

Acts 2:42-47 Devoted to Community

42 And they continued steadfastly to the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. 43 Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles.

44 Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, 45 and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need.

46 So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.

Several years ago - My wife and I were doing a couples retreat for Calvary Petaluma - at a hotel in Lake Tahoe.

A) During one of the breaks in our sessions I accidentally walked into the ladies restroom.

B) Now the signs were not clearly displayed and I wasn't paying as close attention as I should have been.

1) But talk about an awkward moment - beyond embarrassed

C) Thankfully the two ladies in there were only washing their hands

1) But the look on their face - said it all - YOU DON'T BELONG in here

D) My horrified look said the same thing! -

1) I have Never made that mistake again! - I check the signs really carefully now!

But I have had a similar experience walking into a gathering of people and suddenly feeling -

I don't belong here.

A) I don't fit it in. - I am not welcome.

B) Sometimes it is the scene: You suddenly feel old and out of touch,

1) sometimes it has been the vibe - not my thing

D) Sometimes it has been the looks on the faces of others that clearly says - what are YOU doing here. -

No matter the reason- every time it happens there is a sense of sadness - why?

A) Author John Eldridge in his book Epic - said it best - One of the deepest of all human longings is the longing to belong, to be a part of things, to be invited in.

God made us in his image to be relational human beings

A) We were made for relationships. First with God - the deepest and most important

B) 2nd with other human beings!

C) Satan from Day one has been trying to ruin relationships: **First with God**

D) When Satan deceived Eve into eating of the forbidden fruit - he told her she would become like God - closer to God

But in reality the act of eating the forbidden fruit - created a wedge

A) Right away after eating the forbidden fruit -

B) we are told that Adam and Eve - realized they were naked - **loss of innocence**

C) And they felt ashamed and hid themselves from God in shame.

D) That is what sin does - it destroys intimacy and innocence and brings shame.

But Satan was not only wanting to destroy the relationship between man and God but also between the husband and the wife

A) When God comes looking for his two friends that are hiding in shame-

B) He asks - Adam you eat of the fruit that I told you not to eat?

C) Remember Adam's response: Adam immediately goes to the **blame game** to deal with his shame -

1) It was the woman - YOU GAVE ME.

D)Not my fault - I feel this way it is her fault and your fault.

Here is what is interesting: When Adam ate of the forbidden fruit that Eve gave to him

A)He was essentially choosing Eve over God - God said if we would eat we would die - there would be loss.

B)I would rather lose You God - than lose her.

C)But In essence there was loss in both relationships

1)Sin destroyed intimacy in both - God and man - and man with man.

D)Jesus came to restore both!!!!

1)Relationship between God and man

E)Bring unity amongst men.

That is what we are seeing in our text today. Part 2 of series - Devoted -

A)What the early church was devoted to.

Scene: Acts 2 Pentecost - Jerusalem population has swelled from 30K to 150k

A)Mandatory feast - Jewish families have traveled from all over the middle east

B)In V.7-11 it mentions people from 14 different countries or areas around the middle east -

1)14 different dialects and languages

C)Holy Spirit falls on the 120 - sound of a Roar of wind - sounds like a tornado come from the house

1)They hear these Galileans - hillbillies - fluently speaking all these languages

D)How can this be - what does this mean?

Peter stands up and preaches about Jesus - 3,000 people get saved. Restored relationship with God

A)It is the birth of the early church -

B)But this was more than a group of people being made right with God -

1)God was doing something TO them IN them - eventually THRU THEM

42 And they continued steadfastly (the NLT, ESV, CSB) - 42 All the believers devoted themselves

We see 6 things in these verses that the early church devoted themselves to:

- Apostles teaching the Word of God
- Fellowship and community
- Communion - remembering the cross
- Prayer
- Worship
- Telling others about Jesus

Last week we spent our time talking about how they devoted themselves to the teaching and studying of the Word of God.

A)The mark of every healthy church and every vibrant believer is that church and those people - will be devoted to the study of God's Word

B)But the study is not just for study sake - it is for getting to know Jesus better. -

1)Growing in our relationship with him

C)So they were Devoted to studying the word and living out the word of God in their lives and in their relationships - core value here hold high the Word

Today we are going to focus on the 2nd thing in this list - that they devoted themselves to. Fellowship!

A)Fellowship in the Greek is Koinonia = to share in Common.

B)V. ⁴⁴ Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common.

C)That to me is such an amazing statement -

1)that speaks to restorative work of salvation that the gospel can bring in society

You have all these people - from different backgrounds - countries - cultures - rich and poor - slave and free

A)Different priorities - different philosophical ideologies - different political stances - Ages - young and old

B)There were so many things that made them different - but they are brought together by one common thing - trumped everything -

1)Not a thing but a person JESUS

C) All of us guys who went to the conference yesterday - caught a glimpse of this - Convention center

1) The place was packed full of men - colors - economic standings - political persuasions - former gang members -

D) All things in common - one thing in common - JESUS!

Where else does that happen? - Sporting event

A) Charger game - Monday night - up in my space - dude hugged me

B) Changes after the game when everyone is trying to get out of the parking lot - right?

C) What we are reading here is so different from that 1) this sharing in Common of their love and devotion to Jesus - lasted years

Today I want us to consider 5 things that marked the fellowship of the early church

#1 Their common love for Jesus.

A) Jesus had done something to them - IN THEM

B) That brought them together - bonded them together. Sinners saved by grace -

C) We could say: Fellowship begins with God's love, overflows from God's love, is centered on God's love, and expresses God's love.

“Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.” 1 John 4:11-12

D) True fellowship is centered in this mutual awe and appreciation for who God is and what he has done in our lives and is doing in our lives.

Too often what we tend to call fellowship in Christian circles isn't fellowship at all - no life to it

A) We get together with friends - casual or pointless conversations

B) College years at Coco's after church on Wednesday nights - what are we talking about?

C) That marked a shift in our conversations:

D) We started talking about what we learned - how God spoke to us - what we needed prayer for.

It didn't mean that we didn't talk about those other things anymore - there is a place for catching up

A) But it wasn't all we talked about - we left that restaurant every time - built up - closer to Jesus - sharpened in our walks

B) We went away each time knowing things we could be praying for others about

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.” - Colossians 3:16

C) Listen church: there is a lot more ministry that can happen here in our gatherings on Sunday - that what happens in this room-

D) If we start to carry what the Lord is doing in here to - out in the hallway - out into the courtyard

Asking simple questions:

A) How was God speaking to you today - how can I be praying for you this week.

B) Some of you do that - I dare more of you to do that - burrito and coffee - watch what happens

C) The first thing that marked their fellowship was their common love for Jesus

#2 There was a genuine care and generosity - V.45 sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need.

A) Now one of the things that a lot of people don't realize about the early church is that they were living communally out of necessity.

B) Tons of people from all these other places - come to Jerusalem and get saved.

C) They don't want to go home - God is doing something in their lives -

1) so new believers in Jerusalem are opening their homes - Renting homes

D)Picture that - suddenly thrust together with strangers - but nobody cares -

1)just excited about Jesus

Everyone is sharing with one another - to take care of each other.

A)See later in Acts Rich believers are selling property to take care of the needs of others.

B)There was this: We are all in this together mentality.

C)Core Value here: Generosity -We have been blessed to be a blessing!

E)Fellowship involves walking into the hurt and burdens of one another's hearts,

1) and helping each other physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

"Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." Galatians 6:2

This is part of the beauty of the body of Christ -

A) There is a common phrase in so many of the verses we are looking at today - one another

B)True fellowship brings from a heart of being concerned about one another

C)God brings us into one another's lives to remind each other of the faithfulness of God

³ All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is our merciful Father and the source of all comfort. ⁴ He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When they are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us. ⁵ For the more we suffer for Christ, the more God will shower us with his comfort through Christ 2 Corinthians 1:3-5

When my nephew died in a car crash back in 2018 - one of the first calls I received was from my friend Ed Taylor in Aurora CO.

A)His adult son had also died tragically several years before that - He knew that pain deeply.

B)In 2020 when my Dad died - Ed who called me again - we share in that fellowship of loss

1)Comfort one another

C)Last year when Ray Bentley died - I heard Daniel his son talk about how his dad was his best friend - **I could relate**

1)I reached out to Daniel - we had that connection - fraternity you don't join you are just placed in

Loss and trials and difficulty are a part of life - Rains on the just and unjust alike

A)But it is those things that connect us -

B)God intends to use us in each others lives if we let him. Comfort one another God

C)But the Devil wants us to retreat into our pain - A huge tactic of the devil is moving us toward isolation

D)Satan loves to isolate - the last days people are going to fall away - that is where it starts - ISOLATION

I grew up in a neighborhood where everyone knew each other - knew problems - someone was suffering the rest of the neighborhood rallied -

A)My mom still has friends from the neighborhood who drive down to see her - call her

B)Today Satan wants to keep us Isolated

C)He tries to keep us so busy we only have time for ourselves - our family - our needs

D)Isolation has shaped our culture - Masters Drive -

1)No one knows their neighbors - no relationships

E)Covid only exasperated this -

There is this natural tendency and cultural tendency to isolate and keep others at arm's length.

A)but when we do it robs us .

B)It robs us of the opportunity of being used in someone else's life

C)Rob's them of the opportunity to be used in our life

D)The strength of the Redwood is in their connected root system

I love the words that Paul shared with the believers in Thessalonica

“So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but **also our own selves**, because you had become very dear to us.”

1 Thessalonians 2:8

#2 There was a Genuine love and care for one another!

#3 There was a Joy - V.46 NLT met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and **shared** their meals with great joy and generosity

A)They enjoyed being together

B)It involved food- they ate - gathering together around a meal was such a huge part of their culture.

C)This was the restoration of relationships in Garden.

Good food makes everything better right?

A)Jesus modeled this: Jesus was always eating - enjoyed that -

B)Falsely accused of being a **Glutton and a wine bibber** - enjoyed it so much

C)Marriage supper of the lamb!

1)Food is a unifier -

D)On Wednesday night with the men - we were talking about bridging the generational gaps - that can occur in the church

E)Aaron Sabio - encourage the older men in the church to invite the younger men to lunch

1)Or breakfast and pay for them!

Instant connection over food. -

A)Fellowship can start with sharing in common a good pizza - so good.

B)Then it can lead to something that moves beyond the Physical to the spiritual.

Key thing: It takes being intentional -

A)Once or twice a week I meet with one or two of the men in this church for lunch -

B)Or I am meeting with another Pastor in the area - 1)I could come up with 100 reasons why I don't have time to do it.

C)But I recognize how important it is - **Opportunity to give and invest up close and personally in the lives of others**

D)I have to be intentional about it - or it is not going to happen.

“And let us consider how to stir up **one another** to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging **one another**, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.”

Heb 10:24-25

E)Stir up - Build up - even idea of bringing back to life - Paddles - Clear

“Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.” 1 Thessalonians 5:11

It is a beautiful thing to belong to the family of God

A)All the barriers that divide our culture come crashing down

B)Sinners connected by Jesus - people whose lives have been touch by Jesus

C)You are hear today - You want to belong to a family - Invited into the family God

D)Dysfunctional family - YES - sinners - broken

1)Not perfect - Broken people who are being transformed by our loving redeemer

E)Yes it is a dysfunctional family but it is the best dysfunctional family around

1)We would love for you to be a part of it

#4 We will see there is a fellowship that comes from serving Jesus together

³ I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, ⁴ always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy, ⁵ **for your fellowship in the gospel** from the first day until now. Philippians 1:3-5

The believers in the early church grasped something that we often forget.

A) They were saved to be in fellowship with God and fellowship with each other - glorious

B) But they were also saved to be a part of God's mission -

C) To share in the fellowship of the gospel - the spreading of the good news

It came so naturally to them - they were so excited about Jesus - they just had to tell everyone

A) The Lord was adding daily those who were being saved.

B) There is a special bond that happens when people are engaged in the great commission together.

C) Some of my deepest relationships over the years have come from locking shoulders with other believers - **the fellowship of the gospel.**

D) Connection and bond in being involved in the work of the Lord -
1) being involved in something bigger than yourself

E) There is an excitement that happens when you see God - using someone else -

1) or blessing your efforts to serve him.

I want you to note this - there was a balance in their focus

A) On the one hand they were devoted to community and connection -

B) In our church culture today - the younger generation is all about this -
1) they are great at community - love to hang -

C) Create environments around hanging together - food together - they bond

Whereas my generation tended to bond through service -

A) We were all about the mission - strategizing - how we can reach the world

B) If we are going to get together - there has to be a reason: too much work to be done - too much at stake

C) Well the early church prioritized both - and that is one of the reasons they were so effective -
1) the Lord was adding daily.

D) Healthy balance between community and mission.

E) Home groups - Did 2 community service projects in their communities every year.

There was one more thing that marked their fellowship - #5 Fellowship in the sufferings of Christ - Phil. 3:10

A) To know the fellowship of His sufferings is the persecution we suffer for trying to live a righteous lifestyle.

B) It is what the Bible calls suffering for righteousness sake.

C) Intense persecution was something that marked their existence - but it bonded them together.
1) Soldiers in battle

D) Ever notice how there is a camaraderie amongst people who have served in the military and saw combat -
1) Deep bond - seen things experienced things - felt things - hard for the rest of us to fathom

E) Similar bond amongst first responders

The Devil brought persecution upon the early church in hopes of destroying it - but it only made it stronger

A) That has been the trend throughout the history of the church - grown in times of persecution

B) In 1984 I heard Dana Key say once - concert - **Many in the church are praying for revival - maybe ... persecution**
1) Persecution has often led to Revival

C) Well I don't know if any of us would really pray for persecution -

1) but I can tell you this - I think it is coming

Things are getting crazy in our culture friends

A) Prop 1 a new bill on the ballot that would approve of third trimester abortions -
1) Gavin Newsome Bill board in other states

This was sent out to students and Rancho Minivera middle close - 2 miles from here



B) Crazy - Imagine the back lash if a Christian club put up a sign like that?

C) **This happened recently in San Marcos - San Marcos School Board passed: "THE California Health Curriculum Framework" (NOT mandated by the State)**

K thru 3rd grade will be taught that gender is unlimited and expanding and fluid.

A) That their parents chose their gender before they had a chance to decide.

B) That ultimately their gender is chosen by them.

C) 4th-6th grade will be taught sexual practices and challenge binary concepts about gender and use gender neutral language like "they" instead of "he/she."

D) And in 7th-8th grade are going to be taught things that are so graphic it is not appropriate for me to mention in this setting.

E) And get this: **Parents will not be allowed to have their children OPT out of such instruction.**

Also locally the San Diego Unified school district just approved a new curriculum from Planned Parenthood

A) on "sexual health and education" to push gender identity concepts, according to public school documents.

B) Thankful for Heart academy and the Christian schools and those of you who do home school -

C) Our family values - taken from scripture are under attack

Some of you might not have liked that I prayed for Jen Telles who is running for Vista School district

A) Or today John Franklin for Mayor -

B) Don't bring politics into the church - I am not -

C) but we are called to be salt and light in our culture - to impact -

1) We are called to be the church - Reps for Jesus in this broken world

D) And one of the ways that we must do that is to stand with those who are running for office who support Biblical values

1) One way - that we MUST be the church in this broken world.

E) The more we make a stand - the greater the opposition is going to get.

Friends - everything heating up -

A) We can't bury our heads in the sand - we are called to know the times and seasons we are living in.

B) If you are not standing for Jesus and the truth in times when it is easy -

1) how will U stand when it gets hard

C) Why the Bible says =Last days: People in mass will be departing from the truth and rejecting God

D) But for those who are standing the persecution is only going to bind us closer together!

E) Close with this:

"See to it, brothers and sisters, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. But encourage **one another** daily, as long as it is called "Today," so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness. We have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original conviction firmly to the very end." Hebrews 3:12-14