

SERIES:

SUBJECT: The Church Family

READING: [Act 2:42-43](#) *And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. (43) And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles.*

### Introduction:

Four things marked the infant church we covered the first last week, **it was marked by the truth:** they "*continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine.*" The Transition from law to grace, from Christ's presence to the Holy Ghost's power and from the ministry of the Temple in which the Congregation were spectator to **the local church where the people were all ministers. (the subject of today's sermon next hour)**

*The Holy Spirit was already beginning to fulfill Christ's promise that He would bring to the remembrance of the apostles all the teaching of Jesus and open their minds and hearts to new truth suited for the new age.* First and foremost came the apostles' doctrine which would become **"THE FAITH ONCE DELIVERED TO THE SAINTS."**

It is no accident that this comes first. **It always comes first.**

- In all the epistles, precept comes before practice.
- Experience must always be tested by doctrine, not doctrine by experience.
- That is where Scripture begins [2Ti 3:16](#) *All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:*
- It is where all Preaching must begin [2Ti 4:2](#) *Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.*

**As important as doctrine is it is not all there is within the Local Church; [Act 2:42-43](#) *And they continued stedfastly in the***

apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

II. Second, it was a living functioning body marked by the tie, that blessed *"tie that binds our hearts in Christian love."* They continued **"in fellowship."**

- a. A New bond was forged that day, **a new community created.** John wrote later: **"We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren"** (1 John 3:14).
- b. The church is a body both the mystical as the Body of Christ and temporal as the local visible assembly which met often from house to house and weekly as the various churches developed.

**Act 2:46-47** And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, (47) Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

- c. The believers continued to use the temple for their place of assembly and ministry, but they also met in various homes.
  - i. The 3,000 new converts needed instruction in the Word and fellowship with God's people if they were to grow and become effective witnesses.
  - ii. The early church did more than make converts; they also made disciples (Matt. 28:19-20).
- d. Two phrases in Acts 2:42 may need explanation.

- i. First the "Breaking of bread" probably refers to their regular meals, but at the close of each meal, they probably paused to remember the Lord by observing what we call "the Lord's Supper."
- ii. **Secondly; The word fellowship means much more than "being together." *It means "having in common"*** and likely refers to the sharing of material goods that was practiced in the early church.
  1. The church was unified (Acts 2:44), "And all that believed were together, and had all things common;"
  2. This was certainly not a form of modern communism, for the program was totally voluntary, temporary and motivated by love.
  3. Before those who came from great distances went home they supported one another and were taught the basics of the church before they returned to the native lands!
- e. **This church magnified God! Praising God,** (Acts 2:47a),
- f. **They multiplied their numbers; And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.**

That the church should be composed of saved individuals seems obvious.

Sadly, however, many churches today are made up largely of unsaved individuals.

Amazingly, some even try to design a church where non-Christians can feel comfortable.

**This can't be the goal in a church that is devoted to holiness and righteousness in all areas of life.**

*Such a church will be unpopular with sinners. In this first fellowship, all the professors were possessors.*

**That is not to say that unbelievers are not welcome to attend the preaching of the truth and the worship.**

1. They are welcome to hear the gospel preached and the Word of God expounded.
2. They are welcome to hear the prayers of confession, hear the songs of praise, and the calls to holiness.
3. They are welcome to witness the corporate love and devotion of the church to Jesus Christ and the eternal God.
4. All of that should make them uncomfortable with their spiritual condition.
5. **Membership and service in the church, however, are restricted to believers.**
6. **God's people and Satan's people CANNOT work together to achieve God's goals.**

**2Co 6:14-15 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with**

darkness? (15) And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?

- g. In spite of the restrictive nature of this first church it had a powerful testimony among the unsaved Jews, because of the way the members of the fellowship loved each other and served the Lord.
- h. The risen Lord continued to work with them (Mark and people continued to be saved. **What an example for us to follow as a church!**

Their Christian faith was a day-to-day reality, not a once-a-week routine. Why?

- Because the risen Christ was a living reality to them, and His resurrection power was at work in their lives through the Spirit.
- The promise is still good: "**Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved**" (Acts 2:21).
- That's our mission worldwide and our ministry right here in Sebastian!