

## A Fruitful Church

*"I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. He who plants and he who waters are one, and each will receive his wages according to his labor. For we are God's fellow workers. You are God's field, God's building." (1 Corinthians 3:6-9).*

Who benefits when the church — God's field — functions properly? Ask that question to ten people, and you'd probably get ten different answers! The kingdom's impact is hard to quantify, but maybe our current readings in Acts can shed some light.

**Big Idea:** A healthy and productive church blesses the lives of those within and those without.

### We Bless Those Within

- The Converted — When even the most offensive enemy of Christ turns from their sins, we welcome them into our midst and get to work alongside them, as the church did with Saul (Acts 9:19-22).
- The Persecuted — We bind together and lift up the hands of those suffering for their faith, praising God together with them as the church did with Peter and John (Acts 4:23-31).
- The Poor — We see the needs of those in our number and take action to help, like we see so many times in the church's earliest days (Acts 2:44; 4:32-35; 6:1-7; 11:27-30).

### We Bless Those Without

- The Opposition — Even the Pharisees could see the impact the Lord's people were having on the world. And at the advice of a wise teacher, they took a more cautious approach with this new "Jesus movement" (Acts 5:33-42).
- The Misguided — The church enabled men to preach to people steeped in idolatry and worldly practices (Acts 14:8-18). Though these people often had a lot to overcome in hearing about God, the work was made possible by faithful churches supporting the effort.
- The Nations — Though the church was made up primarily of Jewish believers, the scattering after Stephen's murder led to the establishment of churches far and wide (Acts 10-11; 13:46-49). Borders and prejudices broken down, the church continues to reach all who are lost today!

### Conclusion

How has the church impacted you? What can you do as a part of Christ's body to make a difference in this world?