

DISCIPLINES BUILDING COMMUNITY

talk it
over

KEY SCRIPTURE

Acts 2.42-47

PURSUE GOD

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

"They devoted themselves..." In the Greek the word used for devoted is, *proskartereō*, and comes from the words *pros*, which means moving a direction towards something, and *kartereō*, meaning to be strong. So the word *proskartereō* is more than mere devotion to a task, or an objective. Their devotion was a force where everyone was moving in the same direction. And as they moved they endured with each other in patience, and in their resolve to know Jesus and to make Him known. They weren't a simple group of people devoted to some fantasy idea of community. They had been radically changed by the power of the Holy Spirit, and now their daily devotion was to His disciplines and being His disciples. Disciples whose disciplines would lead others into salvation. They learned about Jesus and His way together, they did life together, they ate and prayed together. And none of this was natural for them. Humanity does not naturally live in close, forgiving, peaceful relationships. We are fundamentally selfish. Selfish with our time, our energy, and our resources. Selfish with our ways, and how we want things done. And the natural impulse is for us to use others to get what we want, or to be used by others so they get what they want. But this group was different, and God's grace changes everything. The resurrected Jesus changes everything. It changed how they read and received God's disciplines. It changed how and when they gathered. It even changed who they ate with, and how they prayed. And it was all because Jesus changes the trajectory of life, and His grace shifts how we function in our day-to-day. It changes how we relate to others, and sets us free to participate in His purpose with His people. And the only reason we can be devoted to Him and to others is because He was first devoted to us.

LOVE LIFE

Where is your devotion? Who is your devotion to?

Is it in self-promotion? Self-preservation?

Or are you willing and able to help sustain others?