

## **Let the Church Be the Church: A Devoted Community Acts 2.42**

*"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer." Acts 2.42*

The character of a person is known not only by his friends, but also by his enemies. The question we need to ask ourselves is: What made the early church stand out from its culture?

We have already seen how the early church got its start with an encounter with God on the Day of Pentecost. Thousands were brought to faith in Christ that day and were added to the church there in Jerusalem, but their faith not only changed their destiny, it changed their lives.

Our text says that they **devoted themselves**. Literally, it reads that they were **continuing steadfastly**.

To what were they devoted? What were the things that this brand new body of believers found important enough to commit themselves to? There are four mentioned in our text.

### **1. The first Christians devoted themselves to the apostles' DOCTRINE – DISCIPLESHIP.**

They devoted themselves first to **the apostles' teaching**. In other words, they gave a high priority to understanding the truth. Now that they had come to know Jesus, they wanted to know more about him. They wanted to understand how to apply this teaching to their lives, so they continually attended the services for teaching and were continuing steadfastly devoted to hearing and understanding the teaching of the apostles.

### **2. They also devoted themselves to FELLOWSHIP COMMUNITY.**

The second thing they devoted themselves to was **the fellowship**. It is interesting how many people think that they really don't need the fellowship of other believers. Not so for the early church. They saw the need to continually devote themselves to a shared life with the other believers.

*"Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching." Hebrews 10.25*

### **3. They also devoted themselves to THE BREAKING OF BREAD – A SYMBOL OF A HISTORICAL EVENT.**

You and I are stewards of that event. An event is something that happened, not a philosophy or a theology or an ethic. God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself. God lived among us, was crucified, was raised, and now reigns as the Lord of the church. Every time we come to communion we celebrate an event. We bear witness to the event and we worship the event, not ideas about the event.

### **4. They also devoted themselves to PRAYER – THE THRONE.**

*"For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ." 2 Corinthians 10.3-5*

*"For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms." Ephesians 6.12*