

This is the first of a group of summary statements separating major events in Acts. It characterizes the life of the church and separates the coming of the power of the Holy Spirit (1:1–2:41) with the increasing difficulty with the Jerusalem authorities (3:1–4:31). The early church was a learning, loving, worshipping, and witnessing committed, mutually-dependent group, and was constantly growing.

Devoted (vs. 42 & 46) — continually be engaged in; take pains to persistently participate in. Six practices are explicitly listed, and the seventh one is implied.

(1) To the apostles' teaching—their minds were engaged to learn all they could about Jesus and how to apply the Old Testament.

(2) To fellowship (*koinōnia*) — a committed, supportive, community that shares the same values and convictions, is mutually involved in each other's lives, and pursues a common purpose together.

(3) To the breaking of bread — this probably refers to both eating meals together as well as celebrating the Lord's Supper together, because the early church did both together (*agape meal*).

(4) To the prayers—praying at set times, privately and publicly; in the temple courts and at home

They had everything **in common** (*koinos*), v. 44. They met together and shared their resources with one another, vs. 44 & 46, even selling property so that no one would have need, v. 45.

(5) To meet together in the temple courts for prayer and encouragement (v. 46a)

(6) To eat together with great and sincere joy and with praise to God (v. 46b–47a) so that all the people who observed them in the temple courts were favorable to them.

(7) To witness to others, by words and deeds, about their faith in Jesus so that daily people believed and joined them (vs. 47b).

Even though there were miraculous signs being performed by the apostles (vs. 43), the people were not devoted to signs and wonders. Their devotion was directed to God and expressed in study, worship, prayer, fellowship, and witnessing.

Devotion is not a thing which passes, which comes and goes, as it were, but it is something habitual, fixed, permanent, which extends over every instant of life and regulates all our conduct.

— Douglas V. Steere: *Prayer and Worship*

Devotion is simply the promptitude, fervor, affection, and agility which we have in the service of God: and there is a difference between a good man and a devout man; for he is a good man who keeps the commandments of God, although it be without great promptitude or fervor; but he is devout who not only observes them but does so willingly, promptly, and with a good heart.

— St. Francis de Sales

God uses three things to change us to become more like Christ: people, circumstances, and the spiritual disciplines. Spiritual disciplines are regular routines we take up to be in tune with the Holy Spirit, conform to the image of Christ, and discern the will of God. They include, among others: reading, studying, memorizing, and meditating upon scripture; praying; fasting; telling others about Christ; doing good deeds; engaging in private and public worship; giving money and time for the service of God; being in quiet solitude with God, in a secluded building or outside in nature; keeping a journal; studying church history and theology; and reading Christian biographies. Bible intake and prayer are never to be neglected, and each person will find some of the other disciplines more conducive and beneficial to them than others. Very little benefit will come through occasional dabbling in them. See *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, by Donald Whitney (1991); *The Pursuit of Holiness*, enlarged edition, by Jerry Bridges (2016); and *Celebration of Discipline: The Path To Spiritual Growth*, 3rd edition, by Richard Foster (2009).