

Acts 2:42–43

42 And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.

43 Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles.

“The Fellowship” ***Acts 2:42b***

INTRO:

Last Sunday we began studying the local church. In our studies we have learned that the church is seen in the Scriptures as both ***“the church which is His body”*** (Ephesians 1:22-23) and the local manifestation of Christ's body, ***“the church of God which is at Corinth”*** (1 Corinthians 1:2). Last time we were together we began looking at the four-fold priority of the church. In **Acts 2:42** we read, ***“And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.”*** We learned the infant church first devoted itself to the Apostles and to their teaching. Today we will move on to the second of the list. They also continued steadfastly in ***“the fellowship.”*** As we explore this aspect of the function of God's church together, we will see it in terms of two parts.

I. What Is The Fellowship?

II. What Kind of Fellowship Did They Continue In?

I. What Is The Fellowship?

A. Remember the Lord's church was born a few verses before this verse. The living God saved three thousand people through the Apostle Peter's preaching. They were baptized and they became the infant church. Once they were a part of the church, what did they do?

1. First, the Apostles taught them. The new church members responded by devoting and committing themselves to the Apostles' teaching.

2. Second, they also were devoted and committed to ***“the fellowship.”*** The article is present in the Greek. The article indicates this ***“sharing together in common”*** was not around the typical things which brought people together in that day. Rather, it was a sharing together in the things which come from a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, the fellowship of His church.

B. The question naturally follows, what was the fellowship Luke referred to here? The word translated *“fellowship”* is a familiar one. It is *‘koinonia.’* The root idea in the word is *“to share together in common, to have something in common.”* The word *‘koinonia’* is used in various ways in the Greek world. For example, did you know that this was a favorite expression for the marital relationship as the most intimate relationship between human beings?

II. What Kind of Fellowship Did They Continue In?

A. What kind of fellowship did these believers have? We can see this fellowship in the Bible on two. First, there was the fellowship which we have with the Living God.

1. As Paul described the spiritual condition of the Corinthian believers, he wrote ***“God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord” (1 Corinthians 1:9).***

This verse speaks of what happened when we were saved. God called each one of us to share together in common with the Lord Jesus Christ. This sharing is both positional and practical. Positionally, we share in His righteousness. Practically we enter into a growing and expanding relationship with God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. In 1 John 1:1-3, we read, ***“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life; the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us; that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.”***

We see two levels of fellowship in these three verses. First, there is fellowship with other believers, ***“with us.”***

2. Second, this fellowship is also the sharing together in the relationship which we, who know Christ, all enjoy with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ. We can have an intimate relationship with God the Father and God the Son. The basis of that fellowship is the incarnation, death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Without the Gospel, there is no fellowship!

3. We haven't talked about the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit. Is there a fellowship with the Holy Spirit? We read in **2 Corinthians 13:14** ***“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion [fellowship] of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.”***

Some translate this word as fellowship with the Holy Spirit and others the fellowship brought about by the Spirit. This is a 'both and' situation. We can have fellowship brought about by the Holy Spirit. The Apostle Paul mentioned this **"fellowship"** again in **Philippians 2:1-2**.

"Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind."

Because there was an ongoing fellowship with the Spirit of God, they should be motivated toward God honoring unity!

4. This **"fellowship"** is not some abstract, esoteric thing. Our **"fellowship"** is real. We can have a growing and expanding relationship with the living God. This relationship involves our sharing together in many things. Let me just touch on one.

"But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death." (Philippians 3:7-10).

Fellowship with Christ for the Apostle Paul meant sharing in His sufferings. How does one do this? We certainly aren't supposed to put ourselves on a cross like some do in the Philippines every Easter time. The answer is found in **Hebrews 13:12-14**

"Therefore Jesus also, [in order] that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate. Therefore let us go forth to Him, outside the camp, bearing His reproach. For here we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come." We are to go out to Him, "bearing His reproach."

The world is not done hating our Savior. We must be willing to suffer the reproach that they would pour on Him. They pour it on us instead. Why? Because we are looking for a city which is to come. This world is not our home; we are just passing through. When we do this, we are fellowshiping in His sufferings. We cannot know the power of His resurrection until we have fellowshiped in His suffering.

5. Do we recognize that God wants His church to be a body of believers who are growing together in the things of Christ, who are growing in grace and in the knowledge of His dear Son? We who share together in the knowledge of His resurrection power and also share together in the fellowship of His sufferings.

B. The second level of this *“fellowship”* is the result of this first level of sharing together in common in the things of Christ. This is fellowship one with another. In the early church this had a very tangible expression in **Acts 4:32-35**.

“Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common. And with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all. Nor was there anyone among them who lacked; for all who were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of the things that were sold, and laid them at the apostles' feet; and they distributed to each as anyone had need.”

C. There is one other example of the *“koinonia”* we need to see. Back in **1 John 1:5-7**.

“This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.”

The biggest obstacle to our fellowship with God and with one another is unconfessed sin.

All of this boils down to one simple truth.

We fellowship by sharing together in common all that we have in the Lord Jesus Christ, our salvation from sin; our new life in Christ; and our new growing relationship with the living God. We also share together in common in one major new goal in our lives, the doing of His will.

We can only share together with each other, because we are actively sharing together with Him.

Hymn# 43 Great Is Thy Faithfulness