping people**

### Conclusion

To finish up then - **Equipping people attracts people to follow Jesus** – because we are like a light on a hill – that people are attracted to – because they see the love of Jesus in us

In our reading from Acts 2 - v47 says the result of the church exalting God, and the result of the church edifying, encouraging and equipping people was that - *the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.*

In other words – **the church grew!**

More about that next week...

Let's pray...

*Heavenly Father, thank you that you are a holy and merciful God and that you require us to be holy and merciful too.*

*Help us to be mindful of the needs of those around us*

*Help us to provide for the spiritual needs of our church family – so that they are equipped to share the Gospel and show the love of Jesus*

*Help us to provide for the physical needs of not only our church family but our community. Help us to be kind and generous to those less fortunate than us.*

*Help us to provide for the emotional needs of our church family by pastorally caring for them – help us to be quick to listen and slow to speak; help us to carry each other's burdens and to pray for each other.*

*Help us to be a light on a hill – shining the love of Jesus – so more and more people come to follow Him!*

*In Jesus name, we pray. Amen.*

### **Benediction**

*<sup>14</sup> For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. <sup>15</sup> And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again. Amen.*