



Acts Lesson 4 – 2:42-47
A Devoted Church

Discussion Questions for Week of October 16-22, 2022

1. Acts 2:42 lists four areas the early church was devoted to. The first thing on the list is the apostles' teaching. What would we call that today? Why do you suppose it was listed first? How does 2 Timothy 4:3-4 help explain why it is still important today?
 2. Which of the four areas in verse 42 do you find is the easiest for you to be devoted to? Why? Which is the hardest? Why?
 3. What risk does our church face if any one of the four areas in verse 42 is neglected?
 4. "Fellowship" includes entering into other people's pain, suffering, and hardship to help shoulder their burdens. How does this differ from our normal use of this word and our expectations of what fellowship involves?
 5. Why should these Christians be devoted to the breaking of bread?
 6. If prayer moves God, why don't we do more of it? Why is it so difficult to pray corporately (as a church)?
 7. Share a positive time you experienced community (e.g., family, church, sports team, etc.). What are some of the upsides of having community? What are some of the risks?
 8. How can we form community around Christ? What elements of such community do you see demonstrated here at Fairhaven?
 9. The way this community of believers cared for one another seems quite radical. What would you think about people in our fellowship selling property or possessions to help someone else in need at Fairhaven (verse 45)?
 10. Have you ever witnessed someone going to great lengths to care for someone else's needs? How did that make you feel?
 11. Sometimes it is hard to be on the receiving end of help. Why?
 12. How did God reward the efforts of His servants to spread the gospel (Acts 2:47)?
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A Devoted Church

Leader Notes for Acts 2:42-47

Let's first set the context for our passage this week.

It's the Day of Pentecost. The Holy Spirit has come upon the church. Peter is in the temple courtyard, and he is preaching the gospel. Peter's sermon produced an amazing harvest of souls - 3000 people believed the message and were baptized. It was an extraordinary event!

Also extraordinary was the life of the first church. These new believers were converted in a hostile environment. Their Messiah had been put to death only weeks earlier. Although He had been raised from the dead, not everyone in Jerusalem believed that. They had no New Testament to follow, no proven strategies for growing churches, and were under a tremendous amount of pressure. What would they do?

Luke describes the life of the first Jewish converts in Acts 2:42: they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to the prayers.

Looking briefly at each of these areas we see the following:

1. They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching. The apostles had no formal religious training – they were fishermen, tax collectors and ordinary citizens. Yet they came in the power and authority of Jesus. They had lived with Jesus, spent time with Him, and been taught by Him. The apostles showed how the Old Testament Scriptures related to New Testament believers. Thus, these new believers listened to apostles communicate who Jesus was, what He had done, and how it had all been prophesied in the Old Testament Scriptures. This new church wanted to learn more about Jesus, and the apostles taught the new church everything they had learned from being with Him. Today, the truth that the apostles conveyed is included in the manual for our lives – the Bible.
2. They devoted themselves to fellowship. The word fellowship is derived from the Greek word "koinonia." Koinonia means holding something in common. It is often used to describe the togetherness, closeness, and affection Christians have towards other members of the Body of Christ. These early Christians were devoted to community. They shared things in common with one another - the same Lord, the same faith, the same hope, and the same joy that brought them together to worship and live for Him. God has designed us for fellowship.

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Leader Notes for Acts 2:42-47, continued

3. They devoted themselves to the Breaking of Bread. What better place to fellowship than at the Breaking of Bread, where Jesus is the center of our meeting, and where we remember His work on the cross as we take the bread and the cup! It is at these gatherings that the believers celebrate the new covenant (Luke 22:19-20).
4. They devoted themselves to prayer. One of the hardest disciplines of the Christian life is prayer. However, Scripture calls us to be devoted to prayer (Colossians 4:2). Prayer is not only to be done individually, because in Acts we see the early church praying corporately (Acts 1:14, 24).

The early Christians' devotion to these four spiritual duties resulted in a church where the Spirit of God was working and where the power of God was evident in the life of the church.

The working of the Holy Spirit in the church produced a sense of divine presence. In the coming chapters we will see miracles performed by the apostles. These wonders and signs will confirm that these apostles were certainly God's messengers.

The church displayed a sense of love and unity. Sharing, meeting each other's needs, and a sense of joy made this an attractive gathering. As a result, "the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved" (verse 47).