



## **The Unity of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:42-47)**

*Notes: Week Six*

### **Acts 2:42-47 (NIV)**

#### **The Fellowship of the Believers**

<sup>42</sup> They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. <sup>43</sup> Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. <sup>44</sup> All the believers were together and had everything in common. <sup>45</sup> They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. <sup>46</sup> Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, <sup>47</sup> praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

### **Acts 2:42-47 (HCSB)**

<sup>42</sup> And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to the prayers.

<sup>43</sup> Then fear came over everyone, and many wonders and signs were being performed through the apostles. <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 anyone had a need. <sup>[a]</sup> <sup>46</sup> Every day they devoted themselves to meeting together in the temple complex, and broke bread from house to house. They ate their food with a joyful and humble attitude, <sup>47</sup> praising God and having favor with all the people. And every day the Lord added to them <sup>[b]</sup> those who were being saved.

#### **Footnotes:**

- a. [Acts 2:45](#) Or *to all, according to one's needs*
- b. [Acts 2:47](#) Other mss read *to the church*

## Holman Christian Standard Bible - Study Bible<sup>1</sup>

Acts 2:42-47

[2:42](#) These four practices—**teaching... fellowship**, the **breaking of bread**, and **prayers**—provide insight into the priorities of early Christianity. These same practices should be considered normative for the church today. The apostles' teaching was probably similar to Peter's message at Pentecost. That is to say, it focused on making Christ known by appealing to eyewitness testimony and the prophecies of the OT. Early Christians gathered together regularly for edification, prayer, and exhortation. The breaking of bread probably included fellowship meals and participation in the Lord's Supper ([1Co 11:17-34](#)).

[2:44-45](#) As part of their fellowship, the early church practiced a community of goods for a short time. Distribution to members of the faith community took place according to individual **need**. This practice did not last long, likely because it was logistically difficult and fraught with potential abuse (see chaps. 4-6).

[2:46](#) Early Christian gatherings took place in two places: **the temple complex** and the homes of individual believers.

[2:47](#) The early church was an evangelizing church. Luke recounted that **every day** the Lord **added to those who were being saved**. He did not say how this took place, but it appears that evangelism took place primarily through the gathering of Christians in the temple and in individual houses. The crucifixion and resurrection of Christ were at the heart of early Christian preaching, which called for immediate response from anyone who listened.

## English Standard Version - Study Bible<sup>2</sup>

Acts 2:42-47

[2:42-47](#) **The Christian Community Shares a Life in Common.** This is the first extensive “summary” in Acts. It depicts a number of activities characteristic of the earliest church (see note on [v. 42](#)).

[2:42](#) The early church was devoted to the **apostles' teaching**, which would have included Jesus' earthly teaching plus what he taught the apostles in his 40 days of resurrection appearances. **Fellowship** (Gk. *koinōnia*, “participation, sharing”) included the sharing of material goods ([v. 44](#)), the **breaking of bread** ([vv. 42, 46](#)), which likely covers both the Lord's Supper and a larger fellowship meal, and **prayers** in house meetings and likely also in the temple ([vv. 42, 46](#)).

[2:43](#) The church experienced **awe** (reverent fear) in response to miracles (**wonders**), which served as **signs** of the Spirit's power and presence among them ([v. 43](#)). Miracles were occurring regularly (**many... were being done**), many more than the few that Luke records in detail.

[2:44](#) **all things in common.** Though some people have referred to this situation as “early communism,” this is clearly not the case, since (1) the giving was voluntary and not compelled by the government, and (2) people still had personal possessions, because they still met in “their homes” ([v. 46](#)) and many other Christians after this still owned homes (see [12:12](#); [17:5](#); [18:7](#); [20:20](#); [21:8](#), [16](#); [Rom. 16:5](#); [1 Cor. 16:19](#);

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1. Jeremy Royal Howard, ed., *HCSB Study Bible*, (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2010), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, Under: "Acts 2".

2. Lane T. Dennis, ed., *ESV Study Bible, The: English Standard Version*, (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Bibles, 2008), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, Under: "Acts 2".

[Col. 4:15](#); [Philem. 2](#); [2 John 10](#)). Further, Peter told Ananias and Sapphira that they did not have any obligation to sell their property and give away the money ([Acts 5:4](#)). In contrast to communist theory, the abolition of private property is not commanded or implied here. (See [1 Tim. 6:17-19](#); but also [1 Tim. 6:6-10](#).) On the other hand, there is a voluntary generosity in sharing possessions that is seen as commendable.

[2:45](#) On generosity among Christians, cf. [2 Cor. 8:9-15](#).

[2:47](#) **praising God**. One of the characteristics of true revival is a desire to spend much time in worship. **And the Lord added to their number** is again an affirmation of God's sovereignty in salvation, since he alone can change the human heart to enable true repentance and faith.

### NLT Life Application Study Bible<sup>3</sup>

*Acts 2:42-47*

[2:44](#) Recognizing the other believers as brothers and sisters in the family of God, the Christians in Jerusalem shared all they had so that all could benefit from God's gifts. It is tempting—especially if we have material wealth—to cut ourselves off from one another, concerning ourselves with only our interests and enjoying only our own little piece of the world. But as part of God's spiritual family, it is our responsibility to help one another in every way possible. God's family works best when its members work together.

[2:46](#) A common misconception about the first Christians (who were Jews) was that they rejected the Jewish religion. But these believers saw Jesus' message and resurrection as the fulfillment of everything they knew and believed from the Old Testament. The Jewish believers at first did not separate themselves from the rest of the Jewish community. They still went to the Temple and synagogues for worship and instruction in the Scriptures. But their belief in Jesus created great friction with Jews who didn't believe that Jesus was the Messiah. Thus, believing Jews were forced to meet in private homes for Communion, prayer, and teaching about Christ. By the end of the first century, many of these Jewish believers were excommunicated from their synagogues.

[2:47](#) A healthy Christian community attracts people to Christ. The Jerusalem church's zeal for worship and brotherly love was contagious. A healthy, loving church will grow in numbers. What are you doing to make your church the kind of place that will attract others to Christ?

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3. *Life Application Study Bible*, (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 1988), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, 1819-1820.

## Life Essentials Study Bible<sup>4</sup>

### A Principle to Live By Acts #5: Three Vital Experiences

*from Acts 2:41-47*

**To become mature in Jesus Christ,  
as a local church we are to engage in three normative functions.**

The 3,000 people who accepted Peter's exhortation to repent and be baptized began to participate in three functions:

First, vital learning experiences with the Word of God. These new believers "devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching" ([v. 42a](#)). What Jesus promised regarding the ministry of the "Spirit of truth" was unfolding before their very eyes ([Jn 14:16-18](#)).

Second, vital relational experiences with God and one another. These new believers also "devoted themselves . . . to the fellowship" ([Ac 2:42b](#)). This human and divine experience involved partaking in a communal meal, praying for one another, meeting each other's physical needs, and praising God ([vv. 42-47a](#)). They were not only loving God but loving one another, a true reflection to the world that they were dedicated disciples of Jesus Christ.

Third, vital witnessing experiences with the unsaved world. These new believers were impacting those who had not yet responded to Peter's message. They had "favor with all the people" ([Ac 2:47a](#)). What Jesus prayed for in John chapter 17 was actually happening. They were demonstrating love and unity among themselves, which in turn opened the hearts of people as "the Lord added to them those who were being saved" ([v. 47b](#)).

These three vital functions are frequently mentioned throughout the rest of the New Testament. They are to be normative experiences for every local church at any moment in history and in any culture of the world.

### Reflection and Response

*Why are functions mentioned frequently in the New Testament  
and very few forms are described for engaging in these functions?*

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4. Gene Getz, *Life Essentials Study Bible*, (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2011), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, 1484.