

The Unwavering Church

Does Life Together

October 5, 2025

Acts 2:42-47

Introduction

NFL

Body

Let's start at v. 42. (SLIDE)

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

Devoted

The first thing that I want us to see is how those who were in Christ related to the things that we're going to look at. They had a posture of DEVOTION to the church. This word "devoted" is the same Greek word we saw in chapter one that described the disciples' prayers before the Spirit came. It speaks to steadfastness. It speaks to persistence. It speaks to firm adherence.

It's like the time my rear-view came unglued from my windshield because when they replaced the windshield, they didn't properly re-adhere it. VW wanted \$1000 for the repair, so I bought a \$4 tube of "glass glue" and sealed it back to the glass. Good luck getting that off.

Such was the nature of the people's relationship to the life of the church, and such should ours be today. I know there are a lot of reasons why we might think that's a terrible idea. The church has had a lot of dirty laundry in recent years. Cultural headwinds abound. Politics is not making it any easier. On and on we could go, but from Ephesians 5:25-27, we know that Jesus loves THE CHURCH, Jesus died for THE CHURCH, Jesus is purifying THE CHURCH, and when He returns, Jesus will delight in THE CHURCH.

So you see, we really have to be all in for the church. Devoted to the church. We have to have a particular love for the church. This means reshaping your life around Christ and His people rather than squeezing church in around everything else. It looks like prioritizing gathered worship, belonging to a local body, giving and serving generously, praying faithfully, and staying committed even when it's messy. In short, devotion is moving from "I attend" to "I belong and contribute," treating the church not as an option but as your spiritual family and mission.

I don't know what your relationship with THE CHURCH is, but I do know what it MUST be based on the Bible. You must be devoted to THE CHURCH.

Devoted to the Word

All of this is assuming that THE CHURCH you are a part of is doing the things that THE CHURCH is supposed to be doing, and you can see those things in the rest of v. 42.

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I find it very interesting that the coming of the Holy Spirit had both a subjective and objective impact on the church. It was emotional but also intellectual. There were feelings and experiences, but also truths studied and applied. Christianity is about the whole person. You cannot bypass the mind. Ours is a reasonable faith. We are all theologians. The question is whether or not we are a good one. We must be devoted to biblical teaching in our local church.

How do we do that here at Beech Haven? It starts with this room on Sundays. The person that takes this platform has a biblical responsibility to read and explain the Bible, all of which is about Jesus, in a winsome or compelling manner. Right now, that's much of Acts. Next it's Colossians. After that, Song of Solomon. Every Sunday, the BIBLE on this stage.

Then we go to life groups. Life groups are "life together in the Word." This week and next Sunday, groups will take a deeper dive into the meaning and application of the biblical text.

Then there's the Bible reading plan which, this semester, includes a devotional book.

Then there are discipleship groups. Those are multi-generational and have a start and stop date, but the Bible is at the center of every group, and we work through a 3-year curriculum plan for all of the Christian life.

Simply put, Beech Haven is set up well so that all the Lord gives us can be devoted to the teaching of the Bible.

Devoted to Community

The unwavering church is not only devoted to the teaching of God's Word, but also to caring for one another. Look again at v. 42.

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

If the Covid era taught us anything, it's that ***we cannot take for granted the privilege of living among other Christians.***¹

But we didn't need a pandemic to teach us how valuable community is for the Christian life. Everything related to the Christian life is intended to be done in community. Christianity is by

¹ Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*

nature a community religion. Community life is not an option for a Christian, but a basic aspect of Christianity.

Now in the text, you can see how this commitment to spiritual communalism initially played itself out. Hospitality, meeting one another's needs, regular participation in worship ... These are the practices of a church devoted to community.

And so we, too, at Beech Haven, must be devoted to community in the church. This is why we spill outside between both services once a month to share a bit of food and drinks together. This is why we are praying and working toward adding nearly 10 new life groups over the next 4 years. This is why we offer a mid-week meal and ministry programming for everyone. It's why we have a fund called "the Christian Concern Fund" ... a place for our folks to donate so that we can discreetly and respectfully meet the financial needs of those in our church.

On and on I could go, but know this: ***In an organized and strategic way, your church is passionate about giving you every opportunity to know and be known ... to be devoted to community.***

Yet being devoted to community should not only come through formal programs or top-down leadership; it happens when God's people take ownership of life together in ordinary, intentional ways. In our day, that might look like a group of men grabbing lunch once a week, young moms meeting for coffee while their kids play, or students lingering over ice cream after school and reminding one another of the gospel. It might be a handful of friends sending prayer texts, hopping on a quick video chat, or neighbors opening their porch for anyone in the church family who wants to drop by. These rhythms aren't about filling a calendar with activities—they're about weaving the presence of Christ into the everyday, so that fellowship, encouragement, and accountability become part of the natural fabric of our lives.²

Devoted to Worship

The unwavering church is not only devoted to the teaching of the Bible and community, but also worship. Look at the rest of v. 42.

The prayers mentioned here were not private ones, but public ones like those in our service or in life groups. And the breaking of bread here is not the same as the hospitality referenced in vv. 43ff, but about Communion ... about the Lord's Supper ... about commemorating the death of Jesus. Overall, this is about a devotion to worship ... a devotion to worship. So, let me say very quickly just a few things about this.

First, let's be sure to express our devotion to worship by being ready to worship.

- On the drive over, start thinking about the holiness of God. Start thinking about the depth of your sin. And start thinking about how miraculous and gracious the cross of Jesus is. If that's on your mind as you drive in, you won't enter this space as a consumer ... you'll enter as a worshipper.

² Derived from Trevin Wax, <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/trevin-wax/early-church-always-together/>

- And remember that all of worship matters. The singing and prayers are not the tail-gate party to the game (the preaching). They are an integral part of biblical worship, and we'd do well to not be OK with just making it on time for the sermon. That's not good.
 - (SLIDE) Look at what Paul says in Colossians 3:16 about this – **Let the word of Christ dwell richly among you, in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another through psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts.**
 - So, participating in all of worship is the only right expression of a church devoted to worship.

(THIS SLIDE AGAIN) They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to prayer.

Second, with regard to public prayer, if you've been coming for a few months, you'll remember that we've been experimenting in our public worship with a set time of prayer. Those prayers have been based in Scripture passages and largely reflect the structure of the Lord's prayer, but it's mostly been one person talking and the rest of us with our heads down. But after some prayer and thought, we're going to push that envelope a little bit starting next Sunday. I'll be inviting us to come take a knee here at the steps or to go stand with someone you want to pray for or to take a knee where you are ... basically asking you to take some physical posture of prayer. And while that time will still be led, it will include an opportunity for you to pray with that person you went to be with or silently. But we are going to be investing in public prayer on Sunday mornings.

Lastly, think about this phrase – “They devoted themselves to the Lord's Supper.” The foundation of Christian community is the cross. Who Jesus is and what He's done at the cross is what determines the nature of our *koinonia* ... our fellowship ... our community.

You know, one of the things I love most about the church is the strange mix of people Jesus puts under one roof. On any given Sunday you've got Tennessee Volunteer fans sitting next to Alabama fans—miracles do still happen. You've got folks who love Fox News and folks who prefer NPR. You've got people who drink their coffee black and others who think coffee is just a vehicle for sugar and heavy cream. You've got people who show up on time, and you have people who show up on their time. You've got people who clap on beat and people who clap on... well, a different beat.

Paul says in Galatians 3:28, “*There is no Jew or Greek, slave or free, male and female; since you are all one in Christ Jesus.*” Our identity is in Christ, and therefore the cross is at the center of our community. Our community is not based on our sharing the same preferences, politics, or playlists, but because we share the same Savior. The cross of Jesus levels the ground, and that's what makes this community possible.

The bread and the cup are simple, but they point to a reality that is eternal: Christ is present with His people, and His sacrifice unites us. So just as the first church gathered often to break bread in His name, we now come to the table as one people, trusting His promise and proclaiming His death until He comes.

Let us prepare our hearts to take it together.

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