

Why we Gather

Fellowship to Encourage Spiritual Growth

Acts 2:42-47 – Devoted

⁴²They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to prayer. ⁴³Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and signs were being performed through the apostles. ⁴⁴Now all the believers were together and held all things in common. ⁴⁵They sold their possessions and property and distributed the proceeds to all, as any had need. ⁴⁶Every 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, ⁴⁷praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. Every day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

Devoted = committed.

The early church was devoted. But they weren't devoted to just anything. There were 4 basic principles they were devoting their selves to: the apostle's teaching, to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and prayer.

1. The Apostle's Teachings

- Today we can follow the apostle's teachings by reading the NT.
- Galatians 1:6-9 (CSB) - *⁶I am amazed that you are so quickly turning away from him who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel— ⁷not that there is another gospel, but there are some who are troubling you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. ⁸But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, a curse be on him! ⁹As we have said before, I now say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, a curse be on him!*

2. To Fellowship

- Being together is key in building relationships.
- Galatians 6:1-2 (CSB) - *Brothers and sisters, if someone is overtaken in any wrongdoing, you who are spiritual, restore such a person with a gentle spirit, watching out for yourselves so that you also won't be tempted. ²Carry one another's burdens; in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.*

3. Breaking of Bread

- The Lord's Supper should be a common experience in the life of the church.
- 1 Corinthians 11:23-26 (CSB) - *²³For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: On the night when he was betrayed, the Lord Jesus took bread, ²⁴and when he had given thanks, broke it, and said, "This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." ²⁵In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, and said, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." ²⁶For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.*

4. Prayer

- Just as important it is to communication with one another...it's much more important to communicate with our Heavenly Father.
- Ephesians 6:18 (CSB) - *Pray at all times in the Spirit with every prayer and request, and stay alert with all perseverance and intercession for all the saints.*

- ❖ Why is it important to be devoted to the Bible?
- ❖ How should fellowship with other believers impact our faith?
- ❖ How are you intentionally trying to build other's faith?
- ❖ Why is the Lord's Supper a good reminder of the gospel?
- ❖ Why is prayer important?

Hebrews 10:19-25 – Provoking

¹⁹Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have boldness to enter the sanctuary through the blood of Jesus— ²⁰he has inaugurated for us a new and living way through the curtain (that is, through his flesh)— ²¹and since we have a great high priest over the house of God, ²²let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed in pure water. ²³Let us hold on to the confession of our hope without wavering, since he who promised is faithful. ²⁴And let us consider one another in order to provoke love and good works, ²⁵not 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.

Provoke = stir up, incite, push, challenge.

The early church was provoking one another. In this particular passage the church is provoking one another toward 2 actions: to love and good works.

1. To love.

- Jesus summed up all the commandments with love God and love others.
- Matthew 22:36-39 (CSB) - ³⁶“Teacher, which command in the law is the greatest?” ³⁷He said to him, **“Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind** ³⁸*This is the greatest and most important command.* ³⁹*The second is like it: **Love your neighbor as yourself.*** ⁴⁰*All the Law and the Prophets depend on these two commands.”*
- As we read in 1 Corinthians 13...love is an action verb. You can't passively love someone. It takes effort and time.

2. To good works.

- Good works is a result of salvation...not a cause for salvation. The order matters. Once we've been saved, we are instantly given the Holy Spirit and empowered to live for God's glory.
- Ephesians 2:10 (CSB) - *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared ahead of time for us to do.*

Discussion Questions

- ❖ What are three practical ways you can love God?
- ❖ What are three practical ways you can love others?
- ❖ How can our faithfulness impact those around us?