

Context

- 1] Jesus had died and been raised to life during the festival of **Passover**
- 2] The next festival **Pentecost** (50 days later), His promised Holy Spirit was given
- 3] Following the 1st sermon by Peter 3000 received his word were baptised

*And they were continuing steadfastly in the **apostles teaching** and the **fellowship**, in the **breaking of bread** and the **prayers** (42)*

And a reverent fear came upon every soul (43a) and signs and wonders were being done by the apostles (43b)

And all who believed were together and had all things in common (44) and they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all as any had need (45)

And day by day, they were continuing steadfastly with one mind in the temple together and breaking bread in their home, they have received their food with glad and generous hearts praising God and having favour with all people. (46,47a)

And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved (47b)
(= more literal translation)

4 notable things in this passage

- 1] There are a series of statements beginning with the word ‘and’
- 2] vs 2:42 *And they devoted themselves to the apostles teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers* (42) gives succinct and complete statement of what the church should be devoted to.
- 3] Items in vs 42 are linked in pairs 1&2 , 3&4 with the word ‘and’
I.e. *the apostles teaching **and** the fellowship, to the breaking of bread **and** the prayers*
- 4] each of the four items in vs 42 is linked to one of the four ‘and’ statements in verses 43-47 associated with its **application**
I.e. *The apostles teaching (42) linked to ‘signs and wonders by the apostles’ (43)*
The fellowship (42) linked with ‘all believers had everything in common’ (44)
The breaking of bread (42) with ‘received their food with glad hearts’ (46)
The prayers (42) with ‘added to their number those who were being saved’ (47)

Intro

- 1] A ‘demo’ – and it is much easier to follow
- 2] this passage is a ‘demo’ of church life

KV *And they were continuing steadfastly in the apostles teaching **and** the fellowship, in the breaking of bread **and** the prayers* (42)

MP *The church should be devoted to*

- 1) *the Word of God **and** the nurture of His people together and*
- 2) *the example of Jesus **and** His mission to the world*

and they were continuing steadfastly

1] **they were continuing** (i.e. an ongoing process with no end stated, opposed to 'they continued' and then it finished)

nb v important – this is not about then but gives a model for now too

2] **Steadfastly** – nothing was going to deter them. These things were of prime importance

Cf No servant can serve two masters (Luke 16:13)

I.e. no excuse lack of time etc, etc.

3] **continuing steadfastly** repeated in vs 46

Cf From day to day continuing steadfastly with one mind in Temple and breaking bread in their homes (46)

In the apostles teaching and in the fellowship

1] **'Apostles teaching' (42)**

a) meaning

Proclamation of Jesus within the context of the Old Testament / the Word of God

Cf teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you (Mt 28:20)

nb Peter's sermon (2:13-26). Half of this sermon was quoting OT Scripture

cf the Word of God = the OT that Jesus accepted + the NT (the Apostolic teaching.)

?Are we wiser than the Apostles?

Cf Marcion - a renowned apostate in 2C who rejected OT and major portion of NT

God's Word is the Apostles teaching

b) application = **And fear came on every soul and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles (43)**

1) not 'awe' (word devalued) but fear 'phobos' (cf phobia)

Cf Acts 5:11; 9:31; 13:16,26; 16:29

Fear God with a reverent fear

2) wonders and signs were done through the Apostles

cf Jesus' sign and wonders (2:22) imitated by disciples; (4:30; 5:12; 6:8; 14:3; 15:12)

cf the complement as in Jesus ministry – the preaching of the Word of God & blessing of the Word of God - healings, miracles, deliverances etc

nb signs not definitive – 'For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform signs and wonders' (Mk 13:22)

God works / does signs and wonders, through His people.

Expect wonders and signs as you pursue His mission

2] **The fellowship (42)**

a) meaning – sharing together

nb Fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ (1 Jn 1:3)

The fellowship of the Holy Spirit (2 Cor 13:14)

cf Koinonikos = generous

The church should be a community of very generous people

b) application = ***And all who believed were together and had all things in common (44) and they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all as any had need (45)***

cf by this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another (Jn13:35)

nb - rarely in church history has this type of communal living been practiced over generations

Love your fellow brothers and sisters.

***The apostles teaching and the fellowship = The Word of God
AND the nurture of His people together.***

In the breaking of bread and the prayers

1] The breaking of bread (42)

a) meaning

1) This was a cultural expression for eating together

nb every meal started with thanksgiving to God and the breaking up of a loaf of bread

2) Jesus had adopted the ritual the night before His death as He gave the church a memorial of His death

cf this is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me' (Lk 22:19)

b) application = ***And day by day, they were continuing steadfastly with one mind in the temple together and breaking bread in their home, they have received their food with glad and generous hearts praising God and having favour with all people. (46,47a)***

1) in Temple and in homes

nb Peter and John were going up to the Temple at the hour of prayer (3:1)

Cf the believers met in Solomon's colonnade (Acts 5:12) round outside of Temple, c 5000 (4:4), not associating with sacrifices

Nb Apostles taught Temple and house to house (Acts 5:42)

(sacrificial function of Temple fulfilled cf tearing of the curtain (Mt 27:51))

Devote yourself to meeting with God's people

2) Breaking of bread cf Jesus

Nb by Jesus (Lk 22:19; 24:35); by the church (Acts 20:7,11; 27:35)

JESUS Note Jesus people broke bread in remembrance of Him

3) Breaking bread = a proclamation

Nb as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes (1Cor 11:26)

? Who is that proclamation to / for?

4) Enjoying favour of all people

Live praising God and you will enjoy the favour of others in general

2] The prayers (42)

a) meaning

1) plural (?) –

cf all these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with... (Acts 1:14)

2) the issue – the work of the Holy Spirit now upon them

Cf you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea, and Samaria and to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8)

b) Application = ***and the Lord added to their number day by day, those who were being saved (Acts 2:47)***

1) The Lord added

Nb the success of evangelism is to the Lord's credit alone

GRACE The Lord adds to the number of believers those who He is saving

2) those being saved

cf (2:21,40)

nb saved from sin, death and hell – not about church membership etc

****Pray for the salvation of others****

The breaking of bread and the prayers = The truth of Jesus's sacrifice for us and His mission to the world

Conclusion

1] The church should be devoted to

a) the Word of God **and** the nurture of His people together and

b) the truth of Jesus **and** His mission to the world

2] Pray that the Lord will add daily to our number those who He is saving.