



DEVOTED *together*



Sunday
September 6, 2026

Acts 2:38-47

Example Teaching Rhythm

Welcome and Connect: 10 Minutes

This helps people feel connected and more comfortable participating in the study and discussion.

Look Forward: 5-10 Minutes

Share any important church events, service opportunities, or upcoming group plans. Keep this brief but clear.

Look at Scripture: 25-35 Minutes

This is the main focus of Community Groups. Read the selected scripture together and guide the group through discussion questions and observations.

Prayer: 10 Minutes

Invite members to share prayer requests and praises, then pray together as a group. This is a time to support one another.

Explaining the H.E.A.R Method

The acronym **HEAR** stands for **Highlight, Explain, Apply, and Respond**. Each of these four steps aims to cultivate an atmosphere to hear God speak.

Highlight - After praying for the Holy Spirit's guidance, read the passage of scripture, and highlight each verse that speaks to you.

Explain - Explain what the text means. Ask questions like:

- Who wrote this, to whom, and why? What does this reveal about God? What do the key words actually mean? What did this call the original audience to, and what does that reveal for me?

By asking questions, with the help of God's Spirit, and by using helpful study resources, you can understand the meaning of a passage or verse.

Apply - Application is the heart of the process. Everything you have done so far culminates under this heading. As you have done before, work to uncover the significance of these verses and the implications they have. Ask questions like:

- What does this passage reveal about God, yourself, or the world that you need to embrace or sit with? Does this passage challenge an attitude, assumption, or habit that needs to change? Is there something to do? Is there someone to love?

Respond - Your response to the passage may take on many forms. Ask: Is there something to pray? - Let the passage shape your prayer, not just inform it. Use the "Five Daily Prayer Prompts" to guide you in your response.

“Devoted Together”

“The church grows as it’s people grow together”

Introduction

Ask ten people what a "devoted" Christian looks like, and most will describe an individual – someone who prays first thing, reads their Bible daily, doesn't miss church. Luke had the perfect chance to describe devotion that way in Acts 2, right after the single biggest day of conversions in church history. He didn't take it.

Three thousand people had just been baptized (v.41). If there was ever a moment to zoom in on personal piety – one new believer, alone with God, learning to pray – this was it. Instead, Luke pulls the camera back and shows a crowd: people eating in each other's homes, selling land for each other, showing up at the temple as a body. The devotion he records is never solo.

The word he picks reinforces it. *Proskartereō* doesn't mean "try hard." It's built from *kartereō* – to hold on, to stay fastened – with *pros* stacked on front for extra force: toward, and staying there. The only other place this word attaches to a boat, it's Jesus asking that a small boat be kept ready for him, standing by, because of the crowds (Mark 3:9). That's the picture: not straining, but staying in position, ready when needed. Luke doesn't use the word once and move on. He opens this section with it in verse 42, covering four things at once – teaching, life together, meals, prayer – and then uses it again in verse 46, for the daily rhythm of showing up at the temple. One grip, held twice, four things inside it.

That's worth pausing on, because most of us have quietly sorted those four into two piles – real spiritual practice (teaching, prayer) and nice-to-have extras (shared meals, shared resources). Luke doesn't file them that way. He hands them over with equal weight in a single sentence, then spends the rest of the paragraph proving he meant it.

There's also a frame around this whole section that's easy to miss on a casual read. Verse 41 ends with a number added. Verse 47 ends with a number added, in nearly identical language. Whatever sits between those two lines – the entire list of four practices – is Luke's explanation for the number. Not a footnote to the real story. The engine of it.

So here's a question worth sitting with before you open the text below: if someone watched your life for a month, would they see devotion as something you do alone, or something you do with three or four other people, on purpose, on a schedule?

Discussion Questions + Illustration

Select a question or two below to open up discussion.

- If a stranger sat in on your group for a month, which of the four – teaching, shared resources, shared meals, prayer – would they notice first? Which would take longest to see?
- Luke doesn't rank these four practices. Which one do you rank anyway – treating it as more spiritual, or more optional?
- What are you currently carrying alone that this passage would call the church to carry with you?
- Verse 45: believers sold possessions for anyone in need. Where does that make you uncomfortable?
- If ordinary shared practices – not a program, not an event – were what God actually uses to grow his people, what would your group stop doing? What would it start?

In many Amish and Mennonite communities, a barn that would take one family months goes up in a single day – dozens of people arriving before sunrise with their own tools, raising a pre-cut frame by hand before dark. No one in that crowd could build it alone; the math only works as a body, labor already offered before anyone arrives.

- Acts 2 looks more like that than like solitary discipline. The early church grew because devotion was labor divided among a crowd – remove the crowd, and you're left staring at a pile of lumber.

Highlight | Acts 2:38-47

Look at the sentence structure in verse 42 before the content. The Greek marks each of the four nouns with its own repeated article: the teaching, and the fellowship, the breaking of the bread, and the prayers. Four separately flagged items, none subordinate to another. English translations smooth this into one flowing list, which quietly erases the emphasis – Luke planted four flags, not one banner.

Verses 43-47 unpack each flag in order. Verse 43: signs and wonders give "the teaching" visible weight. Verses 44-45: property sold and distributed as anyone had need – "fellowship" cashed out with real financial cost. Verse 46: daily meals in homes, glad and sincere hearts – "the breaking of bread" shown as routine, not ceremonial. Prayer gets no separate paragraph; it's folded into the temple worship alongside the meals, as if it were the air the other three breathed.

Notice what's missing: no strategy, no outreach plan. What Luke credits – bookending the unit in verses 41 and 47 with nearly identical wording – is the Lord adding to their number. Four things, done without ranking, are the whole answer he gives.

- Which of the four practices in verse 42 do you treat as background noise to the others?
- Luke never explains the growth beyond naming these four practices. Are you comfortable with an answer that plain?

Explain | Consider the Context

Luke wrote Acts as the sequel to his Gospel – one continuous story about what Jesus started, and what he kept doing through ordinary people once he'd left the room. Chapter 2 is the pivot point of the whole book: the Spirit arrives, Peter preaches, and the crowd's question – now what do we do – gets answered in two stages. Verses 38–41 handle the individual side: repent, be baptized, receive forgiveness and the Spirit. Verses 42–47 handle what comes after: what a forgiven person's life looks like once they're not alone anymore.

Repentance and baptism happen to a person. The four practices happen among people. You don't work your way into forgiveness by devoting yourself to shared meals and prayer – you receive forgiveness, and only then find out what a forgiven life does with its time.

This also isn't a mature institution with buildings and budgets. It's days old. Whatever devotion looked like here depended entirely on people showing up for each other.

- If repentance and baptism come first, and shared life comes second, what happens when someone reverses that order – using community to earn belonging instead of receiving it first?
- This is a church with no building and no budget. What does that tell you about what's actually required to practice these four things?

Apply | Discuss as a Group

Ask most believers to describe a spiritually healthy week and you'll hear about personal habits – time in the Word, time in prayer. Ask Luke, and half his answer is about what happened at the table and in each other's houses. That's not a contradiction. It's a much wider definition of devotion than most of us are working with.

The uncomfortable part is verse 45. This isn't "be generous when it's convenient." It's people selling property because someone nearby had a need. Most groups can discuss that verse comfortably as history without ever letting it ask anything of the room. Luke didn't record it as trivia.

If your group only gathers for teaching and prayer requests, it isn't doing a smaller version of what Acts 2 describes – it's doing something different. The four practices aren't interchangeable options where any one will do. They're four rooms in the same house.

- Where is your group strong – teaching, shared resources, meals, or prayer – and where is it thin?
- Is there a specific, nameable need in this group right now that "shared participation and resources" could meet – not hypothetically, but this month?
- What would change if your group treated a shared meal as just as central to its purpose as the Bible study that follows it?

Respond | How should I live/pray?

This passage doesn't give you a five-step plan. It gives you four things to hold onto without letting go, together, and trusts that the holding on is itself the plan. That's a strange kind of instruction for people who like checklists – there's no metric here, no way to grade yourself at the end of the week. Just four things, held at once, indefinitely.

Practically, that could mean picking the one practice your group is weakest in and doing it on purpose this week – not waiting for it to happen naturally. Naturally is usually code for never. Maybe that's naming a need out loud instead of keeping it private. Private needs don't get carried; only spoken ones do. Maybe it's turning your next gathering into a meal instead of a lesson with snacks on the side – reversing which one is the main event. Maybe it's praying for each other by name instead of in general terms, which takes longer and asks more of you than a quick "anyone have requests."

These four practices didn't earn the growth Luke records. They were simply present when it happened, which is a different kind of confidence to build a group on – not pressure to perform, but permission to keep doing the plain thing and trust it's enough.

- Which of the four practices are you most tempted to skip, and what would it cost you not to skip it this week?
- Who in your group needs to hear that their need isn't a burden to the group – it's exactly what the group exists for?

Response Tool: Five Daily Prayer Prompts

As you leave today, let these five questions carry the weight of your response into the week ahead – not as a checklist, but as an ongoing conversation with God. Introduce the five daily questions as a simple spiritual practice that can help us intentionally live out our faith in our workplaces, homes, families, and communities.

- God, where do you want me to go?
- God, who do you want me to see?
- God, what do you want me to say?
- God, what do you want me to pray?
- God, how do you want me to serve?

After this time of reflection, transition into a time of prayer requests. Allow time for members to share and, if appropriate, allow others in the class to pray for each other.

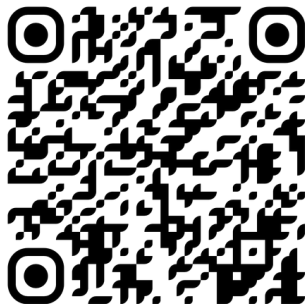
Additional Commentary

- On proskartereō (προσκαρτερέω) – "devoted themselves": from pros (toward) plus kartereō (to hold fast, from kratos, strength). Luke uses it twice in this passage – v.42 (the list of four) and v.46 (the daily gathering at the temple) – bracketing the whole unit with the same grip. It's also used of the disciples waiting on the Spirit before Pentecost (Acts 1:14), of a small boat kept standing by for Jesus because of the crowds (Mark 3:9), and of the apostles' ongoing commitment to prayer and the word (Acts 6:4) – the same word for waiting on the Spirit, keeping a boat ready, and giving yourself to prayer.
- On koinōnia (κοινωνία) – "fellowship": from koinos, common or shared. The word covers more than warm feeling – Paul later uses the same term for a financial offering collected for the Jerusalem church (2 Corinthians 8:4). It's a word with a bank account attached to it.
- On homothumadon (ὁμοθυμαδόν) – "with one accord" (v.46): a favorite word of Luke's in Acts, describing a crowd acting as a single unit rather than a collection of individuals who happen to agree. It shows up at pivotal moments of unified prayer and unified action throughout the book – this is one of the earliest.
- On klasis tou artou (κλάσις τοῦ ἄρτου) – "breaking of bread": most likely ordinary shared meals that included, or were shaped around, remembrance of the Lord's Supper. Luke doesn't separate a sacred meal from a daily one here the way later church practice often would.
- On terata kai sēmeia (τέρατα καὶ σημεῖα) – "wonders and signs" (v.43): the same word pair used of Moses in Exodus and throughout Jesus's ministry, tying the apostles' authenticating works to a much older pattern of God confirming his messengers publicly.
- On prosetitheī (προσετίθει) – "was adding" (v.47): imperfect tense, describing continuous, repeated action rather than a single event. Luke isn't describing one remarkable day. He's describing a habit that kept happening.

Community Group Resource Page

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From Community Group training and resources to Discipleship Group starter guides, we want to equip you to make disciples.



Additional Study

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See a collection of videos, classes, and articles that dive into [Acts 2:38-47](#).

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See a collection of videos, classes, and articles that dive into the [Growth of the Early Church](#).

Overview

Enduring Word - Acts 2



Text commentary, written materials, and audio/video recordings over [Acts 2:38-47](#).

Got Questions - Early Church



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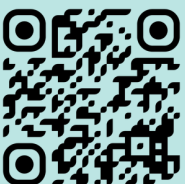
Bible Hub - Acts 2:38-47



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