

PLOT TWIST

When God Surprises His People

Part 9: Healthy Spiritual Communities

Paul returned to the churches he has already founded in Galatia. The aim of Paul's pastoral visit is to keep Christians "Christian" in an environment hostile to the faith – a hostility that Paul himself has recently experienced firsthand.

~ Robert W. Wall
The New Interpreter's Bible Commentary

The churches of Galatia are classless societies where social distinctions are erased. Jews and Gentiles, slave and free, rich and poor no longer exist. The believers see themselves as part of the same family, part of a new race, and part of a new colony from the heavenly realm. They eat together, work together, greet each other with a holy kiss, raise their children together, and take care of one another. It is this joy and love that the Galatian Christians have one for another that will shake the Roman Empire to its very foundations.

~ Frank Viola
The Untold Story of the New Testament Church

As Acts 14 makes clear, Paul's mission is more than just evangelization; it is the formation and strengthening of disciples in such a way that they persevere.

~ William J. Larkin
Tyndale Cornerstone Biblical Commentary

Part of follow-through care for churches is finding a good leadership structure. Because so much of the growth and life of the Christian takes place in community, it was necessary for Paul and Barnabas to endure that the communities were well organized.

~ Ajith Fernando, *The NIV Application Commentary*

Notice the courage Paul and Barnabas displayed. In spite of threats and peril, they continued to strengthen the church. The Christian life is more than merely being converted; it is growing in Christ.

~ Ray C. Stedman, *God's Unfinished Book*

The Lord now calls us to follow in the footsteps of these two mighty apostles, to move out and meet the challenge of this dark world, and to follow the pattern of evangelism they have set before us. May we, like Paul and Barnabas, rejoice to see the power of God advancing in our day.

~ Ray C. Stedman, *God's Unfinished Book*

God gave you the honor not only of believing in Christ but also of suffering for him, both of which bring glory to Christ.

~ The Apostle Paul, *Philippians 1:29 (NCV)*