

# A Shared Faith

REAL COMMUNITY #1 - Pastor Gary Combs - August 25, 2024 - Acts 2:42-47

**INTRO:** Good morning church! We're beginning a new sermon series today entitled "COMMUNITY: Four Shared Devotions for Real Community." We're going to spend the next 4 weeks unpacking the four foundational devotions that led to the tremendous blessing of the New Testament Church.

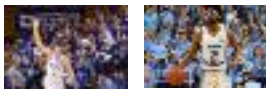
**Need:** People today are lonely. They are looking for community. They want something real, something that will meet their needs of companionship and identity. Whether they recognize it or not, God has made all of us with a deep desire for a relationship with Him and with one another. We long for real, authentic community.

You see attempts at community all around us. Some people identify with a community based on ...

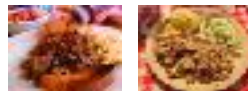
... political views



... favorite color blue.



... Tomato or Vinegar BBQ



... or regional accents



While communities based around politics, sports, BBQ and regional accents may help us find people to associate with as friends, they fall far short of the real community that God has in mind for us. These kinds of communities are really what psychologist and best-selling author, Scott Peck, calls "pseudo-communities."

"Where participants are nice with each other and playing safe, one has merely a pseudo-community. In this setting people present only the most favorable sides of their personalities. When people move beyond this inauthenticity and present their true selves, admitting their own brokenness, common to all human beings, they approach true community. Here the individual experiences deep respect for self and others in the community. This is a glorious place that fulfills the yearning of every human soul for understanding from one's fellows."

**Trans:** So, how do we move from these "pseudo-communities" to real community?

**BODY:** In the book of Acts, Luke described the "true community" of the first century church. He noted that they were marked by four "devotions." These devotions were:

- A shared faith

- A shared family

- A shared food

- A shared focus

We can experience this authentic community when we pursue these four devotions. Today, we're going to focus on the first devotion, "A Shared Faith." The text gives three steps to having a shared faith.

**Read text: Acts 2:42-47 (ESV)** <sup>42</sup> And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. <sup>43</sup> And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. <sup>44</sup> And all who believed were together and had all things in common. <sup>45</sup> And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. <sup>46</sup> And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, <sup>47</sup> praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

## How to have the Shared Faith of Christ's Community:

### 1. Share the same confession.

**EXP:** (42) "And they devoted themselves to the ... teaching" What teaching? Primarily the gospel.

**"Devoted"** - προσκαρτερέω *proskartereo* – to face towards (*kartereo* – strong, steadfast) to earnestly attend to, to continue in, to be constantly diligent towards, to adhere closely to, to give oneself to wholly.

**"The"** – Definite article. Not just any teaching. It is "the" teaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

**ARG:** **We share the same confession of faith.**

Romans 10:9-10 (NLT) For if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by confessing with your mouth that you are saved.

**We share one faith.**

Ephesians 4:4-6 (ESV) There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

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**ILL:** Examples of having a common confession or commitment in order to be part of a community:

THE OATH OF AMERICAN CITIZENSHIP “I hereby declare, on oath, that I absolutely and entirely renounce and abjure all allegiance and fidelity to any foreign prince, potentate, state, or sovereignty of whom or which I have heretofore been a subject or citizen; that I will support and defend the Constitution and laws of the United States of America against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I will bear arms on behalf of the United States when required by law; that I will perform noncombatant service in the Armed Forces of the United States when required by the law; that I will perform work of national importance under civilian direction when required by the law; and that I take this obligation freely without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; so help me God. In acknowledgement whereof I have hereunto affixed my signature.”



MARRIAGE VOWS: When you get married you make a confession. You say “I do.”

THE OATH OF ENLISTMENT “I, \_\_\_\_\_, do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; and that I will obey the orders of the President of the United States and the orders of the officers appointed over me, according to regulations and the Uniform Code of Military Justice. So help me God.”



**APP:** Do you want to be a citizen of heaven? Then you must share the Christian confession. Have you recognized your need for Christ? Repenting of your sin, have you confessed Jesus as your Lord and Savior? Have you made a public profession of your faith and taken the step of obedience to be baptized?

## 2. Share the same passion.

**EXP:** (42,46) <sup>42</sup> They devoted **themselves** to the ... **teaching**... <sup>46</sup> And day by day, attending the temple **together** and breaking bread in their homes.

“**Teaching**” (διδασχῆ, *didachē*) - doctrine, teaching (as in the content of that which is taught), instruction.

“**Themselves, together**” - They devoted themselves to God’s Word together. It was a daily pursuit, truly an obsession to study and pursue the teaching together.

**ARG:** **Delight in it**

Psalm 1:1-2 (ESV) Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night.

**Study it.**

2 Timothy 2:15 (KJV) Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

**Do it.**

James 1:22 (NLT) But don’t just listen to God’s word. You must do what it says.

**Share it.**

Colossians 3:16 (ESV) Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

**ILL:** Newborns have a passion for their mother’s milk ...

1 Peter 2:2 (NKJV) As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby.

**APP:** Do you have a passion for God’s Word? Do you read and study it on your own? Are you in a CG that studies and applies God’s Word together on a weekly basis?

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## 3. Share the same submission.

**EXP:** (42-43) <sup>42</sup> “They devoted themselves to the **apostles’** teaching” ... <sup>43</sup> Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the **apostles**.

“**Apostle**” – Literally, “one sent.” They were devoted to the ongoing authoritative teaching of the ones who knew first hand what the Lord had taught and done. They had been “sent” by the Lord Jesus.

Real Community begins with assent to a common set of values or beliefs. There is agreement on what is true. There is a common worldview or perception of reality. There is a common pursuit to know and understand this better. There is a common recognition of authority and submission to it. Those that pursue this knowledge and calling are held in high esteem by their community.

The biblical meaning of submission does not mean that you become a slave or mindless. It means that you willingly line up under the authority that the Lord has put over you.

**ARG:** **Submit to the teachers of God’s Word whose authority comes from the Lord.**

1 Thessalonians 4:2 (NLT) For you remember what we taught you by the authority of the Lord Jesus.

**Submit to their authority because it’s to your benefit.**

Hebrews 13:17 (ESV) Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.

**ILL:** One of our CG Shepherds sent out an email to his group asking for them to renew their commitment to the group. He asked them to reply by the end of the week as to whether they would commit to “be faithful, constant, loyal, and devoted” to one another. One of the CG members replied to him:

“Good Morning John, I don’t have to wait any longer to give you my answer for God has placed upon my heart to stay devoted to my community group. I not only want to be with all of you, but I have a need to be with all of you. It’s what gets me through the rest of my week. You all are my family in Christ and I love you all. I will be in prayer for all the ones in our group. Thank you, John for sending out this request.”

**APP:** Our ultimate authority is Christ! He is the great shepherd. But He has called under shepherds to help lead and feed His flock from God’s Word. In our church, we have developed a ministry called Community Groups that are designed to take the sermon heard each Sunday and study it in a small group of believers. Our desire is to move the Word from head to heart, from understanding to application. Are you willing to submit to God’s Word? Are you willing to be in a small group of people that hold one another accountable not only to study God’s Word but to apply it to their lives? Check CG on your connection card today! Or sign-up for LOLD. Register for the Men’s Retreat.

**CONCLUSION:** The first century church had four devotions. The first was the apostle’s teaching. They were devoted to the preaching, teaching, study, and obeying of God’s Word.

Will you decide today to share...

1. The same confession... confessing Jesus as Savior and Lord?
2. The same passion... studying and knowing God’s Word?
3. The same submission... following the obeying God’s Word?

Let’s pray.