

An Acts 2:42 look at Cell Groups

The Fellowship of the Believers

⁴²They **devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching** and to **fellowship**, to the **breaking of bread** and to **prayer**. ⁴³Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. ⁴⁴All the believers were together and had everything in common. ⁴⁵They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. ⁴⁶Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, ⁴⁷praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Why:

Why do we need cell groups? Groups were a natural next step after Pentecost when the Holy Spirit was poured out, and 3000 people became Christ-followers on that day. No Synagogue could take 3000 believers, but homes could. These believers were also not from Jerusalem but from all over the middle east, Mediterranean, and North Africa.

These believers went back to their own countries and gathered with believers in their homes. Acts 2:42f wasn't a to-do list, but an account of Luke describing the natural next step for believers. Much of what Jesus taught (And what these early believers devoted themselves too) was around life in community. How to love people, how to forgive people, how to treat people, how to care for the poor and the widows, how to search for the lost. Living in community with other believers was so central to what Jesus taught, and what the early church lived.

There is still a need for this more than ever. Homes, not church buildings, can gather the church of Christ.

What:

The passage is fairly easy to understand in terms of the picture it describes. Its challenge comes in discerning how to apply it. Is the life of this community to be taken as a model for Christian life today?

Verse 42 says that the believers were devoted to—that is, seriously, and earnestly persisted in—four things: "the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers." Each of these four things turns up one way or another in the following verses (43–47). Let's see how Luke unpacks them.

How:

1. The Apostles' Teaching

*"And they devoted themselves to the **apostles' teaching** . . ."*

This desire to learn how to live out a new way of life ties back into verse 37 where their listeners had cried out, "**What shall we do?**" This desperation was owing to Peter's teaching and the Holy Spirit's conviction on Pentecost on how they were to live now. As such they devoted themselves to how the apostles opened up the old testament scriptures that revealed Christ and his Kingdom.

2. Fellowship

*"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and **fellowship** . . ."*

The word "fellowship" (*koinonia*) is built on the root meaning: common, having in common, sharing. Luke describes verses 44–45 as the unpacking of "fellowship" in verse 42. Because verse 44 speaks of having

possessions "in common," and the word "common" (*koina*) is the same root as "fellowship" (*koinonia*) in verse 42.

So here is part of what fellowship was like in the early church: "And all who believed were together and had all things in common; and they sold their possessions and goods and distributed them to all, as any has need." *Koinonia* (fellowship) means having things *koina* (in common).

3. Breaking Bread

*"And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the **breaking of bread** . . ."*

This is unpacked in verse 46: *"And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they partook of food with glad and generous hearts."* "Breaking bread" might refer to the Lord's Supper, or it might simply refer to simple table fellowship. But "partaking of food with glad and generous hearts" shows that togetherness was a precious thing to the believers in the early church. They loved to be together at meals. It seems like they were together with each other in this way almost every day. That was the kind of love the early Christians had for each other when they stood in awe of God.

4. Prayer

*"And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the **prayers.**"*

Vs 47: *"Praising God and having favour with all the people."* When they gathered in the big group in the temple and when they ate together in their homes, Luke says they focused on God—they praised God. When they got in touch with each other, they got in touch with God. They prayed.

A Summary of Early Church Life

- They focused a lot on the teaching of the apostles (which we have in the New Testament).
- They experienced wonders and signs (which are still valid for the church today through the means of spiritual gifts).
- They lived in a state of wonder and awe as they saw day in and day out the stark reality of God in healings and deliverances and changed lives of people being added to the church.
- They shared their possessions as freely with the needy as though they didn't even own them.
- They spent time in big groups in the temple.
- They ate together in their homes almost every day.
- And when they met each other, they met God. They prayed and they praised.

If the awesome teaching of the apostles would stand forth the way it did in Peter's preaching on Pentecost, and if the Lord confirmed his truth with wonders and signs, this holy, happy fear would come upon the church, and material possessions would become as nothing, except to serve others; people, not things, would become precious beyond words; and when we met each other, we would meet God. And prayer would be everywhere. – John Piper

What does this look like at El Shaddai Christian Church?

- 1) Commitment to regular meeting. Let us not give up meeting together – Make gathering a priority in the week. Something not to be missed. Model it for your children.

- 2) Grace based obedience in studying the Word to hear God for ourselves, and directly live it out. Use the guidelines made available by the church, or go onto the website and find resources for your DBS there. Alternatively plan as you feel led by the Spirit for what your own cell, but stay in the loop of the big picture of where the Church is.
- 3) Sharing meals and time together as a family. Find ways of having communion and/or sharing a meal together as a cell group. You would have dinner anyway, so have it together. Bring and share. Let the children join.
- 4) Meeting felt needs as is possible. You don't have to meet every need, but you can see that every need is met. Find specific requests that people in the cell have. If you're able to personally help, do so. If not, search your network for someone who can. Help by praying for supernatural intervention.
- 5) Saturated with a life of prayer. Before cell, prepare your heart, during cell for the Presence of the Holy Spirit, after cell for specific needs and prayer requests, during the week in continued prayer for members in your cell. It's a lifestyle of meeting with God.