



# Abide in ME

john 15:4



Bible studies for disciples who make disciples

Loudonville Community Church

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## Real Church

Acts 2:42-47

### This Week's Core Statement

**BIBLICAL COMMUNITY** - "Community is a bit of a buzz word in today's church culture, and I think that's a good thing. We need to understand it. It's really a modern term for an ancient word – fellowship. The Greek word for fellowship in the Bible is the word *koinonia*. And *koinonia* means being as committed to each other as we are to Jesus Christ. We talk a lot about the building blocks of biblical community, and there are at least ten of them.

1. **Frequency.** In fellowship we meet together often. It's not an every once in a while. It's quite frequent. The Bible tells us in Hebrews 10:25, "Let us not give up the habit of meeting together. Instead, let us encourage one another." A habit is something you do with frequency. You don't do a habit occasionally. You do a habit frequently. You do it over and over and over.
2. **Authenticity.** In fellowship you share your true feelings. There are three fears that cause us to be inauthentic: the fear of exposure, the fear of rejection, and the fear of being hurt again. In the light of God's truth we don't try to hide our faults. So as James 5:16 says, "Admit your faults one to another and pray for each other so that you may be healed..." In recovery we have a saying that you're only as sick as your secrets. I often say revealing your feeling is the beginning of healing. That's what authenticity is all about. You say, "This is where I'm at," and you admit it.

The quickest way to build authenticity in your life and in your group is this – study and apply the word of God. "The word of God is full of living power. It is sharper than the sharpest knife, cutting deep into our innermost thoughts and desires. It exposes us for what we really are." It's not pop psychology that makes you authentic. It's not therapy that makes you authentic. It's not ooey-goey sentimentality that makes you authentic. It's coming into contact with the word of God. When I look at the word of God and let it touch my soul and I see where I don't measure up and where I need to grow, then it forces me to be authentic.

3. **Mutuality.** Fellowship is built on mutuality. In fellowship that means we help each other grow. Together we're stronger. You cannot be what God wants you to be without other people. Romans 1:12 says, "I want us to help each other with the faith we have. Your faith will help me and my faith will help you." That's like that great theologian Bill Withers once said, "We all need somebody to lean on." We need each other to do that. There are three parts to mutuality:
  1. **Mutual accountability.** In other words, you get a prayer partner in your group. You have somebody who you're personally encouraging in their quiet time in your faith and in your spiritual growth. Someone you get alone with and you commit to checking up on each other.
  2. **Mutual encouragement.** "(Speak) only what is helpful for building others up, according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen." The Bible says, "Encourage anyone who feels left out. Help all who are weak, and be patient with everyone."
  3. **Mutual honoring.** Romans 12:10 "Take delight in honoring each other."
4. **Courtesy.** Fellowship is built on courtesy. That means in fellowship we show respect for our differences. In fellowship we show respect even when we disagree with each other. You can disagree without being disagreeable. The Bible says, "Believers shouldn't curse anyone or be quarrelsome, but they should be gentle and show courtesy to everyone." Show courtesy to everyone.

5. **Sympathy.** In fellowship we support each other when we're in need. We support each other when we're in pain. We support each other in our feelings. The Bible says in Colossians 3:12, "As holy people whom God has chosen and loved, be sympathetic." It says be sympathetic, kind, humble and patient. What does it mean to be sympathetic? Sympathy simply means to understand and affirm your feelings, to understand and affirm your problems, to understand and affirm your pain. That's what it means to be sympathetic.
6. **Humility.** This is key because next to fear, pride destroys relationships more quickly than anything else. That's why 1 Peter 5:5 is so important for us as believers. "...clothe yourself with humility towards one another..." Humility means being honest about my weaknesses because I have them. Humility is being willing to admit it when I've made a mistake because we all do. Humility enables us to say the four most difficult words, "I need your help," the three most difficult words, "I was wrong," the two most difficult words, "Forgive me."
7. **Honesty.** Most people don't have anyone in their lives who loves them enough to be honest with them, to be frank with them, to tell them the truth. The Bible says, "Speak the truth in love." Being candid and being connected go together. Healthy relationships and healthy groups are built on honesty and not on flattery or on faking it.
8. **Mercy.** The fact is, every fellowship is composed of imperfect people so people are going to be hurt. The issue is, how do you handle the hurt? It'll determine whether the fellowship splits up or stays together. How do you handle the honesty of life, the conflicts of life? "You must make allowances for each other's faults and forgive the person who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you so you must forgive others." The motivation for mercy? God's been merciful to me. If you call yourself a Christian you have to show mercy to people when they ask forgiveness.
9. **Confidentiality.** Fellowship is built on confidentiality. You'll never develop any close fellowship in your small group without confidentiality. In fact, the quickest way to destroy a small group is gossip. There are dozens of verses on gossip. God has a lot to say on gossip. He says, "No one who gossips can be trusted with a secret, but you can put confidence in someone who's trustworthy." The church and small groups ought to be the safest place in the world.
10. **Unity.** Unity is the ultimate pinnacle of fellowship. Where do we get unity? We discover unity around God's purposes, not around a personality. You can have unity without uniformity. Does God want us all to be alike? No. Does God want us to be unified? Yes. Ten times in the first five chapters of Acts it says, "They were of one accord. They were unified... They were all together... They were of one heart... of one spirit." When we have the unity of the book of Acts in our church we will have the power of the book of Acts in our church.

### This Week's Complementary Passage

#### 1 Corinthians 12:12-26

<sup>12</sup> For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. <sup>13</sup> For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit. <sup>14</sup> For the body does not consist of one member but of many.

<sup>15</sup> If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. <sup>16</sup> And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. <sup>17</sup> If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? <sup>18</sup> But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. <sup>19</sup> If all were a single member, where would the body be? <sup>20</sup> As it is, there are many parts, yet one body.

<sup>21</sup> The eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you," nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." <sup>22</sup> On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, <sup>23</sup> and on those parts of the body that we think less honorable we bestow the greater honor, and our unpresentable parts are treated with greater modesty, <sup>24</sup> which our more presentable parts do not require. But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it, <sup>25</sup> that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. <sup>26</sup> If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together.

appointed

baptized

Caesar

enemy/demons/Satan

eternal life

fathers & children [in one color  
different from Moses]

Gentiles

gospel

grace

Holy Spirit

in the name of Jesus Christ

Jesus

Jews

Law (of Moses)

men of the council

Moses [in different color from  
fathers & children]

prayer

repent (repentance)

resurrection (raised up)

salvation

suffering

the Way

the promise of the Father

witnesses

word of God

## This Week's Text for Study – Acts 2:42-47

### STEP ONE . . .

**READING** what the passage says  
(Read it at least three times)

<sup>42</sup> And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. <sup>43</sup> And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. <sup>44</sup> And all who believed were together and had all things in common. <sup>45</sup> And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. <sup>46</sup> And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, <sup>47</sup> praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

## STEP TWO . . .

### OBSERVING how the passage moves

Return to the passage and **mark key words using the marking guide along with the following phrases and movements:**

- In v. 42 circle the word “devoted.”
- In v. 42 underline: “the apostles’ teaching;” “the fellowship;” “the breaking of bread;” “the prayers.”
- In v. 43 put brackets around, “awe.”
- In v. 43 underline the phrase, “came upon every soul.”
- In v. 43 put brackets around, “wonders and signs.”
- In v. 43 underline the phrase, “being done through the apostles.”
- In v. 44 put brackets around, “all who believed.”
- In v. 44 underline the word, “together,” and the phrase, “had all things in common.”
- In v. 45 put brackets around, “selling” and “distributing.”
- In v. 45 underline the phrase, “as any had need.”
- In v. 46 put brackets around, “day by day.”
- In v. 46 underline the words, “Attending the temple;” “breaking bread in their homes;” “received their food with glad and generous hearts;” “praising God,” “having favor with all the people.”
- In v. 47 circle, “the Lord.”
- In v. 47 underline the word “added.”

## STEP THREE . . .

### Ask the five “W” questions and the one “H” question:

1. **WHO** is speaking? Who is this about? Who are the main characters? And, to **whom** is it speaking?
2. **WHAT** is the subject of the passage? What does the passage say about the subject?
3. **WHEN** do or will the events occur? When did something happen to a particular person, people, or nation?
4. **WHERE** did or will this happen?
5. **WHY** is something said or mentioned? Why would or will this happen? Why at this time? Why this person?
6. **HOW** will it happen? How is it to be done? How is it illustrated?

## STEP FOUR . . .

### UNDERSTANDING what the passage means

*This commentary is intended to enhance your own study of the text.*

#### Commentary on Acts 2:42-47

v. 42 - **devoted themselves.** Persisting, persevering in; attending to, busying, occupying themselves (cf. Acts 1:14, 6:4; Romans 12:12, 13:6; Colossians 4:2). Or, attach oneself to.

v. 42 - **the apostles' teaching.** The learners in the gospels are now the teachers. "The teaching of the apostles has come down to us in its definitive form in the New Testament" (J. Stott).

v. 42 - **the fellowship.** The famous Greek word, "koinonia." *Koinos* means common. This is the only occurrence of this word in Acts. Some translations have the definite article, "the fellowship." Koinonia refers to a participation or sharing in common of something with someone else (i.e. eating, praying). Koinonia then is the *result* of sharing in something together not the sharing itself. Christians share in the life of God together.

v. 42 - **the breaking of bread.** Some think Luke is referring to the sacred act of eating together as in Luke 24:35 (the only other time this word occurs). Others think this is a reference to the Lord's Supper, often observed by the early church around a meal. It seems that "breaking bread" was an act of worship that involved eating, praying, teaching, singing, and the Lord's Supper.

v. 42 - **the prayers.** In the earliest days of the church, the Jewish believers did not separate themselves completely from their Jewish context and practice.

v. 43 - **awe.** Lit. "And a great awe." Or fear. We get our word *phobia* from this word.

v. 43 - **every soul.** Seems to include Christians and non-Christians.

v. 43 - **wonders and signs through the apostles.** The primary purpose of these wonders and signs was to seize the attention of others and confirm the teaching of the apostles.

v. 44 - **together.** The unity of togetherness. A gathered group functioning in unity.

v. 44 - **all things in common.** The believers were sharing everything with their new family with God as their Father. Their possessions were now available for God's use.

v. 45 - **selling their possessions and belongings.** Or, properties. Same word as in Acts 5:1 where Ananias sold "property." The believers did not claim any exclusive right to whatever property they owned. It was readily liquidated and the funds were used to bless others. The selling, however, was voluntary.

v. 45 - **as any had need.** This was not a one-time act. The believers were repeatedly selling their extra things as needs were made known.

v. 46 - **day by day.** Informal, private gatherings in homes. Evidently, everyone did not sell their homes.

v. 46 - **attending the temple.** Their formal, public acts of worship. "I do not believe that they still participated in the sacrifices of the temple, for already they had begun to grasp that these had been fulfilled in the sacrifice of Christ, but they do seem to have attended the prayer services of the temple" (J. Stott).

v. 46 - **breaking bread.** The Lord's Supper or an ordinary meal. It was customary for a Jewish father to break bread at the beginning of a meal.

v. 46 - **in their homes.** Or, house to house.

v. 46 - **glad and generous hearts.** Gladness is exultation. Generous may mean simplicity of heart. "Unaffected joy." "A gloomy Christian is a contradiction in terms" (Barclay).

v. 47 - **praising God.** "When the Spirit reigns, the hearts of God's people move up toward Him and their relationship with Him intensifies" (R. Kent Hughes).

v. 47 - **favor with all the people.** The word *kalos* refers to something that is not only good but looks good. There is a winsome attractiveness about it. Outside the believing community, they enjoyed popular goodwill because of their attractiveness.

v. 47 - **added to their number.** Or, added daily to the church. Adding to the total number and taken into church fellowship. The Lord does the adding by the church's active witness.

v. 47 - **being saved.** *Sozmenous*: the word is a present participle indicating that salvation is a progressive experience culminating in our glorification.

## STEP FIVE . . .

### SUMMARIZING the message

One of the most persistent challenges to a belief in God is the fact that God is invisible. In the Old Testament, the invisibility of God was a major problem for the Jews living near their heathen neighbors. They were laughed at, mocked, and scorned because they worshipped a God who could not be seen. Their neighbors taunted them saying, “Where is your God? If you come to our temple, you will be able to see our gods for they can be seen and touched.” The Israelites had a reasonable response to such taunting. They said that the gods of the heathens were nothing more than rocks and wood, carved by human hands. They rightly asserted, “You can carve a mouth, ears and a nose out of marble, but it doesn’t mean it can speak, hear, and smell.”

The same challenge still exists today. How is the invisible God made visible? The Bible teaches that God resolved the problem of His invisibility by sending His Son into the world. Jesus is the image of the invisible God. John says, “*No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father’s side [Jesus], He has made Him known*” (John 1:18). Two thousand years ago Jesus made the invisible God known to us. But then He departed and returned to heaven. No one has seen Him since. So how is the invisible God made visible today?

The stunning answer of the New Testament is that the invisible God makes Himself visible in the church.” “*No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us*” (1 John 4:12). As the church does life together, the invisible God is made visible. So the church must look like the God it talks about.

In Acts 2:42-47 Luke is describing the early church in the days following Pentecost when the Spirit of God baptized Jesus’ disciples and clothed them with power. Peter stood to preach and 3,000 people believed in Jesus. Immediately, they were formed into a unique community – a Spirit-filled church. In this passage we can identify four marks of a Spirit-filled community.

1. **A Spirit-filled church is a learning community** (v. 42). The Holy Spirit stirs in us an insatiable hunger to learn all we can about our life in Christ.
2. **A Spirit-filled church is a life-giving community** (v. 42). The Holy Spirit binds us into a fellowship like none other. Two key elements of fellowship are the breaking of bread and prayer.
3. **A Spirit-filled church is a generous community** (vv. 44-47a). The Holy Spirit led the believers to sacrificially meet the needs of their new brothers and sisters in Christ.
4. **A Spirit-filled church is a witnessing community** (vv. 43, 47b). The Holy Spirit used signs and wonders, the lifestyle of the believers, and preaching to draw people into the welcoming arms of the church.

STEP SIX . . .

**EXPLORING** the passage through discussion

1. What interested you or even surprised you about the marks of a Spirit-filled community displayed in verses 42-47?
2. Do you think the order of Luke's description of the early church's devotion in verse 42 is intentional? For instance, why does he begin with teaching?
3. What are your thoughts regarding the breaking of bread? Do you think this is a reference to the Lord's Supper and/or sharing a meal? On what do you base your opinion? How may this picture alter your understanding of sharing a meal with other believers?
4. In Sunday's message, Pastor Paul referred to the "spirit" or culture of the church. Aside from the actions described in this passage, how would you describe the *culture* of the early church?
5. This vignette depicts a unified church? What were some specific challenges the early church had to face in order to be unified? What are some specific challenges to our unity today? How is our unity maintained? How do we mess it up?
6. Should Christians literally follow this example of generosity within their local community? What do you think that would that look like?
7. What will it take for Loudonville to be this kind of church? What intimidates you about being this kind of church?



## THE MISSION OF LOUDONVILLE COMMUNITY CHURCH

We are committed to reaching and teaching people to become devoted followers of Jesus Christ, connecting them to one another and sending them to serve their families, communities and world.

### 10 CORE BELIEFS OF A DISCIPLE

#### **Authority of the Bible** *2 Timothy 3:16-17*

We believe the Bible to be the inspired, the only infallible, authoritative Word of God.

#### **The Godhead** *2 Corinthians 13:14*

We believe that there is one God, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

#### **The Deity and Sinlessness of Christ** *Colossians 2:9*

We believe in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His virgin birth, in His sinless life.

#### **The Sufficient Atonement of Christ** *2 Corinthians 5:19-21*

We believe in His vicarious and atoning death through His shed blood.

#### **The Resurrection and Return of Christ** *Acts 1:3, 9-11*

We believe in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and in His personal return in power and glory.

#### **Salvation By Grace** *Ephesians 2:8-9*

We believe that for the salvation of lost and sinful man, regeneration by the Holy Spirit is absolutely essential and that a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

#### **The Ministry of the Holy Spirit** *John 14:16*

We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a godly life.

#### **Unity in Christ** *Ephesians 2:14-17*

We believe in the spiritual unity of all believers in our Lord Jesus Christ.

#### **Eternity** *Revelation 21:22-27*

We believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost; they that are saved unto the resurrection of life and they that are lost unto the resurrection of damnation.

#### **Stewardship** *1 Timothy 6:17-19*

We believe that everything we have or own belongs to God.

### 10 CORE PRACTICES OF A DISCIPLE

#### **Undiluted Worship** *Matthew 22:37-40*

Loving the Lord God with all of our physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual vigor and, my neighbor as myself.

#### **Constant Abiding** *John 15:1-11*

Abiding in Christ in order to be faithful and bear fruit.

#### **Bible Study** *Hebrews 4:12*

Reading the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for daily life.

#### **Desperate Prayer** *Psalms 66:16-20*

Praying to God to know Him, laying requests before Him and, finding direction for daily life.

#### **Biblical Community** *Acts 2:44-47*

Fellowshipping with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, other people's lives and, in the world.

#### **Spiritual Gifts** *Romans 12:4-6*

Using my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

#### **Total Forgiveness** *Ephesians 4:30*

Practicing forgiving others as God has forgiven me in Christ.

#### **Tangible Compassion** *Matthew 25:31-46*

Showing compassion to those in need and so minister to Jesus Himself.

#### **Generous Giving** *2 Corinthians 8:7*

Giving away my money to fulfill God's purposes.

#### **God Space** *Ephesians 6:19-20*

Increasing the quantity and quality of our gospel conversations.

## 10 CORE VIRTUES OF A DISCIPLE

### **Love - a sincere affection for others** *1 John 4:10-12*

Love is acting in someone else's interest no matter who they may be, no matter how you feel, and no matter what it costs.

### **Joy - a delight unaffected by circumstances** *John 15:11*

An inner delight in God that is sustained in spite of the changing seasons of life.

### **Peace - an abiding sense of harmony** *Philippians 4:6-7*

Relationships are free from friction. Positively, it describes harmonious relations with others in the church.

### **Patience - a willingness to stick with things** *Proverbs 3:3-4*

Being willing to live with a difficult situation for a long time—even if things are slow to change or never change.

### **Kindness - a sense of compassion in the heart** *Job 6:14*

An inner disposition that puts others at ease and out of which kind actions flow.

### **Goodness - a goodness that flows outwardly** *1 Thess. 5:15*

Choosing to do the right things in my relationships with others.

### **Faithfulness - an unwavering loyalty** *Psalm 26:3*

Being the kind of people who keep our word to one another.

### **Gentleness/Humility - an attitude of humility without any entitlement; a lack of self-awareness** *Philippians 4:5; 2:3-4*

Gentleness is power and strength under God's control. Humility is considering others above myself, if I consider myself at all.

### **Self-Control - an ability to direct your energy wisely**

*Titus 2:11-13*

The strength to restrain our desires, emotions, and actions has to come from within rather than from some outside source.

### **Hope - a certainty of what is to come** *Hebrews 6:19-20*

Coping with the hardships of life and with death because of hope in Christ.

Each week this Bible Study will feature either a core belief, practice or virtue vital for growing disciples.



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