



## **United in Spirit** **Acts 2:42-47 (NRSVue)**

**Children need good examples to follow.** Let them see you reading, and they'll want to read books, too. Wash your hands before you eat, and they'll wash their hands, too. Your example helps children live well.

The earliest Christians, those who believed in Jesus at Pentecost, were a marvelous group of believers. They give us who are children in the faith their example to follow.

The biggest lesson they teach us is this: *Christian fellowship makes us strong together and increases the power of our witness to the world.*

Let's see how this works out.

### **Devotion in Unity**

Do you want to be devout Christians and live as a healthy, unified church? Then follow their example.

As scripture says, "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers" (Acts 2:42).

The Bible studies I lead and the sermons I preach are not to make me look intelligent. I study and lead worship so you can grow as Jesus' disciples.

Notice the four things the earliest believers did. They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, to fellowship, to breaking bread together, and to prayer. This is what every church, and each Christian, needs to do, if they wish to develop their faith and their faithfulness.

See the result among the earliest Christians: "Awe came upon everyone because many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles" (Acts 2:43). God gave them astounding experiences, confirming Jesus as Lord.

Being a lively church that draws others' attention isn't about an attractive building. It's about your devotion to unity in Christ. Miracles may attract, like the wonder of our building repairs, but it's Christian love that keeps people here.

Our devotion to unity shows in our practice of the four basic duties of every Christian: Devotion to teaching, fellowship, breaking bread, and prayer.

### **Shared Lives, Shared Love**

How do you share your lives and love others? Follow the example of the earliest believers in Jerusalem.

As scripture says, "All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need" (Acts 2:44-45).

I'm not suggesting you sell your house and car and move in here. But what if you adopted their generous attitude?

Share your life. Be genuine in your love for others.

Some of you remember seasons in our country when neighbors looked out for one another without thinking. People shared both joy and hardship freely. That spirit wasn't perfect, but it was genuine. When we take up Christ's way of caring for others, we help that spirit take root again.

Return to the attitude of believers who experienced the liberating love of God in Jesus Christ. Look to people in need and do what you can to help. Give what you can. Pray with fervor for the suffering; pray with them. Encourage the downtrodden. Care for people near your house. Show that you see them. This fulfills Jesus' great commandment. Not only do you love God. You love others.

Share your life and love in Jesus' name.

### **Joyful Gatherings, Growing Witness**

God blesses such a way of life. He'll bless you, too.

As scripture says, “Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved” (Acts 2:46-47).

I’m suggesting that we need to begin the next great phase of our church’s renewal. We fixed a leaky roof. We fixed the crumbling walls. We’ll paint them and move on to the Sunday school rooms. But we need to repair the heart of the church, too.

We must get back to Jesus Christ’s behavior. We have to grow as his lively disciples. Devote yourself to study and fellowship, to breaking bread and praying. Reach the needy wherever they are—close at hand. Be glad and generous. Look beyond what you need. What do the neighbors need? How can we help them find it?

**The earliest believers** started the Christian church well. They began with the Lord’s basics. Let’s follow their example because *Christian fellowship makes us strong together and increases the power of our witness to the world.*

How do you begin? Begin by praying over this passage from Acts each day this week. Ask the Spirit to show you one way to live like the believers in Acts. When you feel that heavenly nudge, follow it. And share it with us so we can grow together. Ask us to explore the idea with you.

Let’s see what God has in store for us as his church.

**Amen**