

## The Book Of Acts: Verse-by-Verse

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### Acts 2:44-47

- **A “Snapshot” Of The Early Church:**

- They only had born again believers as members.
- All 3,000 new members had been baptized.
- Flexibility in ministry (no previous church traditions).
- A large Church: 3, 120 members!

Luke's compact description: "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles."

- **An “Apostolic” Church:**

These new converts need a very solid foundation for their newfound Christian experience. The apostles were the natural source of correct teaching. If they fail to pass on the Gospel in its entirety, the Church will eventually fail through misinformation and division. See: I Corinthians 3:10-13; I Timothy 4:13; Titus 1:9

Paul's warning: "I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: preach the word." - 2 Timothy 4:1-2.

The apostles' early direction and teaching was critical to the establishment of the Church, however, once the foundation was laid it would be necessary for others to take their roles in the proliferation and maturing of the Church. See: Ephesians 4:11-13

- **The Unity And Generosity Of The Acts 2 Church: vv. 44-45**

"All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need."

These 3,000 plus new converts were together and had everything in common. The Greek word that Luke stresses two times in this statement is “koinonia”, which means “to share in common.”

The Greek phrase translated “together” will be repeated in verse 47 when Luke notes, “the Lord was adding to their number.” The Greek text literally says, “together, those who were being saved.”

Is Luke saying that 3,120 people had an identical life?” No! Having everything in common does not mean to have identical experiences or identical lives.

Three Things That Constitute Koinonia (Basics):

### **1. We Must Be Saved.**

Glancing ahead to verse 47: “And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.” Luke’s description points back to Joel’s prophecy: “Whoever calls on the Name of the Lord will be delivered.”

To have real koinonia, we must be saved. I cannot claim to have a deep, intimate fellowship with the rest of the body of Christ if I have not taken the very first step in that process – accepting the Gospel message.

### **2. We Must Be Connected To Other Christians.**

You can’t have “all things together” if you don’t gather with other believers. Koinonia is based upon connecting with other believers on a deeper level than just worship services.

The other side of the story: The first Church started with 3,120 believers and it kept growing! How did they connect? Luke says they met in large-group formats at the Temple courts and in small group formats from “house to house.”

### **3. We Must Share Spiritual Experiences.**

Peter’s Day of Pentecost promise: “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins.

And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.”

The experiences we must have to practice koinonia: We must be saved, and we must have the Holy Spirit. Is that the limit of shared experiences?

If the Early Church shows us anything, it's that people from very different families, occupations, and, in part, different ethnicities all shared similar spiritual experiences. What does Luke say in verse 42?

- They devoted themselves God's Word, taught by the apostles.
- They devoted themselves to the Lord's Supper.
- They devoted themselves to fellowship.
- They devoted themselves to the times of prayers.

**The Acts 2 Church's Generosity:** v. 45: “They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need.”

Luke is not promoting some form of Christian Socialism. He is reflecting on a unique situation that came about with 3,000 being saved on the Day of Pentecost.

The History: Thousands of pilgrims from the Roman Empire traveled to Jerusalem for the Feast of Pentecost. After Peter's salvation message, many received Christ. The problem was, they wanted to stay longer to get grounded in their new faith. For them to do this they had to find a place to stay and finances to support them.

To meet these needs, the Jerusalem believers opened their homes and donated money to help their new brothers and sisters in Christ. As a part of this organized effort, some even sold land and donated the proceeds. See also: Acts 4:36-37.

What About The 21<sup>st</sup> – Century Church?

Jesus' story in Luke 12: The farmer who had a great harvest, but only thought about himself. The key teaching: "But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?' "This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich toward God." - Luke 12:16-21.

Paul's encouragement for us to be generous: I Timothy 6:17-19

"Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share."

Now there is definitely a need for wisdom in all of this. The Bible is not suggesting that we should give without any thought to the circumstances. The Acts 2 Church took care of the legitimate needs of those who had joined the fellowship and needed help to stay in Jerusalem and get grounded in their new walk in Christ.

- **A Two-Tiered Fellowship:** vv. 46-47,

"Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved."

### **1. Large Group And Small Group Experiences:**

A beautiful balance: 1. The Acts 2 Church met together (*koinonia*) in the Temple courts. It was a necessity: No less than 3,120 needed to get together for the apostles' teaching and the Lord's Supper.

2. The small-group context: "They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God."

The small group emphasis was not upon apostolic teaching: They were receiving that on a daily basis in the Temple meetings. These disciples are meeting in one another's homes and sharing a meal.

An Old Testament event - Exodus 24:

"Then Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and the 70 elders of Israel went up the mountain. On the mountain, these men saw the God of Israel. He was standing on something that looked like blue sapphires, as clear as the sky! All the leaders of Israel saw God, but God did not destroy them. They all ate and drank together." – Exodus 24:9-11

- **"Breaking Bread" Or "The Breaking Of Bread"?**

Verse 46: "They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God."

In verse 46 the definite article is not in this Greek sentence. They are not meeting for "the" breaking of bread which identifies the Lord's Supper. Instead, they are meeting for common meals.

- **Praising God And Enjoying Favor: vv. 46-47**

"They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved."

The Acts 2 Church was "enjoying the favor of all the people." Does this mean the 3,120 were met with approval by everyone in Jerusalem? No. It won't take long before the religious leaders launch their first salvos against the newly formed Church.

Those who came in contact with this early Church found reasons to like them. This stemmed from the way they treated one another. It convinced many people that they were genuine.

- **The Lord's Additions: v. 47**

"And the Lord was adding to their numbers day by day those who were being saved." The Greek text: "And the Lord kept adding those who were being saved every day to their number."

This is not a passing comment. With the apostles doing miracles in the Temple courts, more and more Jews were believing the Gospel message. Who added them to the number of the believers? God did.

What Paul says about salvation and the accession of believers to the God's kingdom.

- I Corinthians 12:13: "Some of us are Jews, and others are Gentiles. Some of us are slaves, and others are free. But God's Spirit baptized each of us and made us part of the body of Christ."
- Ephesians 1:13-14: "In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory."

The Greek word for "sealed" means "to stamp with a private mark". This action involves keeping something secret or - protecting or preserving an object.

Luke's point in saying that God added to the body of Christ those who were being saved: While human evangelism is taking place, it's God who actually makes a convert part of His Son's body. It is God who seals us as His own and guarantees our future salvation.