

With Glad and Generous Hearts

Ps 23; Acts 2:42-47 (Yr A)

Easter IV May 3, 2020

“they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts” (Acts 2:46 NRSV)

“They” devoted themselves to study and fellowship.

“They” would sell their possessions...

“They” spent much time together...

“They” broke bread at home...”

Who are “they?” And what do “they” have to teach us?

They were a home church of Jewish Christians living in the aftermath of Peter’s Powerful Pentecost sermon. Peter preached the Hebrew Scriptures. The Holy Spirit opened the audience’s minds and hearts, and **their** reaction to this truth of Jesus’ identity as “both Lord and Messiah” (v. 36) was that **they** were convicted to repent and be baptized, and follow Jesus as Lord and Savior. **They** “devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers” (v.42). The lifestyle of Jewish Jesus Followers was 1) Instruction and study, 2) Communal sharing of possessions, and 3) Worship. With glad and generous hearts.

What advice “they” have for us follows:

- 1) We are to be all in. Committed. Devoted. Completely surrendered. The early church didn't have to be told to study scripture, pray, break bread together, or care for others. They devoted themselves, persisted, continued... They were definitely NOT lukewarm!
- 2) We are students of scripture. We follow Jesus by studying what Jesus said and did and applying it to our lives. We read and study and meditate upon the Bible because we WANT to know it! We want Holy nourishment. Think of it like this: Students in the U.S. study U.S. history. Students in France study French history. Students in the U.K. study British history. Students of Jesus study _____ (the Bible)!
- 3) We enjoy relaxing around a table together. Those in the early church "ate their food with glad and generous hearts" (v. 46). This we do without needing to be told!
- 4) We are grateful and generous, and goodwill follows. Early Jesus followers sold their possessions to care for their needs and to give to the poor. They glorified God in all they did.

They shared with everyone. Well into physical isolation and sheltering at home as we are gives us a different perspective, doesn't it? We've been sharing space and time and limited supplies in abundance! Sharing is caring, and sharing is

challenging! But we're participating with the necessary restrictions to love and protect and serve our neighbors.

How is it with your spirit?

Have you been studying the Bible, praying, sharing with others? How creative have you been in breaking bread together?

How eager are you to physically gather with other believers? I think we all miss being together with our church family. It's been an enormous challenge to remember we're in this pandemic together even though we can't be together.

Sharing everything in common? Personally, I'm not sure I'll be able to eat from a buffet line when they reopen, even with sneeze guards!

That said, the Lord is my Shepherd, so I do not want. Even with worshiping individually, or as a single family, our cups continue to overflow. We can do our part to keep apart, as you have been. We will dwell in this house of God our whole lives long. Amen.