

Acts 2:42-47: COMMON PRIORITIES (GOOD): COMMON PROPERTY (BAD) PART #1

The first public witness to the Gospel by the twelve resulted in the salvation of about 3000 souls (Acts 2:14-41). In view of their native-country-destinations, these converts were enough to evangelize the entire Mediterranean world. These most likely are more converts than Jesus experienced; they represent the “greater works” that Christ prophesized in John 14:12. But before they could go home, they needed teaching and indoctrination: Luke explains the process in verse 42.

I. 2:42 FOUR COMMON PRIORITIES in the Early Church

Expositional note: all verbs in this paragraph (vs. 42-47) are imperfect tenses (past linear action): Luke by this choice is telling us that these believers persisted in the action described (“kept on action” would be a good translation) and that time was passing, moving forward: these were not just occasional occurrences nor momentary highs!

A. They persistently gave themselves to _____.

1. “Doctrine” translates διδασκαλία / didache: this word normally refers to the “act of teaching,” but it can refer to the subject matter taught (2 Timothy 4:2).
2. They were totally engaged in the Apostles’ teaching, which no doubt was very soteriological in nature of this time.

Apostolic teaching was authoritative and by the end of the first century took shape in the New Testament: today we look there for the mind of the Apostles.

3. Doctrine (didache or didaskalia) is the emphasis of Paul’s pastoral Epistles.

1 Timothy 1:6; 4:1,6,13,16; 5:17; 6:1, 3
2 Timothy 3:10, 16; 4:2 (didache), 3
Titus 1:9 (didache, 1st, didaskalia, 2nd); 2:1, 7, 10.

Didaskalia emphasizes subject matter, that which is taught, in most of its uses.

B. They persistently gave themselves to _____.

“Fellowship” translates κοινοβία / koinonia which means “to share in common.” Here the sharing has to do with what they had learned of the Apostles’ Doctrine.

They discovered help, meaningfulness, forgiveness of sins, Godly priorities in the Apostles’ Doctrine; then they shared in common what they had learned.

In the Greek text the Apostles Doctrine and the fellowship are linked in couplet.

C. They persistently gave themselves to _____ (the Lord's table).

The Lord's Table, "breaking bread" is referred to in Acts 2:42, 46; 20:7,11; 1 Cor. 10:16 & 11:24: it was very much a part of Apostolic teaching and fellowship.

The Lord's Table is (1 Cor. 11:23-34):

- 1) A Memorial; "this do in remembrance of me"
- 2) A Corporate Pronouncement: "As often...ye (plural) do proclaim..."
- 3) A Place of Self Examination: "Let every man examine himself and so let him eat of that bread"

D. They persistently gave themselves to _____.

"Prayer" translates προσευχαις / proseuchais (noun form 37 times in N.T.; verb form 87 times). The definite article with "prayer" indicates specific prayers, most likely those relative to the synagogal ritual (as per 3:1).

Prayer was very much a part of this dynamic fellowship: some public prayer, much private prayer.

II. 2:43 AN EFFECT OF THIS CORPORATE ACTIVISM

"Reverential fear, awe kept coming upon every soul" (in the fellowship and upon many outside the fellowship!).

Conclusion: Zeal, concern, responsiveness, activism, a sense of purpose and direction felt throughout the ranks, a *spirit d'corps* filled the early church!

NEXT WEEK: THIS CORPORATE CONSCIOUSNESS AND ZEAL PRODUCED OR EVENTUATED IN A COMMUNITY OF GOODS WHICH HAD LONG RANGE NEGATIVE REPERCUSSIONS. NEXT WEEK; VOLUNTARY COMMUNISM IN THE EARLY CHURCH: WHY IT WAS A MISTAKE.