

# A Shared Family

REAL COMMUNITY #2 – Mike Laramée – September 1, 2024 -- Acts 2:42-47

**INTRO:** Good morning church! We're continuing a sermon series today entitled "REAL COMMUNITY: Four Shared Devotions for Real Community." We're unpacking the four foundational devotions that led to the tremendous growth of the New Testament Church. Today, we're talking about the second devotion: "A Shared Family." This is entirely appropriate, as Pastor Gary is now attending a family reunion in Bristol VA.

What does your family look like?



**Need:** People today are starving for true and lasting relationships. Yet, Americans are struggling with loneliness more than ever. According to Gallup surveys ...

"We are physically detached from each other. We change places of residence frequently. Seven in ten do not know their neighbors. Americans are among the loneliest people in the world. – George Gallup Jr.

To attempt to cure our loneliness, we've turned to social media. But a 2023 study in the National Library of Medicine concluded this:

"This study found that more time spent on social media was associated with higher levels of loneliness... in particular for people who used social media as a means for maintaining relationships." — National Library of Medicine (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9817115/>)

In my opinion, "social media" is really just media now. Where the forum was perhaps visualized as a means to connect to others, it is not used for real communication or interaction. Most of what's on social media today is mostly video produced specifically for consumption. We are disconnected from each other, and need family more than ever.

Our definition of a "normal" family has changed through the years. The idealized nuclear family of the 1950s TV world has become a rare thing today. Many in our body either came from or are part of single parent homes. Many families have experienced multiple divorces, with the complications of multiple step parents and step siblings. Several of you are not originally from Eastern NC, and your blood relatives do not live close. Perhaps you do have a large extended family in the area, but your "family" causes you more stress and pain than those outside of your family.

**Trans:** Sin causes us to be separated from God and from each other. But when we come to Christ, He reconciles us to God and to one another and causes us to be devoted to God and one another. This is what we see in Acts ...

**BODY:** In the book of Acts, Luke described the "authentic community" of the first century church. He said they were marked by four "devotions." They were:

**- A shared faith      - A shared family      - A shared food      - A shared focus**

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

**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

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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 share in the family of God.

### 1. Choose to belong fully.

**EXP:** (v 42,44) And they **devoted** themselves to ... the **fellowship** ... and all who believed were together

**Devoted** – *proskartereo*, *pros* – 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.

**Fellowship** - *κοινωνία*, *koinōnia* - fellowship, a community, participation, a relation in which parties hold something in common. What do we hold in common? Physical families have biology in common. God's family shares a common spiritual birth. Birth into the family of God that comes through belief.

Why the definite article “the” fellowship? **THE** fellowship requires the involvement of the Holy Spirit. Fellowship between people is temporary. Sports teams, work associates, military. **THE** fellowship includes God, so is infinite and eternal.

**ARG:** God wanted a family.

Ephesians 1:5 (NLT) “God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ.”

**The only way into God's family is trusting in Jesus.**

John 1:12 (ESV) “But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God”

John 14:6 (ESV) Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

**Our relationship has changed. We are no longer strangers, but family.**

Ephesians 2:19 (NLT) From now on you are not strangers and people who are not citizens. You are citizens together with those who belong to God. You belong in God's family.

**ILL:** **God wanted family:** The first words in the new testament are a family tree from the covenant of Abraham to Jesus (Matt 1:1). And through Jesus, we are adopted into God's family (John 1:12/Rom 8:17). Man alone is not good (Gen 2:18).

Some story illustrating To be present vs to belong fully? Maybe sitting through a military training versus participating in a live military operation? Or a mandatory office lunch versus family dinner.

Maybe the triune nature of God? Three who are one.

John 17 prayer

**APP:** **Non-believer:** accept the gospel, be born again into the family of God through your belief in Jesus Christ

**Believer:** do you consider those in the faith your family? Your brothers and sisters? Or is church just a place you come to on Sunday? Is this just a loose collection of strangers who happen to show up at the same time each Sunday morning?

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CG pitch.

## 2. Decide to live sacrificially.

**EXP:** (v.42,44-45) <sup>42</sup> And they devoted themselves to ... the fellowship... <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**.

“**All things**” - ἅπας, *hapas* - all, the whole, altogether. i.e. "each and every part" making up a complete unit. Your skills and your stuff. Talent and treasure.

“**Common**” - κοινά, *koina* – common, held in common, shared, ordinary. It’s the root of *koinonia*. In both attitude and action they viewed everything they had as belonging first to God and then to one another, making it available as others had need.

“**Distributing**” - διαμερίζω, *diamerizó* - to divide up into parts, break up, distribute.

“**Need**” - χρεία, *chreia* - need, necessity. At first, the apostles worked as the middlemen, verifying needs and making the appropriate distribution (Acts 4:32-35). However, they soon delegated much of this to the deacon ministry (Acts 6). How can they meet others’ needs? They knew what those needs were. This applies to us as well - how many of us are transparent enough to be able to not only share our needs, but allow others to meet those needs? Not sharing needs is not being polite; it actually hinders others’ ability to share in the blessings.

**ARG:** 1 John 3:16-17 (ESV) By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him?

Galatians 6:10 (NLT) Therefore, whenever we have the opportunity, we should do good to everyone—especially to those in the family of faith.

**ILL:** Recently, in one of our small groups, one of our members had surgery, and the recovery from that surgery was going to be extensive, taking several months, where she was going to need care during her rehabilitation. Before the surgery even happened, this group made sure that the family was going to reach out to the rest of the group with their needs. I can report that not only did that family request the help they needed, but a number of members helped out when able with meals, rides to the doctor and visits. This is not unusual, but a regular feature of our Community Groups. That’s what they do.

**APP:** Belonging fully to God’s family, we are also to share our stuff. Are you willing to trust God with all that you are and all that you have? Will you make your stuff available to God and to His family? First, decide to recognize God’s ownership and your stewardship. Become a tither to give recognition of God’s ownership. Then, begin to make your skills and stuff available to the fellowship, addressing needs as the Spirit stirs your heart.

## 3. Commit to gather regularly.

**EXP:** (v. 46-47) <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.

**Day by day** - ἡμέρα, *hēmera* - day or daily. This was a daily devotion of theirs. Part of a routine; a habit.

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**Attending** - προσκατερέω, *proskartereō* - **Devoted**, continue steadfastly, attend continually. Again we see this word appear in the text which the ESV translates as attending. We know that this is the same word for devotion from verse 42. There is the sense here that the believers were devoted to worshipping corporately, they essentially made this commitment of top priority.

**Together** - ὁμοθυμαδόν, *homothumadon* - of one accord, one mind, of the same passion or fierceness. Most closely it means “one passion.” The believers shared one passion and that was worshipping Christ together in the temple and in the homes. They built community and fellowship by their constant presence with each other.

**Praising God** - αἰνέω, *aineō* - to praise, extol, to sing praises in honor to God. These believers were not only devoted to meeting together but meeting together under the banner of worshipping God’s Son. Corporate worship was a top priority for them - there weren’t many things that were going to prevent them from gathering.

## **ARG:** Corporate worship is for our encouragement

Hebrews 10:25 (GW) We should not stop gathering together with other believers, as some of you are doing. Instead, we must continue to encourage each other even more as we see the day of the Lord coming.

## **Corporate worship is for our sanctification**

“Sanctification can happen on the spot as we sit under gospel preaching and engage in corporate worship.”  
- Tim Keller

Acts 5:42 (ESV) And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and preaching that the Christ is Jesus.

## **Corporate worship points to future reality**

Revelation 7:9-10 (ESV) After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!”

**ILL:** Gather regularly: Community Group, Church.

**APP:** Will you prioritize meeting and worshipping together in the church and in the homes? Will you make “attending together” the big rock in your calendar? Would you miss a family birthday party? Well, we have a party for Jesus every Sunday. We also gather together every week in homes throughout the area. Don’t miss the party.

Most men made friendships in high school or college, and assumed that those men would be their “friends for life”. After getting married and having a career, they found little time for those friends. Men still need that type of connection - our Ironmen Retreat is a great way to get that fellowship and connection with other men. Do you like being outdoors? Do you like food? Do you like good teaching? Sign up today.

## **CONCLUSION:**

Will you...

1. Choose to belong fully to God’s family?
2. Decide to live sacrificially with God’s family?

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3. Commit to gather regularly with God's family?

Let's pray.