

WEEKLY REFLECTION

What comes to mind when you read Acts 2:42-47? Is it the foundational pillars of Scripture, fellowship, communion, and prayer (v.42)—or something more? The passage offers us an amazing snapshot of a church so devoted to God and its members that it was making waves in its community. They were giving to the poor and needy (v.45). They were praising God (v.47a). They had favor with all the people! As a result, God was adding to their numbers *daily* the people who were being saved. (v.47b).

While the four pillars were essential for building a solid foundation, the early church exhibited two qualities that the modern-day church seems to neglect. Firstly, they had a healthy and holy fear of God, referred to as *phobos* in the original Greek. Secondly, they received all they had with glad and generous hearts (v.46b). Rather than being things they could do, both of these were instead heart postures that impacted the way they lived.

Because they had a holy fear of the Lord, the early church could live boldly and vulnerably with each other. *Because* they received everything they had with glad and generous hearts, they possessed a generosity that transcended the material. Despite facing religious and societal persecution from Jewish religious leaders and Roman authorities, they remained steadfast to God and each other.

When we think about the way we do church today, we must ask ourselves if we share the same *phobos*, the same reverent fear of the Lord, and the same joy and humility in receiving what we have today. While there are things we can be doing, true transformation starts from the heart. Without the Holy Spirit's work in us, there is no way we can be together and share all things in common (v.44) the way the Lord desires us to. So, church, what will your response be today? Will you continue to dabble, or will you allow God to move you to devotion?

QUESTIONS

QUESTION ONE:

What comes to mind when you think of devotion to the church? How different is it from the picture of the early church as depicted in Acts 2:42-47? What are some of the challenges and obstacles you might face in getting to the kind of devotion that is described in Acts 2:42-47?

QUESTION TWO:

The two heart postures described on Sunday are (1) *phobos*, a healthy fear of the Lord that looks more like reverence or respect for a magnificence far more powerful than ourselves; and (2) joyful humbleness and humility in receiving what we have, which manifests in a transcendent generosity.

What do you think these two heart postures would look like in your everyday life? Can you find any references in Scripture to support your answer?

Which one of the two do you find harder to move towards? Are there people in your life who display these two qualities of *phobos* and / or joyful generosity, and how might you learn from their example?

QUESTION THREE:

The early church in Acts 2:42-47 met daily and had all things in common. While that sort of unity can only be granted by the Holy Spirit, we can also take steps to grow in our fellowship and friendship with one another by being intentional with when and how we meet.

An easy first step might be to consider when and how you are currently meeting with your life group, outside of Sundays and your weekly life group meetings. Are you able to meet up with your life group members over the week, to share and do life together? Do you feel able to live boldly and vulnerably with each other? If not, what might be some of the challenges and obstacles you face, and how can your life group members help you in the process of overcoming them?