



## Functioning In Community

**(Acts 2:42-27)** 42 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to prayer. 43 Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and signs were being performed through the apostles. 44 Now all the believers were together and held all things in common. 45 They sold their possessions and property and distributed the proceeds to all, as any had need. 46 Every day they devoted themselves to meeting together in the temple, and broke bread from house to house. They ate their food with joyful and sincere hearts, 47 praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. Every day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

**A church on the move functions in community in three basic areas:**

## 1–SHARED COMMUNION (42-43)

The early church functioned together as a community in communion with God and one another.

- Devoted to \_\_\_\_ God's \_\_\_\_ together.
- Devoted to \_\_\_\_ with God's \_\_\_\_ together.
- Devoted to \_\_\_\_ God's \_\_\_\_ together.

A shared, genuine devotion to Christ will move the church forward.

## 2–SHARED COOPERATION (42-46)

The early church cooperated together as a unit. (4:32) *“Now the entire group of those who believed were of one heart and one mind...”* **There was UNITY in the church** — a state of oneness and harmony.

Jesus prayed for His disciples (John 17:21) —all who would believe in Him for all the ages — *“that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you.”*

Jesus unites us. His blood bought us and through faith in Him we are adopted into God's family and through His Spirit we are baptized into ONE body (Ephesians 4:4-5).

Unity is not \_\_\_\_.  
Unity is not \_\_\_\_.

Yet, we are to preserve and protect unity. Ephesians 4:3 says we are to “*make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*”

The mission depends on it. Warren W. Wiersbe: The lost world cannot see God, but they can see Christians; and what they see in us is what they will believe about God. If they see love and unity, they will believe that God is love. If they see hatred and division, they will reject the message of the Gospel.

If we are to maintain the unity the Spirit has given us during times of conflict, we must cultivate the same qualities found in our Lord Jesus. What qualities are these?

In Ephesians 4:1-3 Paul spells it out for us: *1 Therefore I, the prisoner in the Lord, urge you to walk worthy of the calling you have received, 2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, 3 making every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.*

#### FIVE CHRISTLIKE QUALITIES NECESSARY TO MAINTAIN UNITY:

- Humility
- Gentleness
- Patience
- Love
- Zeal

## 3–SHARED CONTRIBUTION (44–45)

They shared. They gave. They were generous with their resources.

When we function properly in community it not only affects how we interact with one another, but how we contribute to the needs of the body.

This too was Christlike! Jesus gave Himself, sacrificed for us all! 2 Corinthians 8:9 *For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ: Though he was rich, for your sake he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich.*" Jesus said (Acts 20:35) *"It is more blessed to give than to receive."*

Paul then reports (1 Corinthians 8:2-3) about the generosity of the believers in Macedonia, though they were in deep poverty. How? *"they first gave themselves to the Lord and then to us"* (v. 5).

Instead of saying "What I have is mine," they said, "Lord, everything I have belongs to you."

- Be a generous contributor with the \_\_\_\_ gifts God has given you. (2 Corinthians 9:6-8)
- Be a generous contributor with the \_\_\_\_ gifts God has given you. (Ephesians 4:3-12)

## THE RESULTS:

(vs. 46-47) *"They ate their food with joyful and sincere hearts, 47 praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. Every day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved."*

When we commune together, cooperate together, and contribute together, we will be filled with joy, God will be glorified, and the mission of the church will move forward.