

## **The Apostles Creed – Week 7**

### **~ The Communion of Saints ~**

#### **Introduction**

Well dear friends – What if I told you that I had a **once in a lifetime opportunity** to take you **back to the inception** of the early Christian Church in Jerusalem...

Assuming that our time machine appears somewhere over the North Atlantic, we decide that **we're going to fly South** – over what the Romans would call **Britannia**.

Looking down, we don't really see a whole lot – maybe **the Ancient Stonehenge** already **two thousand five hundred years old** at this point – but **besides that** – **London will not appear** for another **10 years**...or as they called it (Londinios)

We cross **the channel of water** to fly over the fields of Gaul, a land captured by Julius Caesar in the year 51 BC – **today** we simply know it as France!

Crossing the snowy Alps we **descend upon** the **dusty brown Italian** landscapes **until eventually** we come to the city of Rome... Tiberius Caesar has already begun his dominant reign at this point – and it appears that **he only has a few short years** to go...

But our interests turn **East-Ward**...

Gliding over the Adriatic, we decide to follow the Mediterranean coastline **through the territories** of Macedonia, Asia, Cilicia, and Syria – it's all a bit too exciting if we're honest!

One final turn now – & **we decide that we're going to head south** – into the region of Palestine and eventually the Roman province of Judea...

This area is now governed by the infamous **Pontius Pilate** – and our machine **finally touches** down within the city of Jerusalem...

And it's a beautiful day for travel...

As we step out of our **time-travelling DeLorean** we find ourselves surrounded by  
*"Jews from every nation under heaven..."*

**There are** Parthians – & Medes – Mesopotamians – & Romans –  
 Cappadocians – & Asians – Egyptians – Libyans – Cretans – & Arabs – **the  
 list seems utterly endless...**

And **as we begin to look around** we notice that something catches our attention!

Something that **can only be described** as **the sound** of a *violent rushing wind!!!*

Our feet **are immediately swept-up** into the hype of this **bustling** crowd **as we find  
 ourselves** standing **before a group of men** who, **somehow** begin to preach the  
 Gospel in **all of the known languages** of the people that day...

One of these men (Peter) challenges the crowd directly:

*This Jesus, whom you crucified, by the hands of lawless men has now been  
 raised from the dead & declared to be the Son of God in both power & glory!*

*Repent & be baptized **everyone of you** for the forgiveness of sins – for  
 reconciliation – & for the promised Holy Spirit **poured out** into your hearts **by  
 faith!!!***

And **in a matter of mere hours!** The remnant of the Church goes from 120 to **3,120**  
 in **ONE SINGLE DAY!!!**

Church growth numbers **justified by the power of 26** – as the Church in Jerusalem  
 now becomes the Spirit-filled body of Christ!!!

**What did they look like?**

And as the days begin to pass – you & I notice something very strange about this gathered assembly...

These 3,120 new believers begin to **devote themselves** to 4 of the **most basic, boring, ordinary** actions of the Christian faith:

Teaching  
Fellowship  
Communion  
& Prayer X2

These **4 things** appear to be the **tell-tale signs** of a Spirit-filled community – united in Christ!

Now... to be sure **there are more things** a Church could be doing when they come together to worship – but **at its core** these are the **basic things** a church **should be doing...**

A Church **can always be doing more** than these things – but a church **can never be doing less** than these things...

### **Main Point**

And so in light of that friends – the main point that we're going to see as we come to Acts chapter 2 is:

*The Spirit-filled Community of Christ will always be devoted to the body of Christ*

### **Acts 2**

So if you have your bibles, Acts chapter 2, beginning at verse 42 – Luke writes this:

*[AND] they devoted themselves to the Apostles' teaching, to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to prayer. <sup>43</sup> Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and signs were being performed through the apostles. <sup>44</sup> Now*

*all the believers were together and held all things in common. <sup>45</sup> They sold their possessions and property and distributed the proceeds to all, as any had need. <sup>46</sup> 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, <sup>47</sup> praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. Every day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.*

### **Opening gambit**

New Testament Scholar Luke Timothy Johnson summarises these verses when he writes:

*“The gift of the Holy Spirit brought about a community, which realized **the highest aspirations** of human longing: unity, peace, joy, and the praise of God...”*

The **highest aspiration of human longing** – that’s what was created here on the Day of Pentecost!

Everything **you were created for** – everything **your heart desires** – everything **God commands you to be** – **is found here** in Acts 2:42:

Friends – this is what our hearts were made to be!

*We were created to be in fellowship with our brothers & sisters in Christ!*

### **Devoted**

And **what I find stunning** about these verses **is the fact** that these early Christians **were NOT engaging** these activities in a catatonic state!

They **were not simply strolling along** – as if these activities were sometimes **a good idea** for them to do!

Rather – the point that **Luke is making** is that these Spirit-filled Christians **were devoted** to them!

They **laboured** for them – they were **committed** to them!

It speaks of **doing an intense action** – with **intense effort!**

A kind of **holy stubbornness** that is **NOT** easily broken!

And here in verse 42 – it's put **into a form** that is **constant** – **continuous** – **unrelenting** – & **steadfast!**

As if **what we really have here** is something like:

### **THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS**

#### **Cats & Dogs**

But **I don't want you** to hear what I'm **NOT** saying...

Luke is **NOT** advocating for some kind of **Christian eutopia** – a **sort of** Spiritual community that **only ever** focused on **teaching, & prayer, & fellowship, & communion...**

No this was a group of **sinner!** A group of **Christian sinners that fought** like cats & dogs!

And like cats & dogs this early Church **had its issues...**

#### **The Early Church**

You have Ananias and Sapphira, who will lie to the Holy Spirit...

You have Simon, the magician, wanting to purchase the power of God...

**Hellenistic Jews & Hebrew** natives fighting **over** the **distribution of** the widows...

Friends – This was **far from the perfect Church depicted** in the book of Revelation!

### **The forgiveness of sins**

And this! (**by the way**) is **why** the authors of the Creed put the *forgiveness of sins* **in the section on the Church...**

Because the authors understood that the Church of God is the platform **by which** the forgiveness of God is made visible to the world!

The unity they had **in Christ** was the basis for **the unity** they had in the body!

If the body of Christ is to be anything – it must be a body for the forgiveness of sins!

### **4 Main Things**

And so as these Christians grew in their affections for God & affections for one-another – these 4 things **became the centre** of their fellowship!

4 things every Christian Church **should be doing** to grow in their affection for Jesus...

#### **#1 It Persistently Learns**

And the **first one** is this:

A spirit-filled community will always have **a persistent devotion to Christ – centred teaching X2**

We see this in Verse 42:

[and] *They* [**that is these 3,120 new believers**] *devoted themselves to Teaching X2*

#### **The Apostle's Teaching**

But notice – it's **NOT JUST ANY** teaching – it's the Apostles' teaching – biblical teaching – doctrinal teaching!

This was a **specific body of knowledge** that was intensely scrutinized & examined!

See as you go through the book of Acts – and you begin to study the subject of their sermons – **you quickly begin to realize** that these Apostles’ were consistently devoted to:

### **The authority of the Christ centred Scriptures!**

All that Jesus **taught** – all that Jesus **said** – all that Jesus **did** – these Apostles’ were **undyingly devoted** toward!

It’s what Jesus told them to do in Matthew chapter 28:

*Go forth and make disciples of all the nations – baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and of the Holy Spirit – **teaching them** to obey all that I have commanded you!*

John chapter 16:

*When the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all the truth...for He will take what is mine and **declare it to you**...*

So these Apostles’ are **taking that truth** – **taking that teaching** – & **applying it here** on the Day of Pentecost, so that these 3,000 new believers **are being taught** the very Word of God!

So given Matthew 28 – given John chapter 16 – given **all of the sermons** in the book of Acts – **it is safe to assume** that **whatever the Apostles’ teaching was** – It had something to do with **the object** of their affections – Jesus Christ!

For over 2,000 years brothers & sisters **faithful Christianity has consistently sought to treasure** the Christ-centred Scriptures...

**1 Peter 2**

It's what Peter refers to in 1<sup>st</sup> Peter chapter 2:

*Like newborn infants, **long for the pure spiritual milk** of the Word, that by it you may grow up into salvation!*

In fact a **more provocative translation** of this would read:

*Like newborn infants **lust X3** after the pure Spiritual milk of the Word...*

This is a **Holy-Spirit craving** brought about by God-Himself!

It's one of **the marks** of being a Spirit-filled believer!

A Spirit-filled believer **will always have an insatiable desire** for true biblical teaching!

### **Not Exempt**

And I find it **very interesting** friends that **even after** their miraculous encounter with the **true & living** God – these **Spirit-filled Christians continued to desire** the pure milk of the Word!

almost as if their miraculous encounter DID NOT EXEMPT THEM from pure doctrinal teaching...

### **Straight from the Text**

I remember several years ago I was preaching at a night service here at Grace, **and one of the people** who were visiting that night spoke to Pastor Craig after the service – and **Craig had gone up to them & asked** this particular person **what did you think** about the service?

And this person responded:

*We really enjoyed the service, everything about it was great... except the guy up the front preached from the Bible...*



And Craig said:

Yes...?

And they said:

*Well...we've just never been to a Church where someone preached **directly** from the bible...it was really odd?!?!*

Now I have to say – **it was actually quite fun** to pick Craig's jaw up off the floor at that point...

But the fact remains that – as amazing as that was – it was also **incredibly sad to hear...**

That there are whole churches **out there** in the world who are **starving their sheep** of the Christ-centred Scriptures....

How sad it is, **that this kind of expositional** teaching was an experience altogether foreign to their ears...

### **God Grows His Church**

But see this is how **God has always** grown His people!

The Spirit empowers God's people – to proclaim God's message – to call God's chosen – into God's Church! **X2**

From beginning to end – salvation will always be **the work of** the Spirit, **in the heart** of His people, **through the Power** of His Word!

May it never be said of us here at Grace – that we starve our people **for the sake** of mindless entertainment!

Friends wherever you find the Church of Jesus Christ – there you will find her **teaching!**

## #2 Persistently Gathers

Secondly – wherever you find the Church of Jesus Christ there you will find her gathering! X2

It's one of the marks of a Spirit-filled community – a Spirit-filled community will always have:

*A persistent devotion to Christ-centred fellowship X2*

[And] *They devoted themselves to the Apostles' teaching & to fellowship!*

## Koinonia

The Greek word for fellowship here is the Greek word: *Koinonia*

It's derived from the root word:

1. Koinos – which simply means *common*...

And what the authors of Scripture are trying to get across here is the idea of:

That common expression of our shared life in Christ **X2**

So, what unites the body of Christ, in sharing in His life, is **nothing in them** – **but everything in God!**

I mean you think about it... What could these 3,000 souls **have possibly shared in common** before the Day of Pentecost!?!?

There is **nothing here** that they had **in common** outside of Christ?!?!?

And yet we see, that after Pentecost, after they are filled with the Spirit, these brothers & sisters are coming together in unity & love to worship the One True God!

And so **the Gospel then**, unites us **not only** to Christ Himself, but also to Christ's people!

And that's really the meaning that's behind this word *fellowship* here...

This word is actually a business term – and it refers to a **mutual partnership** between 2 parties...

But interestingly – **it can also can be used** to refer to a **marriage bond expressed** between a husband & wife in covenant...

So when Luke uses this term for fellowship – & **applies it to the Church in Acts!!!**

You & I can begin to get a picture of **just how intimate** this early Church was with one-another!

They loved each other's company!

They loved each other's fellowship!

**Everyone – Everyday**

In fact I want you to notice **just how often** they are **coming together:**

Verse 44:

*Now **all the believers** were **together** and held all things in **common**...*

Verse 46:

***Every day** they devoted themselves to meeting **together** in the temple...*

So **how many** of them were together? – **Every single one!**

**How often** were they meeting? – **Every single day!**

Everyone – everyday **X3**

Are you starting to get the point of fellowship?!?!?

Friends:

True & authentic fellowship **always comes** at a **great & valuable** cost... **X2**

A cost to our time!

Our money!

Our efforts!

Our plans!

Our devotions!

Our interests!

Our hobbies!

Friends:

True & authentic fellowship **hurts!**

**It hurts** to do this – **It hurts** to be vulnerable – **It hurts** to be open – **It hurts** to be real!

**And that's the point that Luke is making!**

That's what's behind this word Koinownia!

I don't think he's saying we need to meet together every day – but **there does seem to be something in this** that **we in the West are missing** with our once a week coffee & cake catch-ups!!!

These brothers & sisters were **devoted** to each other – **and devoted to meeting!!!**

### **Not Marxism**

In fact **NOT ONLY** were they devoted **to meeting** but:

They were **devoted to giving! X2**

This is **also apart** of that meaning for Koinownia...

Have a look at Verse 45:

*And they sold their **possessions and property** and distributed the proceeds to all, as any had need...*

Now... **no serious New Testament scholar** sees this as a proof-text for communism – this is not social Marxism – or any other kind of political agenda!

In fact **in the very next verse** it says that these Christians:

Broke bread in their **homes** and ate together in their **houses...**

So **NOT even these Christians** gave **everything they owned** to the Church...

They still had food & shelter they had held onto!

But secondly this giving was **a free & generous** giving – this was not mandated by the state but; **motivated by grace!**

So when someone was falling into poverty **in the early Church** [which we know **many of them were**] – Christian believers began to **voluntarily give away their possessions and homes & give them** to the poor!

This was an amazing act of God’s generous grace that these Christians were opening their **homes** – and **opening their hearts** for the sake of the Gospel!

### **Pagan Attraction**

And we know that **just by looking** at Church history – the community of the Church **was one of the great** attractions to the Pagan world!

What attracted the Pagan community **more than anything else** in the early Church, was the Christian fellowship they shared **day after day after day after day....**

### **Voddie Baucham**

As one pastor has said:

*If you **claim to love** Jesus, and yet **hate** His bride, then **you do not love** Jesus Christ...*

Every **true & genuine** believer will have a consistent devotion to Christ – centred fellowship!

And where a Christian refuses to join a local Christian Church – then **they are refusing to grow** in their affections for Christ & affections for His bride!

God’s people **have always existed** in community – because **that’s what their hearts were created for!**

### **Genesis 1 & 2**

It’s the climactic expression of the ancient agenda found on the first pages of the bible – when Himself declares:

*“It is **NOT** good for man to be alone...”*

He **isn't saying** it's not good for man **to be single** – He's saying **it isn't good** for man **to be solitary!**

God has designed the human race to exist in community – **both** in community **with the triune God** & in community **with those who belong to Him!**

Friends wherever you find the Church of Jesus Christ – there you will find her **Gathering & Giving...**

### **#3 Persistently Eats**

Thirdly – A Spirit-filled community **will always have:**

*A persistent devotion to **Christ centered Communion X2***

### **Communion or Eating**

We see this in verse 42 & again in verse 46:

*“And they devoted themselves to the Apostles’ Teaching, and to fellowship, and...to **the breaking of bread**...” X2*

Now commentators are divided on this – is **Luke simply referring to** a shared meal in someone's house – or is he referring to the Lord's Table?!?!

The English is not very clear – the Greek's a little better...

But **where it gets really confusing**, is that **throughout Scripture** this phrase (the breaking of bread) **can actually refer** to both kinds of events!

So in Acts chapter 20 – when Paul is travelling throughout the area of Troas Luke can write:

*“And on the first day of the week we came together to break bread...”*

The first day of the week is a Sunday (it appears to be the Lord's Day) – **and apparently Paul wanted to fellowship with the believers and break bread for communion...**

**But then** there are **other times**– where the breaking of bread **simply refers to** sitting down to eat together – Luke chapter 24:

*“When Jesus reclined at table with them, He broke bread, gave thanks, and ate...”*

and so the question for us now is **which one does Luke use here?!?!**

Well you can't see it there in the English – but **in the Greek** verse 42 has a definite article before the word bread; whereas verse 46 **DOES NOT...**

And so because of that, scholars have assumed that verse 42 **reads more like** a liturgical statement – & verse 46 is more of an informal statement!

Now...probably he can use **the same phrase** for **both** because **as you may well know** – the early Church often met in houses & in homes – and **when they met together they would often fellowship** over a shared meal – and naturally **as they began** to eat & drink – they would begin to pray, and sing, and **fellowship** – until eventually the meal would naturally transition **into a formal time** of Communion...

And so **what is most likely the case** is that:

- Verse 42 is a reference to Communion...

&

- Verse 46 is more of the family meal

But the idea you get here is that these Christians were **always eating together!**

**Eating is Spiritual**



See in the Ancient Middle East – **much more so** than today – the sharing of a meal was regarded as something of great **spiritual** significance!

Something much more than **simply sitting down** to eat together – friends **eating & drinking** (in the ancient middle East) forged a covenant bond of **loyalty & love!**

It frequently sealed a covenant connection between 2 parties for the sake of unity!

And see this is why Paul in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 11 was **so very cautious** to warn these Christians about the manner in which they **eat & drink** together – because eating & drinking is **MUCH MORE** than MERE physical fulfillment!

There is something that happens when Christian believers are **united to eat together!**

And friends **how much more** is that **unity on display**, when we come together for **the official ceremony** of breaking bread; the Lord's Supper!

This is why we're warned in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 11 – do NOT take these emblems lightly!

Wherever you find the Church of Jesus Christ there you will find her **eating...**

#### **#4 Persistently Prays**

And then lastly – a Spirit-filled community united in Christ –will always have:

*A persistent devotion to **Christ centred prayer X2***

*And they devoted themselves to the Apostles' teaching, and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and... **THE prayers! X2***

#### **Prayer if difficult**

Now again the definite article here is **very important** to indicate that these were set prayers – planned prayers – arranged prayers...

We know from many of the Gospels that the Jews had **set times & habits** where they would devote themselves to certain prayers!

We know from Acts chapter 3 that Peter and John were going up to the temple **at the hour of prayer**...

We know that Jesus Himself (being God in the flesh) went away to be with His heavenly Father...

So prayer is one of the most basic yet **critical elements** of early church worship – & Luke says that these guys were **DEVOTED TO THIS!**

### **Didache**

There's a book in the first century that's kind of like a Church constitution manual, it's called the Didache – that's the Greek word for teaching...

You can go online and find it—it's 16 chapters, it's not that long, but it's fascinating.

And in chapters 8, 9, and 10 you see a lot of instructions in this early church manual about **corporate prayer, & corporate fasting, & corporate communion**, and praying in accordance with the sacraments...

And the impression you get, is that there was **almost always** constant praying going on in the early church!

And prayers here would also include the spiritual songs of the psalms!

They lived to pray to God!

Robert Murray Mc'cheyne (an Old Presbyterian minister) once said:

*“What a man is on his knees before God, that he is, and nothing more.”*

Our prayer life reveals the deepest convictions of our hearts... and our prayers are going to reveal **what we believe** about God, the Gospel, & the Church...

Prayer is the lifeblood of the Church – it's **the heart** of the Christian faith...

May we as a Church body come together **consistently** to pray!

Friends – Wherever you find the Church of Christ – there you will find her **praying!**

### **Application #1 – Obeying Scripture**

Now every week I've tried to make these sermons applicable to us – so we're not just learning head knowledge but heart knowledge...

And there are many things we could take away from this morning – but I just want to focus on one...

What I think is at the very center of Acts 2:42 is this:

*A genuine Christian believer will always seek fellowship in a local Christian Church X2*

It is one thing **to attend** a local Church – it is a whole nother **to belong** to a local Christian Church...

The bible is clear about this friends....

There are **no rogue Christians** in the Kingdom of God!

There is no **maverick spiritualist** on the pages of Scripture!

There is no me & my bible – under a tree – with the Holy Spirit; **I don't need the Church kind of Christians!**

I mean we've all met people like this:

*You don't have to go to Church to be a Christian... X2*

And **that's true** – YOU DON'T

BUT the bible says that:

**Every true & genuine Christian will always go to Church!**

It's one of the marks of being a Spirit-filled Christian...

So that fellowship is **NOT a necessary** means of our salvation – but **it is a necessary fruit** our salvation...

See **we can't seek** to honour Scripture by refusing to do what it says!

If the bible commands that **we must NOT forsake the gathered assembly** – then as bible believing Christians **we MUST NOT forsake the gathered assembly!**

**Extenuating Circumstances**

Now **I know the irony** of saying this in a pandemic!

**There are times of extenuating circumstances** that prohibit us, from obeying this command!

There are times where **God will NOT allow His people** to meet for fellowship!

So **I'm not casting aspersions** on any of my fellow Christians who are **genuinely waiting** to get back to Church!

That's **NOT** what I'm talking about here!

What I am addressing is a **genuine heart condition** of a professing believer, who **never desires to join** a local Christian Church!

Who says to themselves:

*Well I just love Jesus, but I don't love His Church...*

That is a concept foreign to the pages of Scripture!

### **My Family**

It's interesting to note that **in my own family** the biggest thing I heard growing up in my household was:

*"You don't need a **human teacher** to tell you how to interpret the bible... you just need the Holy Spirit – the Holy Spirit is your teacher – and He will teach you how to read your bible..."*

But See **the problem with that**, is that a person who says:

*You don't need a human teacher **to teach you** how to read the bible..."*

Is **at that point** being a human teacher, teaching you, how to read the bible...

It's a self-contradicting statement!

### **You do need a human teacher**

So **what good is it** if you're off under a tree, with you & your bible, **when you're not reading** what your bible actually says to do!?!?

We can't seek to honour Scripture **by refusing** to do what it says!

So it appears that **you do need a human teacher** for 2 main reasons:

1. You need a human teacher **because you're not reading** what the bible actually says!

2. And you need a human teacher **obviously** because you don't know that the bible says that!

So may this challenge your heart, like it has challenged mine this week:

*A genuine Christian believer will always seek fellowship in a local Christian Church*

### **Conclusion**

Let me finish here today with this....

Dietrich Bonhoeffer was a Lutheran Pastor during the second World War...

Around the time of the war he had been arrested & put into a Nazi concentration camp until eventually he was assassinated by Hitler's own personal executioner...

But prior to his arrest, he had written a little book on Christian community called *life together* – and here's what Bonhoeffer said regarding community:

*“The physical presence of other Christians is a source of **incomparable joy**, and **strength** to the believer. A physical sign of the gracious presence of the triune God. How **inexhaustible are the riches** that open up for those who, by God's will, are privileged to live in the daily fellowship of life with other Christians.”*

Friends:

*The consummation of eternal life will be an activity connected by **supreme social enjoyment!***

God has designed the human race to exist in community **imaging the very likeness of the One** who exists in the **very real community** of:

The Father, The Son, & the Holy Spirit!

So that our existence in eternity will see the ultimate realization of that design – **we will be together with God**, worshipping the Lamb **with all the saints** of the **holy catholic Church!**

It's the reason the Church exists friends!

And here in Acts chapter 2 you & I get a little taste of eternal life – and what that will look like in heaven!

These 4 things are the ordinary means by which God has chosen to grow His Church in both love for God and love for one another!

Friends:

*The Spirit-filled Community of Christ will always be devoted to the body of Christ*

May we devote ourselves to these very things here at Grace.

Let's pray.

**Acts 2:42-47****~ Discussion Questions ~**

**[Read Acts 2:42-47]**

**Main Point:** *The Spirit-filled Community of Christ will always be devoted to the body of Christ*

**Q1.** In your own words, how would you describe “*The Holy catholic Church?*” – Where is the Church seen & experienced on earth?

**Q2.** What are the 4 actions Luke mentions in verse 42 that the local Church was doing in Jerusalem? – Do you think there’s an order to these actions, why or why not? – Do these actions demonstrate that the early Church was free from its faults & flaws, why or why not?

**Q3.** What would have been the content of “*The Apostles’ teaching?*” – What would be the equivalent content for us today?

**Q4.** **[Read Genesis 2:18; Matthew 19:4-6]** – According to these verses, why is fellowship so important for us?

**Q5.** **[Read 1 John 1:3-4; 1 Corinthians 1:9]** – According to these verses, what is the basis of our fellowship with God? – **[Read Acts 2:41; Philippians 2:1-2]** – According to this verse, what is the basis of our fellowship with one another?



**Q6.** What are some practical suggestions for us to cultivate a community of believers fixed on Koinonia and not just having coffee & cake once a week?

**Q7.** Does Acts 2:44-45 teach a form of cultural Marxism/Communism, why or why not?

**Q8.** Do you think verse 46 is a prescriptive text for us to meet together for Church every single day, why or why not? – How would you apply these verses to our Church?

**Q9. [Read John 13:35]** – Why would the radical hospitality of the early Church in verses 44-46 have been such a glaring thing for the outside world?

**Q10.** Do you think the phrase “*Breaking of bread*” is a reference to The Lord’s Supper, or to a sit-down meal? – Why is eating such a significant thing throughout Scripture?

**Q11.** Why is prayer so vital for the Christian life? – What are some ways we can encourage one another to pray more?

### **Application Questions**

**Q1.** Do you see a continued & increasing desire in your life for Christ-centered teaching? – If not, does that concern you?

**Q2.** Do you see a continued & increasing desire for Christ-centered Fellowship?

**Q3.** Do you see a consistent pattern of sacrificial giving toward the Church, and to brothers & sisters within the Church? – If not, does this concern you? – What are some ways we can cultivate healthy Christian hearts toward our brothers & sisters in the Church?

**Q4.** Do you see a continued & increasing desire in your life for Christ-centered hospitality? – What are some ways to cultivate this fruit? – What are some of the most simple, basic, & easy meals you cook for others in the Church?

**Q5.** Do you see a continued & increasing desire for Christ-centered prayer? – What are some tips you can share to help others cultivate a healthy prayer life?