

ViralStJames Bible Study #5: Pentecost Part 2

The Background: Pentecost – New Lives, New Landscapes

Acts 2:42-47

Here we have the earliest description of the early church, filled with the Spirit, meeting together in Jerusalem in both the Temple Courts and in people's homes. Although the church soon hit problems as it expanded beyond Judea and into the Roman Empire (as Paul's letters make clear) this first account can still help us reflect on what the priorities and practices for a church could be like.

The Passage

Acts 2:42 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

Acts 2:43 Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. ⁴⁴ All who believed were together and had all things in common; ⁴⁵ they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. ⁴⁶ Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

The Questions

- 1) What four activities did the new believers devote themselves to? Should these still be the focus of the church today? Why is each important?
- 2) 'All the believers were together' (v43). Why is unity in the church important?
- 3) In addition to the four activities identified earlier, the church was also characterised by generosity (v45) and see also Acts 4 32-36. Why do you think they saw this as important? How important do you think generosity should be in the church today?
- 4) Where did they meet together? (v46) Is it important to be able to meet both in public and in private? What about virtual meetings?
- 5) How does Luke describe their state of mind? (v46) Do you think a church acting like this would be attractive to other people? (v47)
- 6) Although the description of the early church here in Jerusalem appears idyllic, the idyll did not last long (Acts 8 1-3). How easy is it to be a 'church' displaying the characteristics seen in this passage when times get tough?
- 7) What do you take away from this reflection?

The Space for notes
