

WARM-UP

- What are some of your favorite group activities?
- Do you consider yourself introverted or extroverted? How do you respond when you are put in an uncomfortable situation?
- Tell us about your go-to group—those you usually communicate with and are quick to update. How did you become friends?

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

ACTS 2:42

(Read also **ACTS 2:43–47**.)

Imagine being one of Jesus' first disciples and part of the early church. That unlikely bunch went through so much together—from being called to follow Jesus to His death, resurrection, and ascension, to being filled with the Holy Spirit. Now, their group—the church, the called-out ones—was growing by the day. This must have been both exciting and disconcerting. They just kept following Jesus, their lives were changed, and they were about to change the world. They were called and commissioned by God for a purpose that could only be accomplished together. This was always God's design for the church—an assembling or gathering of people. In this lesson, we will look at their shared experiences as a community and their results.

1 | The early church gathered together.

And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. ACTS 2:42

The disciples—old and new—devoted themselves to what mattered most: knowing God and being in community. They made an effort to gather and grow together. Why do you think this is important? What do you think will happen if we lose this?

2 | The early church experienced God together and through one another.

⁴³And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. ⁴⁴And all who believed were together and had all things in common. ⁴⁵And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. ⁴⁶And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts . . . ACTS 2:43-46

As they devoted themselves to God, they experienced God's power and miracles. They were consistent in this, and God consistently met them (Matthew 18:20). As a community, they experienced God through each other by helping each other know God and His word, sharing lives with one another, and meeting one another's needs. How do you think our church can learn from the experience of the early church?

3

The early church found favor in the community around them.

... praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved. ACTS 2:47

Our experiencing God as a community does not only grow us spiritually, but also results in others coming to know God as well. Because they reflected God, the early church had favor with their community. As a result, more people came to know God every day. As part of the Church today, how are we reaping the benefits of what the early church did? What is the Church's role among the watching world today?

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APPLICATION

- How much priority do you give to gathering together as a church? How can you express that through your words and actions every week?
- In which community or communities have you experienced God? How has this community helped you in your spiritual growth? How have you helped others in their walk with God?
- What is your prayer for your local church and for the universal Church?

