




STUDY

NEW COMMUNITY

Background

The Holy Spirit has come! Peter calls people to turn from their sins to Jesus and be baptised. Many see their sin and turn to God for forgiveness. They form a new group. They are the first church—people who trust in Jesus. Here are people who have repented, are forgiven, and are filled with the Holy Spirit. Now Luke explains how they live.

Read

 **READ** Acts 2:42-47 two or three times.

Explain each verse in your own words.

Understand

 **READ** Acts 2:42-43

Verse 42: "Devoted" – made a priority.

Verse 42: "Breaking of bread" – eating together; remembering Jesus' death.

- What do these new believers devote themselves to (spend all their time doing)?
- Why are these things so important?
- How does everyone feel?

Verse 42 gives their priorities. These are the things the new believers

were "devoted" to. They spent their time and put their focus on these things.

- Apostles' teaching: This was the teaching from the apostles about Jesus.
- Fellowship: This was the shared life the Christians had together. "Fellowship" means what we share together.
- Breaking of bread: This refers to meals together. It was also a time to celebrate the Lord's Supper and remember Jesus' death (Luke 22:14-20).
- Prayer: Speaking to God. This probably included prayers of confession, thanksgiving, praise and requests.

Verse 43 says that everyone was filled with "awe"—this means respect, reverence, fear. God was working and this was an amazing time. They saw God's presence by miracle signs from the apostles.

 **READ** verses 44-47

- How do the believers behave to each other?
- What words explain their attitude?
- What is Jesus doing through this group?

The believers were "together", which means they spent time with each other. They also had

everything "in common". This is the idea of "fellowship" or sharing. For example, they sold their things and gave to other people. This was not needed to join the community (not everyone sold their possessions or property). It was how people cared for each other in the community.

The believers met together regularly in the temple and in each other's homes. They were "glad" or joyful people because of what God had done for them. They were "sincere"; it was from their heart. They praised God for all he had done.

"Enjoying the favour of all the people" can mean they were treated well by the people around them. But a better translation is: "Having grace for all the people". The believers showed kindness to all those around them.

The Lord Jesus continued to work among them. He brought more new believers into the group. They were "being saved" by believing in Jesus.

picture of how God's people should live together and what they should do. Their new life means a new relationship with God and with each other. So they learn about God, remember Jesus, praise God and pray to him. They also live together with other believers. They care for each other and encourage each other. This includes practical help and support.

So the main point of the passage is: Believers live out a new life together.

Find the main point of the passage

- What do these verses teach us about church life?
- What do they tell us is important in a group of believers?

These verses tell us what should be important for God's people. It is a



PLAN

Main point of the sermon

A sermon explains the passage, and applies the passage to the hearers. Look at the main point of the passage. Write what this main point will mean for your hearers.

It will be something like this:
Believers in Jesus live out their new life with God and each other.

Sub-points

- Read the main point again.
- Read the verses again.
- What sub-points will help you teach this passage?

This passage does not divide up easily. The themes are repeated through the passage. It is best to find the key themes and then explain them. You can use the themes of "new relationship with God", and "new relationship with each other".

Think of a heading for each sub-point.

For example:

1. New relationship with God (v42-43, 47)
2. New relationship with each other (v42, 44-46)

Illustrate

The main point is about the new community that believers are part of. For example, if you have new parents, that means you are in a new family and you have new brothers and sisters. So when we believe in Jesus, we have God as our new father and other believers as our brothers and sisters. That means we now live differently with them.

Apply

- In your church life what are the most important things?
- What needs to change so that your church has the same priorities as this first church?
- What can we learn so we can live together better as God's people?

How this applies will depend on your church. Which of these priorities is your church good at: The apostles' teaching, fellowship, the breaking of bread or prayer? Encourage people to keep going in those. Which of these priorities is your church bad at? Challenge people about those.

Review

Check the main point is clear and that you keep to THIS passage.



TEACH

Start

This passage is about the new community of the church. The new community is people who have repented and believed in Jesus. We will see what a community is like when people have been forgiven and are filled with God's Spirit.

Explain

New relationship with God (v42-43, 47)

When anyone believes in Jesus, they turn to God. They are forgiven and receive the Holy Spirit. How do they now live out their new relationship with God?

- They keep learning: They spend time learning from the apostles so they understand more about what God has done and promised. We can do this as we study the Bible and listen to teaching from God's word.
- They keep remembering: They remember Jesus' death for them by breaking bread together. Do we do this often and with joy?
- They keep praying: They praise and thank God. They ask him to bring more people to know him.

New relationship with each other (v42, 44-46)

There is also a new relationship with each other. Believers are united

(joined together). *Use the illustration about joining a new family.* People give themselves to "fellowship"—their new, shared life. They learn together, eat together, remember together, and pray together. They spend time together and care for each other. They share their houses and possessions with each other.

The result was that Jesus brought new believers to join the group.

Apply

Encourage people with what a beautiful picture this is. This is a happy and united group of people. God is at work. How can we be more like this?

Encourage people about which of these they are doing well. Challenge people about which of these you need to do more in your situation.

End

God has made a new community of his people, who are his family. They live a new life with him and with each other.

Pray

Pray that your church will become more like this first church. Ask God to use you to bring more people to know Jesus as Lord and Saviour.