

Acts 11: USABLE

The church in Antioch for many reason's was a church of firsts. It was the first daughter church (church plant) that grew large enough to support the mother church (Jerusalem). It was also the first place the disciples were called "Christians" ("Christ's ones"-the ending "-ian" means "belonging to the party of"). The church in Antioch was the first church to use "elders" as a part of their organizational structure. We see evidence of this leadership structure still in the church today. Last but not least, this primarily Gentile-Christian church sent out the first real "missionary team" to spread the Gospel. I don't know about you, but I want to be a part of a church that is used by God. I would love to be a church like the one found in Antioch! Unfortunately, being used by God is not a given for every church, but this has to due more with us and our willingness to be used, then God. Truth is, in order to be a church used by God, we need to be USABLE. (Used with permission from the Life Application Bible Commentary)

- (U)nstained by our Culture
- (S)tretched to our Limits
- (A)dhering to the Savior
- (B)old in our Witness
- (L)iberal in our Giving
- (E)quipped in the Scriptures

(U)nstained by our Culture (11:19-20, 22, 26)

Like I mentioned earlier, it was at Antioch that believers were first called Christians, the "Christ-ones." Because we bear the image and name of Christ, there needs to be a distinction between the church and the world.

(S)tretched to our Limits (11:19; 12:1-3)

From the very beginning of the early church, we find evidence that struggle, rejection, criticism, and even death for believers was the norm. A wise person once said, "You won't grow unless you're stretched."

(A)dhering to the Savior (11:21, 23, 26)

(Adhering: To stick fast to, believe in and follow the practices of.) Barnabas encouraged the believers to make a serious, solid attachment to Christ and, "stay true to the Lord." There's lots of things we attach ourselves to as Christians, but Jesus is the only person who should be the rock of our salvation.

(B)old in our Witness (11:19-21, 24)

If the church in Antioch can serve as an example, the church spoke, told, and preached the Good News. They didn't just spread the Good News locally, but their influence would soon be felt around the region, and eventually, around the world! As a result of sending, people believed and turned to the Lord.

(L)iberal in our Giving (11:27-30)

It's not uncharacteristic to see new believers begin to give at the beginning of their faith journey. The church in Antioch was a giving church from the beginning. They were unselfish, others-centered, and giving-oriented, even to a culturally and racially different

congregation.

(E)quipped in the Scriptures (11:23, 26)

Trinity Church's vision is to "Reach People, to Equip People, to Reach People," an important component before you can reach people is to Equip People. The church in Antioch was equipped. The picture here is of a classroom, courses, study, and memorization work. Before Antioch became a sending place, it was first a teaching place. We have a great picture of an equipping church and an equipping people. It's no wonder they changed the world!

What would your life look like if you were **USABLE** by God?

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