

## Home Church (a.k.a. “Sundays at 6”)

- **Location:** 4496 Carnes St. Acworth, GA 30101
- **Day and time:** Sundays at 6 p.m.
- **Contact:** [darrell@theharmonyhouse.net](mailto:darrell@theharmonyhouse.net); [heidi@theharmonyhouse.net](mailto:heidi@theharmonyhouse.net). 770-422-0022
- **Web-site:** [www.theharmonyhouse.net](http://www.theharmonyhouse.net) (click on New Song tab).
- **Fifth Sundays:** On the 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday we meet in another location to share a meal and fellowship. Please contact Darrell or Heidi for the address and more information.

### I. **What do we believe?** We support the Apostles’ Creed and Nicene Creed.

#### Apostles’ Creed:

I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit  
and born of the virgin Mary.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried;  
he descended to hell.

The third day he rose again from the dead.

He ascended to heaven  
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty.  
From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic\* church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.

*\*universal, the true Christian church of all times and all places*

Nicene Creed: <https://www.anglicancommunion.org/media/109020/Nicene-Creed.pdf>

### II. **How do we worship?**

We follow the early church or persecuted church model found in **Acts 2 and 4** and referenced at the conclusion of epistles, such as **Romans 16**. Decision-making foundation: ***Worship that is pleasing as unto the Lord (Col. 3:23; Heb. 12:28-29)***. *The chief purpose of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.*

The house or persecuted church model recaptures two deemphasized doctrinal truths: The priesthood of believers (**I Pet. 2:5-9**) and the church as followers of Christ (**Acts 7:48-50, 17:24-25; 1 Cor. 3:16**). Both have significant implications for the church. The priesthood of believers emphasizes and encourages all believers to minister rather than rely on ordained clergy. The home church model also recaptures “church” as followers of Christ, a living temple (as opposed to a structure made by human hands). Shifting the focus from a building to the life of Christ - lived out through His followers, united in faith and purpose - empowers the believer to live as Christ.

#### Characteristics:

- A. Dedicated to teaching, prayer, and sharing meals (to include communion) **Acts 2:42**.
- B. All share a song, teaching or insight (**1 Cor. 14:26**). In line with spiritual gifts, teaching is on rotation.
- C. Meet in a home or public space (no building, utility, or staffing costs). 100% of giving goes toward local and other worthy charitable/missions causes (**Acts 4:32-35**).
- D. Minister freely – not as a duty, nor for money (**1 Pet. 5:2; II Cor. 2:17**).
- E. All serve. Women hosted house churches in the first century: Lydia (**Acts 16:11-15**); Priscilla and Aquila (**1 Cor. 16:10; Rom. 16:3-5**); Nympha (**Col. 4:15**); and Mary, the mother of John Mark (**Acts 12:12**). Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Susanna traveled with Jesus and the Twelve; Joanna provided for the ministry out of her own means (**Luke 8:1-3**). Junia, an early apostle, is known to be female by early biblical scholars (**Rom. 16:7**). Eunice and Lois taught (**2 Tim. 1:5; 3:14-17**). Youth are encouraged (**1 Tim. 4:12**).
- F. Spiritual gifts are given by the Holy Spirit at the time of conversion to Christ. All spiritual gifts are recognized and encouraged. There is no biblical support to create an office, hierarchy, or title from spiritual gifts - such as pastor – nor are there gender distinctions in the list of gifts. Rather, Jesus modeled and taught servant leadership through the washing of the disciples’ feet. Five are necessary for the body to be equipped and built up: apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher (**Eph. 4:11-12**). Lists of spiritual gifts: **Col. 12; 1 Cor. 12; Rom. 12; 1 Pet 4:9; Eph. 4:7-16**. We function within the gifts entrusted to us through the Holy Spirit.
- G. Elders (shepherds of the flock) are appointed (**I Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; I Pet. 5:1-4**).
- H. Kingdom-minded: “Seek first the kingdom of God” (**Mt. 6:33**). As a believer in Jesus Christ, our citizenship is no longer “of this world” – I am a citizen of heaven. (**Phil. 3:20-21**). Our values, priorities, and mission align with Jesus, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, today and for all eternity.
- I. Outreach-oriented. We are a part of and pray for three primary missional efforts: New Song (worship outreach to group homes and internet ministry); Nicaragua mission trips; and the God-Mobile (sharing Christ in a booth at local fairs). We support and pray for the above efforts as well as other national and international causes.

### III. Advantages of the first century house or persecuted church model

- A. All carry the gospel: “And they added daily to those who were being saved” (**Acts 2:47**). No delegation of sharing the gospel to paid staff. When serving *freely* out of love to the Lord, there is no motivation on the part of paid staff to protect position, power, compensation, housing allowance, title, etc. All saints are entrusted with the expectation to be kingdom-minded: exercise gifts, evangelize, disciple, and multiply.
- B. Spiritual growth: All are expected and encouraged to be a student of the Word, ready and prepared to give an answer for the hope that is within them (**1 Peter 3:15; 2:5-9**), encouraged and equipped to disciple others and multiply. Jesus modeled and expected His followers to grow and eventually be sent out to carry the gospel to the uttermost parts of the earth (**Mt. 28:19-20**).
- C. Repentance is a gift. We do not water down the gospel (avoid the topic of sin) or provide entertainment as a manipulation to attract followers – ultimately with the goal to pay overhead costs. Rather, we present the full gospel. Repentance (turning from) of sin is a gift. Upon repentance the Holy Spirit creates “a renewed mind” and offers “times of refreshing before the presence of the Lord” (**Acts 3:19, Rom. 12:2; II Cor. 10:5**).
- D. Sanctification or growth into Christlikeness. Large settings offer ambiguity and therefore a lack of accountability.
- E. No one has need: Small settings enable one to be known, encourage one another, provide for one another, and suffer together.
- F. Unified: Jesus’ final prayer is that believers may be one. Barriers fall away when the focus is on Christ rather than denominational distinctions (**John 17**).
- G. Giving: **100% of giving goes toward missions locally and abroad**: No building, utility, staffing, office or website expense. As with the early church model, the church met in homes or community spaces and served the Lord freely.

*When there are so many advantages, why not?*

### IV. What is the church?

- A. Priesthood of believers: The church is *people* who follow Christ (**I Pet. 2:4-5**), not a building. God no longer dwells in a temple made of human hands, but in the life of the believer through the gift of the Holy Spirit (**Acts 7:48-50, 17:24-25; 1 Cor. 3:16**).
- B. Salvation is by grace through faith (**Eph. 2:8-9**): The church is those who have placed their faith in Christ: “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God” (**Mt. 16:16**). The Holy Spirit indwells the life of the believer upon faith and repentance of sin. This is followed with believer’s baptism as a proclamation of your new life in Christ.
- C. Fruit test: “And you will know them by their fruit” (**Mt. 7:15-20**). Believers serve Jesus out of love for Him. Believers tell others about Christ. Believers are not ashamed of

the Gospel of Christ for it is the power of God unto salvation to all who believe  
**(Rom.1:16)**.

Final thoughts:

Although less common in free countries, world-wide, the house church model is alive and well. Missionaries visiting from persecuted nations describe the church as a gathering of saints in small numbers, sometimes as few as two or three. “Where there are two or three, there I am in the midst of them” **(Mt. 18:20)**. The church meets undercover whenever and wherever possible – homes, the woods - emphasizing caring for one another’s physical needs and prayer. “My house will be a house of prayer” **(Mt. 21:13)**. Times of persecution brings the church back to its foundation – Christ. However pleasurable, in the first century the first church wasn’t – and still isn’t – about the things we have made it: beautiful large buildings, stained glass, ornamentations, staffing and programming. These aspects developed gradually, most notably in the second through fourth centuries. No, the church, as ordained by God, is the body of Christ. God, through the Person of the Holy Spirit, indwells the life of the believer (the temple of the Holy Spirit). “The Most High does not dwell in houses made of human hands” **(Acts 7:48, 17:24)**. Whenever and wherever saints gather to worship, Christ is present with them **(Mt. 18:20)**. This is the church.

Jesus didn’t commission the apostles to build a structure and ask them to get people to come to it. He asked them to “Go make disciples” **(Mt. 28:19-20)**. Jesus modeled the same. To evangelize and disciple, gather to care for the saints and pray – this is not something to be delegated. It is the commission of *all* who follow Christ.