

Acts 2:42–43

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⁴³ Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles.

“The Local Church” **Acts 2:42-43**

INTRO:

One institution we Christians put a lot of emphasis on is marriage. We do this because it is an institution God created. Another institution which should be important to us is the local church. The church was born at Pentecost. We find the baby church's immediate priorities in our text today.

I. WHY THEY WERE DEVOTED

II. WHAT THEY WERE DEVOTED TO

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“And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. (Acts 2:42–43)

A. Remember the setting of this verse. Earlier in **Acts 2**, the Holy Spirit began His New Testament ministry of indwelling believers and forming them into the church. Now is this the Church which is His body or is this the church of God which is at Jerusalem? Both! What does the infant church filled with all these new converts do? The first thing they did was to devote themselves to the Apostles' teaching.

B. The word translated ***“continued steadfastly”*** in the NKJV is a very interesting one. When it speaks of a relationship with a person it means *“to attach oneself to someone, or to be faithful to someone.”* However, when it speaks of something instead of someone it means *“to be busily engaged in, to hold fast to, to continue or persevere in.”*

1. These young believers attached themselves to the Apostles, and gave themselves eagerly to the learning of and living out of the teaching of the Apostles.

2. In the case of this infant church, this zeal for the teaching of the Apostles went far beyond the first blush passion for the Lord we found when we were

saved. I can see these folks thronging the Apostles to learn what God had to say to them because they had never heard these things before.

C. The two aspects of this devotedness, **(1)** to the apostles personally and **(2)** to their teaching, happened because both are bound up in the ministry of the Word of God. Example is a part of the package of teaching the word.

II. WHAT THEY WERE DEVOTED TO

“And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.” (Acts 2:42).

A. They were devoted to the Apostles' and they were devoted to their teaching. The word **“doctrine”** is the word for teaching. The word **“teaching”** includes all the Apostles taught and practiced. Now what exactly was the Apostles' teaching.

B. First, it involved a correct understanding of the Old Testament Scriptures.

1. At the birth of the church the New Testament was not yet written. When Paul wrote **2 Timothy 3:16 and 17**, ***“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work,”*** the Scriptures he had in mind were mainly the Old Testament. This is not to say the New Testament is not inspired. It is. It is to say we must also understand and make a matter of our study the entire counsel of God. This includes the Old Testament.

2. We must understand how the one true and living God took centuries to teach His people in the Old Testament that He is a holy and just God, and that they must come to Him exclusively on His own terms. He is the same God Who we meet in the New Testament. He is still a consuming fire, as the writer of Hebrews reminds us! He has not changed.

3. The Apostles taught the brand new infant church these truths. They also, no doubt, showed them how the Old Testament spoke of the coming Messiah. Remember Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch (**Acts 8:26-35**)? Philip took **Isaiah 53** and preached to the Eunuch about the Lord Jesus!

C. Beyond this, the Apostles' teaching also involved new revelation, which the Lord Jesus gave to His Apostles to build His church. How can we get our hands on this teaching? What did the Apostles teach? We have it right here in our hands. It is the New Testament.

1. The Bible teaches us about how we are saved and can come into a relationship with the living God in salvation through faith in His Son!

“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior,”
(Titus 3:5-6)

The Apostles' doctrine taught that the worst sinner on the face of the earth could be forgiven and cleansed through the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. It also teaches us how we are to live out our lives in a growing relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ after salvation.

Ephesians 4:1-2 “I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love.”

The Apostle Paul wrote in Ephesians about growing up in Christ in the context of His chosen people and not in a vacuum.

3. The Apostles teach in the Bible about this thing that God the Son created called the church of which we are supposed to be a part and in which we are to be actively ministering to one another so that He might be glorified

The question is: What is our relationship to the Apostles' doctrine?

Are we busily engaged in it, hold fast to it, and continuing and persevering in it?

Do we live the commands that they gave us?

Do we study the Bible and make it the center of our existence?

This is the will of God in Christ Jesus for us that we live our lives steadfastly committed to knowing and living out God's Word in our lives.

Hymn# 371 *Have Thine Own Way, Lord*