

Acts 2:42-47  
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Source  
John MacArthur

**42 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to prayer.**

**43 Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and signs were being performed through the apostles. 44 Now all the believers were together and held all things in common. 45 They sold their possessions and property and distributed the proceeds to all, as any had need. 46 Every day they devoted themselves to meeting together in the temple, and broke bread from house to house. They ate their food with joyful and sincere hearts,**

The church will still be effective in bringing sinners to Christ when it manifests the same key elements of spiritual duty that marked the first fellowship.

## I. IT WAS A SAVED CHURCH

**They devoted themselves** Acts 2:42a

A. Who is the “they”?

Acts 2: **41** So those who accepted his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand people were added to them.

B. Despite the hate, ridicule, and persecution they suffered, they remained faithful.

Then Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, “If you continue in my word, you really are my disciples.” John 8:31

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. **2** Every branch in me that does not produce fruit he removes, and he prunes every branch that produces fruit so that it will produce more fruit. **3** You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. **4** Remain in me, and I in you. Just as a branch is unable to produce fruit by itself unless it remains on the vine, neither can you unless you remain in me. John 15:1-4

Then he told them many things in parables, saying, “Consider the sower who went out to sow. **4** As he sowed, some seed fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured them. **5** Other seed fell on rocky ground where it didn’t have much soil, and it grew up quickly since the soil wasn’t deep. **6** But when the sun

came up, it was scorched, and since it had no root, it withered away.<sup>7</sup> Other seed fell among thorns, and the thorns came up and choked it.<sup>8</sup> Still other seed fell on good ground and produced fruit: some a hundred, some sixty, and some thirty times what was sown.<sup>9</sup> Let anyone who has ears listen.” **Matthew 13:21**

But he has no root and is short-lived. When distress or persecution comes because of the word, immediately he falls away. **Matthew 13:3-9, 21**

C. In contrast, the apostle John writes of false believers.

They went out from us, but they did not belong to us; for if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us. However, they went out so that it might be made clear that none of them belongs to us.” **1 John 2:19**

Do not be yoked together with those who do not believe. For what partnership is there between righteousness and lawlessness? Or what fellowship does light have with darkness?<sup>15</sup> What agreement does Christ have with Belial? Or what does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? **2 Corinthians 6:14-15**

<sup>4</sup> But I have a few things against you. You have some there who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to place a stumbling block in front of the Israelites: to eat meat sacrificed to idols and to commit sexual immorality.<sup>15</sup> In the same way, you also have those who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans.<sup>16</sup> So repent! Otherwise, I will come to you quickly and fight against them with the sword of my mouth. **Revelation 2:14-16**

Take aways for us:

Many current problems in the local church are due to the “invasion” of lost persons and leaders.

Church leaders must make every effort to discern if people are saved that enter membership or leadership roles.

## II. IT WAS A SCRIPTURAL CHURCH

**<sup>42</sup> They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to prayer.**

A. A commitment to **the apostle's teaching** is foundational to the grown and spiritual health of every church.

If you point these things out to the brothers and sisters, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, nourished by the words of the faith and the good teaching that you have followed. **1 Timothy 4:6**

Command and teach these things. 1 Timothy 4:11

Until I come, give your attention to public reading, exhortation, and teaching. 1 Timothy 4:13

Pay close attention to your life and your teaching; persevere in these things, for in doing this you will save both yourself and your hearers. 1 Timothy 4:16

“The church cannot operate on truth that is not taught.”                    John MacArthur

Take aways for us:

The survival of the church must be built on the historic biblical teachings of scripture.

### III. IT WAS A FELLOWSHIPING CHURCH

**<sup>42</sup>They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to prayer.**

**A. Fellowship** is the spiritual duty of believers to stimulate each other to holiness and faithfulness.

What we have seen and heard we also declare to you, so that you may also have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. 1 John 1:3

**B.** Those who choose to isolate themselves are disobedient to the direct command of Scripture.

And let us consider one another in order to provoke love and good works,<sup>25</sup> not neglecting to gather together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging each other, and all the more as you see the day approaching. Hebrews 10:24-25

Take aways for us:

Community is absolutely essential.

Church attendance does not always constitute community.

#### IV. IT WAS A CHRIST-CENTERED CHURCH

**<sup>42</sup>They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to prayer.**

A. Their fellowship was symbolized by obedience to the spiritual duty of breaking of bread, a reference to the celebration of the Lord's Supper or communion.

B. Communion acknowledges the wonderous work of the Lord Jesus on the cross.

C. Communion calls for self-examination and purging of sin, thus purifying the church.

Take aways for us:

The Lord's supper is a powerful memory tool for local believers today.

The Lord's supper should always be taken with sincerity and gratefulness

#### V. IT WAS A PRAYING CHURCH

**<sup>42</sup>They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to prayer.**

"Prayer is the slender nerve that moves the muscles of omnipotence."

Romans 12:12 <sup>12</sup>Rejoice in hope; be patient in affliction; be persistent in prayer.

Take aways for us:

Prayer is a vital tool for personal spiritual battles.

Prayer for one another is a true source of survival in a local church.

#### VI. IT WAS AN AWE-INSPIRING CHURCH

**<sup>43</sup>Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and signs were being performed through the apostles.**

A. *Phobos (awe)* refers to fear or holy terror related to the sense of divine presence, to the attitude of reverence.

Take aways for us:

We must always remember a changed life can change the minds of unbelievers.

## VII. IT WAS A MIRACULOUS CHURCH

**<sup>43</sup> Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and signs were being performed through the apostles.**

A. One reason for the awe the first fellowship inspired was the **many wonders and signs** performed by the **apostles**.

John 14:10-12 “Don’t you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words I speak to you I do not speak on my own. The Father who lives in me does his works. <sup>11</sup> Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me. Otherwise, believe because of the works themselves.<sup>12</sup> “Truly I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do. And he will do even greater works than these, because I am going to the Father.”

Take aways for us:

God can and still does miracles.

We must always remember a changed life can change the minds of unbelievers.

## VIII. IT WAS A SHARING CHURCH

**<sup>44</sup> Now all the believers were together and held all things in common. <sup>45</sup> They sold their possessions and property and distributed the proceeds to all, as any had need. <sup>46</sup> Every day they devoted themselves to meeting together in the temple, and broke bread from house to house**

A. They possessed not only a spiritual unity but also a practical oneness.

The first Christian fellowship was not a commune, nor does the passage offer

B. Such sharing and mutual meeting of the needs of pilgrims was a long-standing tradition in Israel during the great religious feasts.

This is how we have come to know love: He laid down his life for us. We should also lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. <sup>17</sup> If anyone has this world’s goods and sees a fellow believer in need but withholds compassion from him—how does God’s love reside in him? <sup>18</sup> **Little children, let us not love in word or speech, but in action and in truth.** 1 John 3:16-18

Take aways for us:

Generosity has and always will be a sign of a healthy local.

#### IX. IT WAS A JOYFUL CHURCH

<sup>46</sup> Every day they devoted themselves to meeting together in the temple, and broke bread from house to house. They ate their food with joyful and sincere hearts,

A. *Agalliasis (gladness)* is the noun form of the verb *agalliao*, which means “to rejoice.”

Take aways for us:

Joy comes from allowing the Holy Spirit to control us.

Praising God defuses earthly cares and puts the focus on the Lord.

#### X. THEY WERE AN ATTRACTIVE CHURCH

Their duties and character granted them **favor with all the people**.

John 13:35 “By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

“May they all be one, as you, Father, are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us, so that the world may believe you sent me.” John 17:21

Take aways for us:

We must remember that unbelievers notice when we commit to true love.

We must remain attractive but not at the expense of sound doctrine

#### XI. THEY WERE A GROWING CHURCH

<sup>47</sup> praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. Every day the Lord added to their number<sup>48</sup> those who were being saved.

“True evangelism flows from the life of a healthy church.” John MacArthur

Take aways for us:

We must never forget the great commission!