

introduction

Throughout our Revival series, we've been considering what happens when the work of the Holy Spirit becomes intensified among God's people. Today, we'll look more closely at Acts 2 where we see a clear picture of this. After the Holy Spirit is poured out at Pentecost and many respond to the gospel, what happens next may seem surprisingly ordinary. And yet, there is something remarkable about a community living in this way. The Spirit's work draws people not only into a deeper relationship with God, but into a shared life with one another, where each person has a part to play in it. In our discussion, let's consider what a church devoted to life together could look like, and what it might mean to see ourselves as people who are both "needy and needed" within it.

read Acts 2:42-47 (NIV)

⁴² They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. ⁴³ Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. ⁴⁴ All the believers were together and had everything in common. ⁴⁵ They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. ⁴⁶ Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Take a few moments to reflect on the Scripture. Share some insights, questions, or points that strike you. Then read what follows.

context

The book of Acts tells the story of the earliest Christians and the growth of the church following the resurrection and ascension of Jesus. At the beginning of Acts 2, Jesus' followers are gathered in Jerusalem when the Holy Spirit comes upon them at Pentecost, just as Jesus had promised ([Acts 1:8](#)). Peter then publicly proclaims the good news about Jesus, and a massive group of people respond and are baptized (2:37-41). Acts 2:42-47 shows us what begins to happen next: the new believers don't simply embrace a new set of beliefs; they find themselves drawn into a new community and a new way of life together.

a shared life

So what does life look like for this newly formed community? Luke gives us a picture that is strikingly ordinary: they learn together, eat together, pray and worship together, share what they have, and care for one another's needs. The extraordinary work of the Spirit is expressed through the ordinary practices of life together.

Luke tells us that these early Christians "devoted" themselves to this life together (v. 42). The word "devoted" carries the sense of giving constant and consistent attention to something (or someone). These were not occasional activities they participated in when convenient, but regular practices they returned to again and again. In v. 42, Luke gives us a picture of the rhythms that shaped the ongoing life of the early church: the apostles' teaching, fellowship, the breaking of bread, and prayer. And as the passage continues, we see how deeply this shared life extended into the ordinary parts of their lives — they gathered in homes, ate together, worshiped together, and used what they had to care for one another's needs.

This passage gives us a picture of church that is about more than simply gathering or attending. Their commitment to Jesus drew them into a community to which they belonged and in which their lives became increasingly intertwined with one another. This kind of belonging can be deeply attractive, but it can also be costly: it asks for our presence, time, vulnerability, generosity, and commitment to one another. In a culture where so much of life competes for our attention, Acts 2 invites us to consider what it might mean for the church to become not simply something we fit into our lives, but a community that helps to shape the way we live them.

discuss

- 1. What do you find most compelling about the kind of community described in this passage? What feels difficult, unrealistic, or even uncomfortable about it?**
- 2. What are the things our lives tend to orbit around (e.g., work, family, relationships, personal goals, etc.)? Where does community tend to fit within those priorities, and how does this passage invite us to think differently about its places in our lives?**

3. What specific practices or habits do you think actually help turn a group of people from people who regularly gather into people who share life together? What might that look like for our CG? Our church?

needed and needy

The community in Acts 2 also challenges the idea that church is something created by a few people for everyone else to consume. The life Luke describes depends upon the participation of the whole community: people opening their homes, sharing meals and possessions, praying and worshipping together, and responding to the needs around them. The life of the church is something each person both receives from and helps shape.

This kind of participation isn't reserved for people with particular roles, expertise, or spiritual maturity. Throughout the New Testament, we see that God gives different spiritual gifts to different members of the church for the good of the whole (cf. [1 Corinthians 12:4-27](#)), and describes his people as a "royal priesthood" called to participate in his work (cf. [1 Peter 2:9](#)). Christian community, then, is not made up of some people who have needs and others who have something to offer. As counselor Ed Welch puts it, we come to Christian community as people who are both "needy and needed" — dependent upon the grace of God and the care of others, while also having something to contribute to the life and flourishing of the community.¹

But this vision can be challenging, especially in a consumeristic culture that often molds us to approach communities and institutions as consumers: *Is this meeting my needs? Am I getting enough out of this? Is there something better somewhere else?* And yet, Acts 2 offers another way of imagining what it means to belong. The question becomes not only, *What am I getting out of this community?* But also, *What has God given me that I can bring to it?* In seasons of spiritual renewal, the church comes alive not simply through greater attendance or activity, but as people increasingly recognize that they have a meaningful part to play in one another's lives and in God's work through the church.

¹ Welch, Edward T., *Side by Side: Walking with Others in Wisdom and Love* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015).

*“**We are needy.** The goal is to become transparent and humble friends who are at ease with our neediness. We see our hardships and sin, speak openly about them to the Lord, and are willing to ask others to pray for us. **We are needed.** This is the way the church moves forward — through mutual love and care. Such expressions of love was less obvious in the Old Testament, when people relied on kings, leaders, and prophets, but when the Spirit was given at Pentecost — everything changed. Suddenly, ordinary people had extraordinary impact.”*

—Ed Welch, *Side by Side*²

discuss

4. What do you notice about who is doing the ministry in vv. 42-47? What activities seem to belong to the whole community rather than only to its leaders?
5. What can keep us from believing that we have something meaningful to contribute to a community (e.g., busyness, insecurity, feeling inexperienced, waiting to be asked, etc.)? What might help us to move past those barriers?

² Welch, Edward T., *Side by Side: Walking with Others in Wisdom and Love* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015), 65.

group activity

Option 1

Reflect on these following two prompts quietly. Then, go around and share one or both. After everyone has shared, pray for the needs that were named.

- One way I could **invite** the care or support of others in my community right now is...
- One way I could **offer** care and support to others in this season is...

Option 2

Together, name what you see in one another. Break up into smaller groups, or as one group, invite each person to hear from others:

- What is something you've seen me bring (or think I could bring) to the life of a community? (It could be hospitality, attentiveness, wisdom, humor, prayer, practical help, curiosity, noticing outsiders, generosity, etc. Remember that "being needed" doesn't mean having a formal ministry role or title.)

upcoming

- Friday PM - Sunday afternoon, September 25-27 | **WSY Fall Retreat Work Crew - Free**
As of 9/19/26, the youth ministry is still in need of a few more adults willing to help cook food, serve meals, lead outdoor activities for the youth retreat.
redeemerws.com/wsfallretreat | laura.einhorn@redeemerws.com
- Wednesday, September 30 | **Diaconate nomination period ends this month**
The Diaconate is composed of elected leaders and they enable the church to carry out God's mercy in a holistic manner. Help identify and nominate church members who embody compassion and wisdom to serve as a deacon or deaconess. Visit the link to learn more.
redeemerws.com/nominate
- Thursday, October 8 | **Intuitive Artmaking at W83, 7-9 pm**
Invite friends to join you for an activity night in our W83 Gallery. This free pop-up workshop is a great opportunity to strengthen relationships by trying something new together.
redeemerws.com/artmaking