

The Early Life of the Church Acts 2:42

Thesis: To help us better understand the beginning of the church

Introduction:

- A. Notice the context of Acts 2:42 (1:1-2:41).
- B. As we go through these three things, we will make application for our lives today.

I. The early church followed the apostles' doctrine.

A. The doctrine that the apostles taught came directly from God.

- 1. The disciples did have certain authority on this earth.
 - a. **Mt. 16:19** - And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.
 - b. **Mt. 18:18** - Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.
- 2. However, with this authority, they were to speak only the things that Jesus had commanded them to speak.
 - a. **Mt. 10:27** (Jesus command to the disciples as He sent out the twelve) - Whatever I tell you in the dark, speak in the light; and what you hear in the ear, preach on the housetops.
 - b. **Mt. 28:18-20** - And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. {19} Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, {20} teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

B. The doctrine of the apostles is one that we are expected to keep.

- 1. Doctrine means "instruction" (Strong's).
 - a. It is the things that we do for the sake of Christ.
 - b. It is His doctrine that we follow.
- 2. This past week, one man told me that he was a part of a certain denomination because they would leave him alone and let him live as he wanted to, and they would still accept him as a brother.
 - a. This is not the intent of the church.
 - b. There are certain guidelines that we must follow, whether we agree to them or not.
- 3. The early church continued in the doctrine of the apostles.
 - a. Because the apostles spoke the things of God, they had authority in the early church.
 - b. The early church followed their doctrine.

II. The early church continued in fellowship with one another.

A. Because of the churches relationship with Christ, they also had a relationship with one another.

1. To have fellowship with one another is to have a common association with another.
2. In the context of **Acts 2:42**, it is the association the church has with Christ.
3. The only way that we can have fellowship with one another is to be in the right relationship with Christ.
 - a. **I Jn. 1:1-3** - That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life— {2} the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us— {3} that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.
 - b. **I Jn. 1:7** - But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

B. This relationship caused them to help one another as they had opportunity.

1. Notice how they helped one another.
 - a. The early church helped each other physically.
 - 1) **Acts 2:44-45** - Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, {45} and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need.
 - 2) **Acts 4:32-37** - Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common. {33} And with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all. {34} Nor was there anyone among them who lacked; for all who were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of the things that were sold, {35} and laid them at the apostles' feet; and they distributed to each as anyone had need. {36} And Joses, who was also named Barnabas by the apostles (which is translated Son of Encouragement), a Levite of the country of Cyprus, {37} having land, sold it, and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.
 - b. In helping one another physically, they were helping them spiritually by encouraging them in their faith.
2. Today, because of our relationship with one another, we should help one another as we have opportunity (both physically and spiritually).

- a. **Mt. 10:42** - “And whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward.”
- b. **Mt. 25:40** - “And the King will answer and say to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.’”
- c. **Gal. 6:9-10** - And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. {10} Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.
- d. **Gal. 6:1-2** - Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. {2} Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.
- e. **Heb. 6:10** - For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister.

III. The early church continued in worship.

A. The two things that are mentioned in the text are the breaking of bread and prayers.

1. The breaking of bread is the partaking of the Lord’s Supper.
 - a. This was important to the early church.
 - b. **Lk. 22:14-23** – Jesus institutes the Lord’s Supper just before He is betrayed and crucified.
 - c. **Acts 20:7** - Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight.
 - d. **I Cor. 11:17ff** – Paul gives detailed instructions concerning the Lord’s Supper.
2. The church also continued in prayer.
 - a. The church was strong in their prayers.
 - 1) **Acts 1:14** - These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.
 - 2) **Acts 4:31** - And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.
 - 3) **Acts 6:3-4** - Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; {4} but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.

- 4) Acts 12:5 - Peter was therefore kept in prison, but constant prayer was offered to God for him by the church.
- 5) Acts 13:3 - Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away.
- 6) These are only a small portion of the references to prayer in the book of Acts.

b. They understood that they needed the help of God, and therefore they continued to request help from God.

B. Just as continuing in worship was important to the 1st century church, it should be important to us today.

1. Because our worship is important to God, it should be important to us.
2. God expects us to worship Him in spirit and in truth.

Conclusion:

- A. Today, if we are going to be a part of the Lord's church, we must do what they did.
- B. This includes the things that are necessary for becoming a member of His body (Acts 2:38, 47).