

ACTS 2:42-47 (NASB)

⁴²They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. ⁴³Everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles. ⁴⁴And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common; ⁴⁵and they *began* selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need. ⁴⁶Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, ⁴⁷praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.

ACTS 4:32-35 (NASB)

³²And the congregation of those who believed were of one heart and soul; and not one of *them* claimed that anything belonging to him was his own, but all things were common property to them. ³³And with great power the apostles were giving testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and abundant grace was upon them all. ³⁴For there was not a needy person among them, for all who were owners of land or houses would sell them and bring the proceeds of the sales ³⁵and lay them at the apostles' feet, and they would be distributed to each as any had need.

REVIEW

As the Christian movement continued, it stirred onlookers and new converts to embrace a *power* that healed their community as well as their hearts. No longer would competition and self-preservation guide each household. Now a new and singular heart was beating within *them all*. With their devotion to the regular practices of learning, fellowship, hospitality, and prayer, they grew as a family—a family that God would use to change the world *forever*.

STUDY IT

- Why was there such a sense of awe among the people? (2:43)

- What did it mean to have all things in common? Is this still the practice of God's church? Why/why not? (2:44; 4:32-35)
- What was the purpose of the people selling their possessions? (2:45; also 4:34)
- How might one's expressed *need* impact a community? (4:34)
- In 2:46, the people had "one mind." In 4:32, they had "one heart and soul." What do these phrases mean?
- How was God using their *oneness*?
- Why were the people have been "praising God"?
- What was the benefit of the church having *favor* with all the people? (2:47)
- **GO DEEPER:** Some commentators see chapters 2 and 4 as parallels to describe the pattern of preaching → power → favor → growth (revival). But in chapter 4, *favor* is replaced by *persecution*. Despite this, the early church experienced more power and growth. Why do you think that is?

APPLY IT

- Can you think of an example of a time when you felt the joy of *togetherness*? What was that like?
- How might someone's attitudes toward possessions and belongings affect their commitment to a community?
- How about you? How do your thoughts toward possessions and "your stuff" affect your sense of connection with others?
- Luke tells us that the people were glad and sincere in heart, meaning they were *enjoying one another*. How do you *enjoy* being *together* with others? What – if anything – gets in the way?
- What would you ask of God to help you experience more joy in your community?