

PURPOSE

The purpose of this study guide is to facilitate the study of Acts 2:42-47 as a supplement to the sermon. It is based on my (Michael's) study and meditation on the passage. This handout can be used for personal study or community group conversation. (I hope you join a group!)

ACTS 2:42-45 ESV

42 And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. 43 And awe 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.

STRUCTURE

- I. Devotion of the blessed church (2:42)
 - a. Devotion to Biblical Teaching
 - b. Devotion to Fellowship
 - c. Devotion to Communion
 - d. Devotion to Corporate Prayer
- II. Blessings of the devoted church (2:43-47)
 - a. Awe at signs and wonders (2:43)
 - b. No needy persons (2:44-45)
 - c. Supernatural joy (2:46)
 - d. Daily salvations (2:47)

GENERAL COMMENTARY:

In 2:1-13, we observed how the outpouring of the Spirit on Pentecost established a new temple community. In Peter's sermon (2:14-41), he explains the events of Pentecost, which the Lord uses to add three thousand souls to their number in a single day. This massive number is a firstfruits of a global harvest.

Fortunately, Jesus doesn't save people without discipling them. Nor does He save them and leave them isolated. He saves them by adding them to the church, the Spirit-filled community, where discipleship happens. Locationally, the community gathers in the temple and in homes. This will continue until Acts 8, after the death of Stephen, when the temple will violently reject them, scattering them to the four winds (which helps fulfill the Great Commission to be a witness to all nations).

The passage begins with action—ours, not God's. The Spirit-filled church is devoted to four activities (2:42), which Luke presents as the fountainhead of blessings in 2:43-47. Everybody wants to say, "If the church just does x, it will be blessed!"—but we already have the blueprint for success in God's eyes. The church is not held responsible for what God does ("wonders and signs", 2:43; supernatural joy, 2:46; favor, 2:47; daily salvations, 2:47), but we are held responsible for what we devote ourselves to. A blessed church is devoted to the biblical instruction, sharing of life (and resources), communion, and corporate prayer.

Verses 43-47 not only present to us the blessings God grants to the devoted church, but they also expand upon the four devotions of the church. Fellowship, for instance, is portrayed as lavish generosity and house-to-house hospitality (2:44-46) and communion is understood to be "day by day" inside of homes, probably around a meal (2:46). (More on "breaking of bread" as verbiage depicting communion below.)

VERSE-BY-VERSE COMMENTARY:

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

—"And":

- The "three thousand souls" that responded positively to Peter's exhortation did not just raise their hand, receive salvation, and go home; they were "added" to the church. "And" continues the thought. The following section details what they did once "added" to the community.
- The connective word "And" begins not only verse 42, but also verses 43 (about awe, signs, and wonders), 44 (about sharing possessions), 45 (about selling and distributing possessions), 46 (about meeting and eating), 47b (about God adding to their number). The point of the word is to show that community flowed out of salvation (41-42), and the blessings of community flowed out of mutual devotion to the same things (42-47).

—"devoted":

- "continually devoting themselves" (NASB)
- The same word (Gk. *proskarterio*) was used in 1:14 to depict the pre-Pentecost gathering of saints, "continually devoting themselves with one mind to prayer" (NASB).
- The same Greek word is used twice in this passage:
 - "And they **devoted** themselves to..."
 - "Day by day, **attending** the temple together..."
- The word always carries the sense of persevering or continuing in an act to which you are deeply committed.

—"apostles' teaching... fellowship... breaking of bread... prayers":

- These four things are what every church should be "devoted" to. These four things are the behaviors that characterized the early church in its blessed state.
- The early church didn't have occasional Apostolic teaching; it didn't occasionally fellowship; it didn't occasionally partake in Communion; it didn't occasionally pray. It continually did all these things.
- It seems that the four blessings of 2:43-47 are connected to the four devotions of 2:42. Some of the links are more obvious than others, but all are relevant.
 - Apostles' teaching, Apostles' signs and wonders / awe
 - Fellowship, no needy persons
 - Breaking bread, communion joy and favor
 - Prayer, daily salvations
 - Of the above connections, the last one is the least obvious. The link would have been more obvious if Luke had said, "They were devoted to witnessing.... And the Lord was adding to their number daily." Yet, the connection is still there—strongly. The blessing of salvations in Acts 2 is most directly a result of prayer in Acts 1. The 3000 were saved not first because of Peter's preaching, but because of the prayers of the 120.

—"apostles' teaching":

- Teaching was a primary role of Apostles. Acts 6:4: "we will devote ourselves to the ministry of the word and prayer." I am reminded of Jesus's three questions for Peter: "Do you love Me? Feed My sheep" (John 21).
- The people were not casual about the Apostles' teaching, they were continually devoted to it. They attended to it, believed in it, and they applied it.
- Christians seeking to apply this devotional blueprint to their own lives will do so in the following ways:
 - This would first apply to our devotion to Scripture. The Apostles taught from the Old Testament and they wrote the New. Christians who emulate the early church will devote themselves to the Scripture.
 - Second, we will devote ourselves to the Scripture before the other practices. Our fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayers are meaningless if devoid of truth or if devoted to half-truths.
 - Third, we will devote ourselves to human leaders who teach the Scriptures. I don't think we can avoid this element. Luke is giving us a snapshot of the first Spirit-filled community. It had leaders. Faithfulness submits itself to human leaders who are themselves submitted to and devoted to the Scripture. We can't just be floating around. We must have a spiritual overseer to whom we are devoted.

- Stott: "new converts were not enjoying a mystical experience which led them to despise their mind or disdain theology. Anti-intellectualism and the fullness of the Spirit are mutually incompatible, because the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth. Nor did those early disciples imagine that, because they had received the Spirit, he was the only teacher they needed and they could dispense with human teachers."

—"fellowship":

- They were devoted to one another. "Fellowship" means literally a "sharing of life." For Christians, the word "life" is rife with meaning. We share our eternal life-in-Christ.
- Stott: "Thus koinonia (Greek word for fellowship) is a trinitarian experience; it is our common share in God, Father, Son, and Spirit. But second, koinonia also expresses what we share out together, what we give as well as what we receive.... Koinonikos is the Greek word for generous."
- 2 Cor. 8:5: "They gave themselves first to the Lord, and then to us, in keeping with God's will." It is impossible to give yourself to the Lord without also giving yourself to the Lord's people. Church fellowship is the tangible expression of divine fellowship. Notably, the context of this verse, as in Acts, is that the fellowship expresses itself in financial sharing (2 Cor. 8:4, "koinonea").
- The practical outworking for these is the sharing of possessions. Where your treasure is, there your heart is. Are you sharing your possessions in any meaningful way with your congregation? If so, then you are giving them a portion of your heart. If not, you are withholding your heart from those around you. Fellowship is not just ice cream socials and football games; it's the sharing of life, including finances. At least six of twenty references to "koinonia" in the NT relate to sharing finances. Sometimes the word is translated as "sharing" or "contribution". The significance of this is that fellowship (in the normal sense of the word) cannot be had without fellowship (sharing of finances).
- They spent time together day after day. This does not necessarily mean that every single person spent every single day in the temple or in someone else's home. It at least means that the church collectively offered gatherings every day.

—"breaking of bread":

- This means more than just sharing a meal together. If that's all it meant, then "breaking of bread" would be subsumed beneath "fellowship." After all, what is "fellowship" if we never eat meals together? "breaking of bread" is more, however, which is why Luke separates it from "fellowship" as a distinct category.
- Reasons "breaking of bread" should be considered more than just a meal; it is sharing communion together also.
 - I already listed this above, but I'll say it again: Luke differentiates it from mere fellowship, marking it as distinct from general meals together.
 - "breaking of bread" is preceded by "the", which suggests it is part of a ritual. In other words, it's not just that some folks broke bread together; more than that, they joined for THE breaking of bread.
 - In a parallel passage, Acts 20, Luke depicts communion as a sort of "new Passover." Jerusalem has by this point become too hostile for Paul's return and he remains in Troas for Passover, where he breaks bread with Gentile believers on the first day of the week and God raises Eutychus from the dead. Suddenly, Passover is no longer just Jewish, no longer just in Jerusalem, and furthermore, it carries with it the resurrection power of Jesus. In short, "breaking of bread" seems, for Luke, to represent communion as the "new Passover" for Christians. Indeed, Jesus instituted communion during a Passover meal, as He would soon become our "Passover Lamb," sacrificed for sins (1 Cor. 5:7).
 - This would also make sense of why the disciples recognized Jesus's identity after He broke bread (Lk. 24:35). It is context of communion with Jesus at the table that He opens our spiritual eyes to His presence.
 - The church has historically understood Acts 2:42 to be about communion (although there are some detractors today who think it only refers to eating food together—a product of the times in my opinion).
- In the first century, the standard practice was to share communion very regularly. This has also been the practice throughout church history.
 - Acts 2:46. "Day by day... breaking bread in their homes."
 - Acts 20:7: "On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread..."
- In the first century, communion was practiced around a meal, just like Passover. It was tied to "the fellowship." They broke bread around the table in a fellowship meal. But it was also the basis of that

fellowship, bringing together Jew and Greek, male and female, slave and free. We are all one in Christ Jesus.

- Gradually, the church began practicing communion with a small piece of bread and sip of wine. Besides practical reasons (for larger gatherings), the church reasoned that small portions would symbolically portray the meal as an “appetizer” that finds consummation in the wedding supper of the Lamb.
- Some Christians conclude that communion should only be shared over a meal because that’s how it was originally practiced. I appreciate the reasoning, but such a hardline stance would remove one from most fellowships, thus breaking the second “devotion” of the early church: “fellowship.” I think it is better to adopt the practice of John Wesley, who sought to practice communion at least two or three times a week, in various sorts of gatherings. He used the word “constantly” to depict our practice of the Eucharist, and he objected to the word “frequently,” lest some define that word too loosely and sporadically. It is reasonable to deduce that being “devoted” to communion means practicing it at least weekly.
- Svigel: “Many in the early church associated coming to the Table with Romans 12 and offering our bodies as living sacrifices ... reaffirming our commitment to discipleship, and to the Christian life, and to one another. ... So in a sense in the early church, there was an altar call every week at the end of the service. There was a Table call to rededicate.”
- Schreiner: “they devoted themselves to the breaking of bread, which on the surface means eating together. However, in a formal list like this, it means more and points to the Eucharist.”
- Quotes from church history about communion:
 - The Didache: *“On every Lord’s Day – his special day – come together and break bread and give thanks...”*
 - Justin Martyr: *“Then we all rise together and pray, and, as we before said, when our prayer is ended, bread and wine and water [to dilute the wine] are brought, and the president in like manner offers prayers and thanksgivings, according to his ability, and the people assent, saying Amen; and there is a distribution to each, and a participation of that over which thanks have been given.”*
 - Augustine: *“Some partake daily of the body and blood of Christ, others receive it on stated days: in some places no day passes without the sacrifice being offered; in others it is only on Saturday and the Lord’s day, or it may be only on the Lord’s day.”* (Note: he doesn’t argue for whether it should be monthly or quarterly, but rather, daily or weekly!)
 - John Chrysostom: *“The celebration of the Lord’s Supper is the commemoration of the greatest blessing that ever the world enjoyed.”*
 - John Calvin: *“The custom which prescribes communion once a-year is an invention of the devil, For there cannot be a doubt that at that time the sacred Supper was dispensed to the faithful at every meeting; nor can it be doubted that a great part of them communicated. ... Each week, at least, the table of the Lord ought to have been spread for the company of Christians, and the promises declared on which we might then spiritually feed.”*
 - John Owen: Communion should be practiced *“Every first day of the week, or at least as often as opportunity and convenience may be obtained.”*
 - Thomas Watson: *“The sacrament is a visible sermon. And herein the sacrament excels the Word preached. The Word is a trumpet to proclaim Christ. The sacrament is a glass to represent Him.”* (I don’t agree that it “excels” the Word preached, but the quote does show that—despite what some claim—early Protestants held high views of Communion.)
 - John Wesley: *like the first Christians, with whom the Christian sacrifice was a constant part of the Lord’s-day service. And for several centuries they received it almost every day: Four times a week always, and every saint’s day beside. Accordingly, those that joined in the prayers of the faithful never failed to partake of the blessed sacrament. What opinion they had of any who turned his back upon it, we may learn from that ancient canon: “If any believer join in the prayers of the faithful, and go away without receiving the Lord’s Supper, let him be excommunicated, as bringing confusion into the church of God.”*

—“the prayers”

- That “prayers” is plural and preceded by an article, “the,” suggests that these were corporate prayers – part of the church’s liturgy. This does not suggest that they were formal or rehearsed; only that they were corporate and public.
- There are 24 references to prayer in Acts – enough for almost every chapter. Sometimes church members prayed alone, but usually the recorded instances are of corporate prayer. They prayed at

organized times ("the hour of prayer") and they prayed spontaneously. They prayed in the Temple, in homes, on a beach, by a river, in a jail, on a rooftop... basically, wherever they were. They prayed over people, they prayed for people, they prayed for themselves, they prayed for the outpouring of the Spirit. They prayed as a gathered leadership team, they prayed over those whom they led. They prayed at all hours of the day and night.

- God is not simply looking for "a church with a prayer time each week." Or even, "a church that prays corporately everyday." He is looking for a church where prayer is built into the fabric. If our church was a blanket, it would be sown together by threads of prayer. You might not see every thread on the granular level. You would only see the blanket. But it is constituted by those little threads. In the same way, prayer is the behind-the-scenes factor that creates the before-our-eyes component.

—Stott: "the church did not begin that day, and it is incorrect to call the Day of Pentecost 'the birthday of the church'. For the church as the people of God goes back at least four thousand years to Abraham. What happened at Pentecost was that the remnant of God's people became the Spirit-filled body of Christ. What evidence did it give of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit? Luke tells us in verses 42-47."

43 And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles.

—Lit: "Fear (Gk. *phobos*) was occurring to every soul"

—Instances of "phobos" in Luke-Acts:

- [Luk 1:12 ESV] 12 And Zechariah was troubled when he saw him, and **fear** fell upon him.
- [Luk 2:9 ESV] 9 And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with **great fear**.
- [Luk 5:26 ESV] 26 And amazement seized them all, and they glorified God and were filled with **awe**, saying, "We have seen extraordinary things today."
- [Luk 7:16 ESV] 16 **Fear** seized them all, and they glorified God, saying, "A great prophet has arisen among us!" and "God has visited his people!"
- [Luk 8:37 ESV] 37 Then all the people of the surrounding country of the Gerasenes asked him to depart from them, for they were seized with **great fear**. So he got into the boat and returned.
- [Luk 21:26 ESV] 26 people fainting with **fear** and with foreboding of what is coming on the world. For the powers of the heavens will be shaken.
- [Act 5:5, 11 ESV] 5 When Ananias heard these words, he fell down and breathed his last. And **great fear** came upon all who heard of it. ... 11 And **great fear** came upon the whole church and upon all who heard of these things.
- [Act 9:31 ESV] 31 So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace and was being built up. And walking in the **fear** of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it multiplied.
- [Act 19:17 ESV] 17 And this became known to all the residents of Ephesus, both Jews and Greeks. And **fear** fell upon them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was extolled.

—In Luke's writings "fear" is portrayed positively on every occasion except one (Lk. 21:26). It typically comes in response to a vision or miracle. Here it is connected to the "many wonders and signs" performed by the apostles.

—Fear/awe was a common emotive response to Jesus's ministry, as it was in the early church. Luke even portrays "fear" in one of his summary statements, meant to characterize the growth of the early church (Acts 9:31). A church that's growing in faith is likewise growing in fear—fear of God.

—Tim Keller defines the fear of God as, *"to be overwhelmed with wonder before the greatness of His love."* He bases his definition on verses like Pr. 28:14, Ps. 130:14, and Isa. 11:3, where the fear of God is associated with positive emotions like happiness and delight, and it is also considered the proper response to God's love and forgiveness.

—I am reminded of Mike Yaconelli's quote: *"We are afraid of unemployment, we are afraid of our cities, we are afraid of the collapse of our government, we are afraid of not being fulfilled, we are afraid of AIDS, but we are not afraid of God.... I would like to suggest that the Church become a place of terror again; a place where God continually has to tell us, 'Fear not'; a place where our relationship with God is not a simple belief or doctrine or theology, it is God's burning presence in our lives. I am suggesting that the tame God of relevance be replaced by the God whose very presence shatters our egos into dust, burns our sin into ashes, and strips us naked to reveal the real person within. The Church needs to become a gloriously dangerous place where nothing is safe in God's presence except us. Nothing—including our plans, our agendas, our priorities, our politics, our money, our security, our comfort, our possessions, our needs."*

—"many wonders and signs done through the apostles":

- “wonders and signs” remind us of Jesus’s earthly ministry, as depicted in 2:22. Now Jesus continues to minister, but from heaven, through His church (cf. 1:1).
- “wonders and signs” also remind us of 2:19, where Peter quotes the prophet Joel to explain Pentecost: “I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below...” At least the latter—“signs on the earth below”—are playing out through the apostles’ ministry.
- Just as the people devoted themselves to the Apostles’ teaching, the Apostles were the ones performing signs and wonders here. Luke is making a connection, given the close mention of apostles in 2:42 and 43. The connection appears to be this: the miracles of the apostles flowed out of the church’s devotion to the teaching of the apostles. This is the way 2:42ff reads. Blessing flows out of devotion. By way of application, God will pour out signs and wonders on the church that devotes itself to Scripture (including, of course, those parts of Scripture which insist that signs and wonders are for today).
- Miracles would ultimately expand beyond the apostolic circle. Stephen and Phillip—deacons—both perform miracles. Paul and Barnabas are called apostles, but they aren’t part of the original circle, and they too do miracles. God gifts miracles to the Galatian church and gifts of miracles to His church generally.
- Some insist that signs and wonders would be a distraction to the Gospel. Far from it, “signs” point to Jesus, and “wonders” inspire awe at His work. The church needs signs and wonders to properly instill the fear of God.
- “Every soul” and “many” shows just how widespread these phenomena were.

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.

—“All who had believed”: the 3000 who were just added. His way of saying they were saved is not that they were saved or made a decision to believe in Christ. He said they were “added to their number.” The idea of being born again and detaching from the fellowship was not the norm like it is in America. To be added to Christ’s family is to enter fellowship with that family. Salvation must be embodied. We can’t be spiritually attached to Christ’s body if we are more devoted to kids’ sports than “to the fellowship.” Chances are, we’re lying to ourselves about our union with Christ.

—“were together”:

- Part of fellowship is being physically together. “Committed” Christians in the West go to church twice a month. This is not biblical community.
- The word also means more than just being physically gathered, however. In addition, they gathered with “one mind” (2:46, NASB).

—“had all things in common... selling their property... possessions... sharing... as anyone might have need”

- This corresponds to Acts 2:42, “fellowship.” As we’ve been saying, there’s often a financial component to the word “fellowship.”
- Acts 4:32-5:11 tells a story of this happening. They didn’t just sell and give directly. They sold their possessions, brought them to the Apostles’ feet, and it was distributed from the top-down. There must be a willingness to entrust one’s finances to church leadership.
- The emphasis of what church leaders used money for was caring for the needy. This was to such a degree that in Acts 4:34, “there were no needy persons among them.”
- Schnabel: “Luke does not describe a community that denies the appropriateness of private property (as in a monastic order) nor does he propagate a world-denying ‘communism of love.’ Rather, Luke presents a pragmatic ethic concerning possessions in which the needs of the poor take center stage.”
- Schreiner, quoting Jennings: “Time, talent, and treasures, the trinity of possessions. Would feel the pull of this holy vortex.”

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.

—“Day by day”:

- They gave extreme amounts of money and extreme amounts of time. Their experience of God and each other was so rich because... they gave. Rich friendship with God and each other requires corporate sacrifice and devotion.
- One of the surest signs that someone is falling away from fellowship with the Lord is that they first withdraw from fellowship with His people.

- This phrase “day by day” is employed twice in two verses. Day by day, they gathered; day by day, people were saved. The relationship communicates that their frequent gatherings led to frequent salvations.
- Does this mean that people were saved in their gatherings? Or does it mean that they gathered to be filled up and then scattered to be sent out? We are not exactly told, but we do know that 3000 came to faith in a gathering. We also know that signs and wonders occurred through the apostles, which suggests that people came to faith as a result, as is often the case. Overall, it seems that people came to faith in the gatherings as they heard about the mighty move of God. Later, in Acts 8, people will come to faith not through the gatherings but through the scattering that resulted from persecution.

—“temple... homes”: big group, small group. Healthy church life includes both—not just one or the other (unless the church is small enough to fit in a home).

—“breaking bread in their homes”:

- Given the reference in 2:42, this breaking of bread again references communion. By Acts 20, the church is already practicing communion on the Lord’s Day in the corporate gathering, but in the earliest days, it was (perhaps in addition to the corporate gathering) daily and in peoples’ homes.
- This seems to resolve the question of how frequently we should practice communion. It should be very frequent. And we should not feel constrained by church services. Any Christian gathering can practice communion.
- People should be in our homes, and we should be in theirs, if there is true fellowship. True fellowship can’t be entirely centered upon a central location. It flows over into our personal lives.
- Not everyone sold all their possessions; generosity was voluntary. Many people still had homes.
- Schreiner: “Luke seems to have great interest in hospitality, and the phrase ‘from house to house’ supports this. Witherington... notes, ‘On many occasions Luke mentions a person’s name solely because he was a host to Peter or Paul or some other Christian missionary (cf. 9:43, Simon the tanner; 17:5-9, Jason; 21:8-9, Philip and his daughters, where the main concern is that Paul stayed with them). On two occasions we are given complete addresses of where Peter or Paul stayed (9:11—Judas, Strait Street, Damascus; 10:5-6—Simon the tanner’s house by the sea, Joppa).’ These details are not merely to historicize his work but to show the spread of the gospel occurred by means of hospitality.”

—“they received their food together”: true fellowship also involves the sharing of meals. There’s a major difference between sharing an elevator with someone for 60 floors and sharing a meal with someone for 60 minutes.

—“with glad and generous hearts”:

- “glad” is translated as “joy” in Lk. 1:14, 44; Heb. 1:9; Jude 1:24.
- “generous”: only occurs once in the NT. Here are the different translations of this one verse...
 - KJV: gladness and **singleness** of heart
 - NKJV: gladness and **simplicity** of heart
 - NIV: glad and **sincere** hearts
 - ESV: glad and **generous** hearts
 - CSB: joyful and **sincere** hearts
 - NASB: gladness and [fn]**sincerity** of heart (footnote: sincerity can be translated as **simplicity**)
 - Moulton and Milligan, from papyri examples, render it “unworldly simplicity” or “unalloyed benevolence”. I like this latter phrase because it captures both “sincerity” and “generosity.” The point is that their generosity is not begrudged; they are not devoting food and home while withholding their hearts; their external generosity matches internal desire.
- When God’s blessing rests upon a church, we should expect great joy and hospitality.

—“praising God and having favor with all the people”: There was a great sense of praise toward God that existed in the church, but it also spread from the church toward others.

— And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

- When we add to our own number, it’s like duct taping an appendage to a human being. Only the Lord can add to our number, and He does that by baptizing us in the Spirit to be part of His body at salvation. Only the Lord can open the heart like Lydia’s. Only the Lord can save. Only the Lord can add to His own body.
- Stott: “He did not add them to the church without saving them (no nominal Christianity at the beginning), nor did he save them without adding them to the church (no solitary Christianity either). Salvation and church membership belonged together; they still do.”
- In context, “the Lord” is Jesus. Jesus is the one adding to their number.

- Here are some other verses with the same Greek word for "added" (*prostithemi*):
 - [Act 5:14 ESV] 14 And more than ever believers were **added** to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women,
 - [Act 11:24 ESV] 24 for he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great many people were **added** to the Lord.
- Here is a different Greek word (*plethyno*), which communicates the same idea:
 - [Act 6:7 ESV] 7 And the word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples **multiplied** greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith.
 - [Act 7:17 ESV] 17 "But as the time of the promise drew near, which God had granted to Abraham, the people increased and **multiplied** in Egypt
 - [Act 9:31 ESV] 31 So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace and was being built up. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it **multiplied**.
 - [Act 12:24 ESV] 24 But the word of God increased and **multiplied**
- And another (Gk. *auxano*). This word also appears in some of the above texts:
 - [Act 19:20 ESV] 20 So the word of the Lord continued to **increase** and prevail mightily.
- Church growth is clearly characterized as a blessing of God. As a general rule, churches should grow in number, and they should grow by salvations. (I say, as a general rule, because there is such a thing as "hard ground.") There are also realities such as country churches with little possibility for growth.
- Schnabel: "The fellowship practiced in the private homes of believers had missionary consequences. The meetings of the believers in the temple and in their homes were so attractive that unbelievers started to attend. As individual people came to faith in Jesus Christ, the church grew numerically, at a regular pace."
- Stott: "On its own, verse 42 presents a very lopsided picture of the church's life. Verse 47b needs to be added: 'And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.' Those first Jerusalem Christians were not so preoccupied with learning, sharing, and worshipping that they forgot about witnessing. For the Holy Spirit is a missionary Spirit who created a missionary church."