# A shared life

Kalamazoo Mennonite Fellowship

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Acts 4:32-35

32Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common. 33With great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. 34There was not a needy person among them, for as many as owned lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold. 35They laid it at the apostles’ feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need.[[1]](#footnote-1)

Also, Acts 2:42-47

42 They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. 43 Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. 44 All who believed were together and had all things in common; 45 they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. 46 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, 47 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.[[2]](#footnote-2)

## Founding stories

During the Easter season, instead of the Old Testament reading, we get the story of the early church in Acts. And today’s reading shows us a *glowing* story of the early church. We’ve read not only the description from chapter four in the official reading, but also a similar passage from chapter two.

These stories give us the earliest picture of the church. If you read the whole book of Acts, you’ll see that Luke does not hide the flaws in the early church. We see disagreements between the apostles, tensions over the inclusions of Gentiles in the church, hard discussions over the ethical requirements of new converts, even some downright dastardly deeds. We’ll mention one of those later on.

But at first, things were very good. The two accounts we have this morning are from this honeymoon period. Not a single thing is described as bad until chapter five. There are pressures from without, but in the church, things were great.

What does Luke have to say about those early days?

1. The church was of “one mind and soul.”
2. The leadership of the church was clear. Miracles happened, and and the apostles’ message about the resurrection of Jesus was winning converts to the movement.
3. The church met together often to listen to the apostles, to share meals and communion together, to praise God together.
4. People gave up their possessions to ensure that no one went needy.

It must have been a grand and exciting time! The practical and theological question I want to ask is this: what does this mean for us?

1. *The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version*. (1989). (Ac 4:32-35). Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. *The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version*. (1989). (Ac 2:42-47). Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)