

I. Witness - Fellowship of the Believers

Introduction:

What did the first church look like? The parking lot held chariots instead of cars. There was neither coffee nor donuts in the hallways (these were 9th and 19th-century inventions). There were neither pianos nor guitars on the stage (these were renaissance inventions). Still, the four essential elements were there: “the apostles’ teaching,” “fellowship,” “the breaking of bread” and “prayer” (Acts 2:42). Two-thousand years ago, the church was reading and preaching Scriptures, still building relationships, still sharing the Lord’s Supper, and still praying the Lord’s Prayer. Two-thousand years later, we still are.

The first church didn’t stop there. The first Christians “had everything in common” (Acts 2:44). They even “sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need” (Acts 2:45). They met together “every day,” “broke bread in their homes,” and “ate together” (Acts 2:46). Importantly, “the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved” (Acts 2:47).

I am grateful for cars, coffee, and contemporary music and I hope we harness these modern inventions for the cause of Christ. Even more so, I hope we have *unity* in Christ—the kind of unity that gives generously to those in need, hosts dinners in each other’s homes, and adds to our number daily those who are being saved. That’s the unity the first church had.

Read Your Bible

- John 17:20-23
- Acts 2:42-47

Apply God’s Word to Your Life:

1. Who are the people with whom you share the most in common?
2. In John 17:22, Jesus prays that we “may be brought to complete unity.” What do you think “complete unity” means?
3. According to Jesus in John 17:23, why does church unity matter?
4. What are the four elements of church in Acts 2:42? Where do you see these four elements in church today?
5. Which of these four is your favorite? Why?
6. What do you think it means to have “everything in common” (Acts 2:44)?
7. Would you sell your own “property and possessions to give to anyone who had need” in your church (Acts 2:45)? Why or why not?
8. Imagine a church where “the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved” (Acts 2:47). What is it like? How can you participate in making this your reality?

Reflecting on the text:

1. What have you learned about God?
2. What have you learned about the world?
3. What have you learned about yourself?

Pray

Gracious God, make us one, as the Father and Son are one. Bring your church to complete unity, that the world may see Your love for them in our love for each other. Help us to open ourselves, our homes, and our schedules to those around us. In Jesus' name, Amen.