



### **ACTS 2:42-47**

<sup>42</sup> All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord's Supper), and to prayer.

<sup>43</sup> A deep sense of awe came over them all, and the apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders. <sup>44</sup> And all the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had. <sup>45</sup> They sold their property and possessions and shared the money with those in need. <sup>46</sup> They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity— <sup>47</sup> all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved.

### **ACTS 4:31-37**

<sup>31</sup> After this prayer, the meeting place shook, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit. Then they preached the word of God with boldness.

<sup>32</sup> All the believers were united in heart and mind. And they felt that what they owned was not their own, so they shared everything they had. <sup>33</sup> The apostles testified powerfully to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and God's great blessing was upon them all. <sup>34</sup> There were no needy people among them, because those who owned land or houses would sell them <sup>35</sup> and bring the money to the apostles to give to those in need.

<sup>36</sup> For instance, there was Joseph, the one the apostles nicknamed Barnabas (which means "Son of Encouragement"). He was from the tribe of Levi and came from the island of Cyprus. <sup>37</sup> He sold a field he owned and brought the money to the apostles.

### **Group Bible Study/Discussion:**

1. Read Acts 2:42-47 & 4:31-37. What questions immediately come to mind? What do you hear God say to you as you read it a few times to yourself? Does your familiarity with either of these texts interfere with you hearing then in a new light? What do you find to be the most important in these readings? Why?
2. Why would the four areas of "devotion" mentioned in 2:42 be so critical in the life of a fellowship of disciples? What do you lose when you skip any of those areas? Are there areas where you are not as "devoted" as you might otherwise be?
3. Which of the four things in 2:42 do you find is the easiest for you to be devoted to? Why? Which is the hardest? Why?
4. How else did the early church express community life in practical ways? What would you need to do to imitate that early gathering of disciples? How would your life need to change? What do you think would happen?
5. Read Romans 12:9-15 & Hebrews 10:23-25. What elements of Christian community are evidenced in these passages? Do you experience the Christian church that way here at Living Water? If not, what can you do to make a change for the better?
6. What obstacles get in the way of your devotion to community life & deeper engagement with other believers? How can we live free from being slaves to the individualism of our culture & the sense of isolation it breeds?
7. This early Christian fellowship included entering into other people's pain, suffering, & hardship to help shoulder their burdens. How is that different than our normal use & expectation of the word "fellowship"? Why are contemporary Christians reluctant to either share their burdens or assume a share in the burdens of others?
8. Have you ever witnessed someone going to great lengths to care for someone else's needs? What was that like for you to observe? Would you be willing to do that from someone outside your natural family?
9. What are you doing right now that's causing relationships to deepen? What are you doing that's keeping them from deepening?
10. Which do you most lack: consistent community with other believers in worship or community with others in your homes? What will you do about it? Who do you know who lacks a good experience of Christian community? How can your group help them to experience it?
11. What aspect of life in the early church is most attractive to you? Why? How can you begin to live that way & invite others to join you?