

15th May 2016

## Worship in the early church

### Read Acts 2:42-47 Ephesians 5: 15-21

Acts 2: 42ff is a delightful summary of the life and worship of the earliest Christian community. There are a few of these 'summary cameos' throughout the narrative of Acts. (Cf. Acts 4:32-35)

1. 'The church did not begin on the Day of Pentecost. The church as the People of God goes back 4000 years to Abraham. What happened at Pentecost was that the remnant of God's people became the Spirit-filled Body of Christ.' (John Stott) Discuss.
2. From these verses, if you had been part of this early Christian community what would have struck you most?
3. Everything about this community was Jesus-centred, starting with their devotion to the apostle's teaching (the guardians of the tradition of Christ). What do you think being devoted to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship should look like for us?
4. In verses 42 and 46 what do you think is meant by 'the breaking of bread'? Using other scriptures, what was its significance and what can it teach us?
5. The generosity of this early community is striking. How voluntary was this sharing and what challenge does it pose for us?
6. The worship Luke depicts here has a delightful balance to it – focussed on learning but also experiencing; formal and yet informal, joyful and yet reverent; concerned for the quality of their life but outward looking. Where do you think as a church we are in danger of being unbalanced. (You may want to drop the elders an email with your answer).
7. All we read here came through the lives of these earliest followers of Jesus being powerfully filled with the Spirit. How as individuals and as a church can we experience a Spirit-filled life?
8. What should be our guide shaping the church – the blueprint of the past or the heavenly vision of the Bride of Christ in the future?

