

REFLECTION GUIDE

ACTS 2:42-47 - A NEW DAY, A NEW COMMUNITY

KEY TERMS

The apostles' teaching - The Early Church gathered in public at the temple and in homes to hear the apostles (those who had been with Jesus) teach; we get a glimpse of what they taught in the various sermons in Acts (see Acts 2:14-40, Acts 7, Acts 13:16-41) as well as the New Testament letters.

The breaking of bread - Scholars debate whether this term (v. 42 & 46) is a reference to eating meals together or if Luke is referring to communion; based on the end of verse 46 (*they received their food...*) it seems likely that the term includes an actual meal, however, the Early Church took communion as part of an actual meal so the term likely includes communion.

Attending the temple - Attending the temple likely included both gathering with other Christians in the temple courts (see Acts 3:11 & 5:15), which was a common place for Israelites to gather, and participating in Jewish temple worship (Acts 3:1).

BACKGROUND

After recording Peter's Pentecost sermon (Acts 2:14-41), Luke records how the growing church (see v. 41) lived out their new life in Jesus. Luke says that the church was *devoted to apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers* (v. 42). All of the primary components of church are included in this summary (gathering, teaching, community, prayer, liturgy, etc.), even if their experience of "church" and the modern experience are significantly different. The *wonders and signs* that Peter told the crowds that Jesus had performed (v. 22), and that had occurred through the apostles at Pentecost (v. 4), have continued (v. 43). There was also an intense devotion to caring for one another as they were *selling their possessions* in order to give *as any had need* (v. 45). The church did all of this with *glad and generous hearts* (v. 46) and *praising God* (v. 47). The result of living this way was that more and more people believed in Jesus for salvation each day (v. 47).

GOING DEEPER

Read Romans 12:9-21, Colossians 3:12-17, Ephesians 4:25-32, and 1 Peter 4:8-11. What similarities do you see between these passages and what we see the church doing in Acts 2:42-47? In what specific ways do these verses challenge you?

DID YOU KNOW?

Luke uses the word *devoted* (*προσκαρτερέω*) four times in Acts, to describe the Early Church.

They were *devoted to prayer* (1:14, 2:42, 6:4), *the apostles' teaching, fellowship, the breaking of bread* (2:42), *attending the temple together* (2:46), and to *the ministry of the Word* (6:4).

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

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LEARNING THE WORD

1. Read Acts 2:42-47. What is the main idea? What stands out to you?
2. List the attitudes and practices of the early church that you see in this passage (can you identify 10 or more items?).
3. Verse 42 says that they “devoted themselves” to this teaching and this community. How is it evident that a person is truly devoting themselves? What are signs they are not?
4. Verse 47 says that this community enjoyed “favor with all the people” outside the church. Why do you think this was the case?
5. Everything we see happening in this church was a direct result of their believing the gospel message (see verse 41 where they “received the word”). How does the gospel, or good news, bring life and power and purpose to the people of God?

LIVING THE WORD

6. Three times in Acts 2, we see that the people were *glad* – “my heart was glad” (vs. 26), “you will make me full of gladness” (vs 28), and “with glad...hearts” (vs 46). Why do you think gladness is so common in this church and so essential in any church?
7. How can your church or small group better reflect the heart and life of the church in Acts 2:42-47? How does this passage challenge you personally to refine or refocus your attitudes, practices, or devotion towards the church?
8. If you were at a restaurant or coffee shop talking to a non-Christian friend about Jesus, how would you describe (in a few short sentences) what a gospel-believing, vibrant church ought to be?