

**Acts 2:42-47 : The Fellowship of the Believers**

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

This month, we are focusing on the four “non-negotiables” of a worship community.

**Teaching – fellowship – breaking of bread – prayer**

These are four pillars of the first-century church, and four markers of a healthy church. But there are two (2) key things that underscored this first century movement. First is the Holy Spirit. This was a spirit driven movement. God had just finished revealing his power on Pentecost, the people were on fire for God, and the Holy Spirit was the driving force through it all. That is the first thing we notice.

The second thing we notice is that God is partnering with the disciples. They have an active role in this movement. They are “devoted” – meaning, that while the Holy Spirit is moving, they are open and focused on the Spirit, and putting energy into what God is doing. I came across a description of what it means to be devoted in this context...

***The biblical concept of being devoted encompasses both the idea of being set apart for God and the active, ongoing commitment to live in accordance with His will. Whether through acts of worship, personal consecration, or service to others, devotion is a central theme that underscores the believer's relationship with God and the community of faith.***

Devotion is a central theme that underscores our relationship with God and the community. Today, we use words like “submission” and “obedience” but these are other ways of saying someone is “devoted.”

Ask yourself today... “what am I devoted to?” What is in your life that you are giving all of your energy to and making sacrifices to be a part of. Maybe its not one thing, but a number of things... but we all have something that we are devoted to. Something that drives us to continue to keep doing. My goal, and my hope for us all is that our devotion is for Christ alone... and that we are growing in our devotion to these four non-negotiables of the church. Being devoted seems to be really challenging though. I'd be excited if we were passionate, or enthusiastic, or even excited about Jesus. But to be devoted means that God is a priority. He is **The priority**. And I know we all have room to grow in that.

So this month, join me for worship on Sunday as we walk through the four non-negotiables, and then come learn and practice these pillars of faith on Wednesday night at 6:00 as we come together for **“Eat and Teach,”** and together we can grow in our devotion to God with each other and embrace what community looks and feels like here at First English.

God Loves You an So Do I,

Pastor Jay