

The Mission of My Church: “The devoted themselves”

Focus Passage: Acts 2:36–47

Other Passages Referenced: 2 Corinthians 8:3–4

Sermon Recap

Acts 2:36–47 offers a description of the first Church that helps us understand what kind of people we are to be as Jesus’ Church—Jesus’ family on Jesus’ mission. The Church was a devoted group of Christ followers. The verb “devoted” in verse 42 carried the idea “to pay persistent attention” to something. As Jesus’ family on Jesus’ mission, the Church paid persistent attention to learning, loving, and liturgy. As we saw in the account of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit was poured out and into the believers, the disciples moved from gathering to going. However, the rhythm of the Church also moved disciples from their going, back to their gathering again. Being Jesus’ family leads to mission and being on Jesus’ mission lead us back to gather with the family.

The sermon used an illustration of the marketing campaign used by New Balance shoes. On one side of the bag were the words, “Follow no one!” and on the other side was, “Fearlessly independent since 1906.” The point of the illustration was that our fiercely independent culture is constantly trying to disciple us into the world’s way of thinking that conflicts with being a disciple of Jesus. As Jesus’ disciples, we move from following no one to following THE ONE who is worthy to be followed. We move from being fearlessly independent to FEARFULLY DEPENDENT on the One who created us and sacrificed Himself to save us.

To say the early Church was a people devoted to learning speaks to more than acquiring knowledge. The purpose of persistently paying attention to the apostles’ teach was to renew the minds of disciples who had been previously disciplined by the world’s values. To say the early Church was a people devoted to loving is found in the quality of their common life together—their koinonia. Sometimes people debate whether the sacrificial giving and extreme sharing that Luke describes in Acts 2 was meant to be descriptive or prescriptive. The sermon suggested that instead of asking “Does this still apply to us today?” disciples in Jesus’ family need to ask, “How can I apply this today?” This kind of loving and shared life together is costly (See 2 Cor. 8:3–4). The early Church included disciples of Jesus from all over the world, people coming from different languages, cultures, and beliefs. Such devotion is costly in terms of our material resources, time, and even cultural preferences. This common life means we may need to also sacrifice our complaining.

To say the early Church was a people devoted to liturgy speaks to their sharing together both in the temple and in one another’s homes. The word “liturgy” was used because it combines the words “public” and “work.” The definite article “the” found in “the bread” and “the prayers” was likely referring to sharing in the LORD’s Supper and set hours of prayer together. The rhythm of the Church and the public work/worship of the disciples resulted in people coming to faith in Jesus daily.

When we think of Church, it is easy for us to lose the sense of awe and devotion to what it means to be Jesus’ family on Jesus’ mission. To what are you most devoted? To what are you persistently paying attention? What do you need to sacrifice so that the Williamsburg Community Chapel can experience a more flourishing shared life and ministry together?

Group Gathering

Group Check-in — Care, Celebration, Encouragement (About 1/3 of meeting time)

1. Informal conversation to allow individuals to catch up with one another.
2. Ask if anyone would share how they've been hearing and obeying God's direction.

Allow the Word to Speak — Be Hearers of the Word (About 1/3 of meeting time)

READ Acts 2:42-47

1. What from the passage or sermon was most impactful to you?
2. Were you left with any questions or confusion about the passage or sermon?
3. What practices did Luke describe the first Church as devoting themselves to in Acts 2:42–47?
4. Who gathered together (Acts 2:44)?
5. How did the believers manage their personal possessions?
6. Where did the believers of the first Church gather to meet?
7. Find the two times the phrase “day by day” occurs in verse 46 and 47. What two things were happening “day by day.”

Put the Word into Practice — Be Doers of the Word (About 1/3 of meeting time)

1. To what are you persistently paying attention?
2. What do you need to sacrifice so that the Williamsburg Community Chapel can experience a more flourishing shared life and ministry together?
3. Of the three things suggested to which the early Church devoted themselves, which is most indicative of your small group: Learning ... Loving ... Liturgy? Which is least indicative?
4. The sharing of all material possessions and sharing a common life together has caused some to think that the early Church modeled Communism or Socialism. In simplistic terms, Communism teaches that the state owns the capital, Socialism teaches that the people collectively own the capital, and Capitalism teaches that individuals own the capital. What we see in the New Testament is that GOD OWNS EVERYTHING! None of the earthly economic systems capture that truth which means that all of them are flawed. Yet, the gospel is able to flourish so that people can be saved and added to the Church. As the sermon suggested, the better question is not, “Does the example of the Church in Acts still apply to us today?” but rather, “How can we apply what we see in the Church in Acts today?” What do you say?

The Big Question: What do you sense God's Spirit saying to you and what concrete action will you take in response? Share your answer with the group or another trusted Christian and ask them to pray for you.

SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES: Click [here](#) for some good opportunities.

What kind of place is this? — *Acts 2:42-47*

- **A devoted place**

- **Devoted: to pay persistent attention to**

For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing (Gk: koinonia) in this service to the saints.

2 Corinthians 8:3-4 (NIV)

English: Liturgy

Greek: Leitourgia—lit. Public work



What kind of place is this? — *Acts 2:42-47*

- **A devoted place**
 - **Devoted to the Apostles teaching—learning**
 - **Devoted to the fellowship—loving**
 - **Devoted to the breaking of bread and the prayers—liturgy**