

Acts 2:42-47: COMMON PRIORITIES LED TO COMMON PROPERTY **PART #2**

Context: the concluding paragraph of Acts 2 sums-up the results of the Day of Pentecost. The believers almost instantaneously identified with one another as a new association (society) within the larger Jewish culture, an association characterized by devout interest in the Apostles' Doctrine and in fellowship that focused on the Lord's table and prayer. Unity of mind, sharpness of focus, and joy permeate the passage.

Exposition: vrs. 44-47 "THEY HAD ALL THINGS COMMON..."

1. v. 44a - Believers focused "**upon the same thing**" (επι το αυτο), translated in KJV as "were together." Their mind-set was that of " _____ " "fixed upon the same thing."
2. v. 44b - "**and they kept having** (Imperfect Active Indicative) **all things** _____ (κοινη / koine)."

Sharing in common the things of the spiritual life (v. 42) led to sharing things necessary to physical life. No doubt the 3,000 sojourners were recipients of these love expressions as were others. Regardless, the unity of the believers led to very charitable expressions in the fellowship. Note the re-enforcement this mentality in 4:32.

3. v. 45 - "**and they** _____ **selling...** and _____ **parting to all... as every man** _____ **having need.**" All verbs are Imperfect Active Indicatives, emphasizing the continuum of these actions.

They began to sell their assets and distribute the proceeds to those who evidenced continual need. The verbs (imperfects) indicate that they did not necessarily sell all their private possessions at any one time.

4. v. 46, 47a - "**and day by day continuing with one mind in the temple** (precincts) **and breaking bread according to a household** (or "at a home"), **they kept eating their food** (Imperfect Active Indicative) **with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God and having favour with all the people.**"

The believers met regularly in the temple precincts for teaching, worship and witness, most likely at _____ on the east side of the outer court (cmp. 3:11, 5:12).

They also shared communal meals along with the Lord's table in private residences. Verse 46, 47a emphasizes the joy, the spirit of rejoicing, and the singleness of mind that permeated their fellowship as well as the glory they gave to God. Outside, they enjoyed popular good-will.

5. v. 47b - lit. "**And the Lord kept adding to them daily the ones being saved.**"

Only the Majority Text and Codex E have the word "church" (as per KJV). All other texts read, "the Lord kept adding to the same (to them) daily..." Their numbers were constantly being increased by the Lord.

(OVER)

COMMENTS (Acts 2:44-47; 4:32-37)

1. The loving care of fellow believers expressed in Acts 2:44-47 grew into an organized (though entirely volitional) movement by Acts 4:32-37. Acts 2:45, "they distributed": Acts 4:35, "they laid down at the Apostles' feet (the moneys) and distribution was made... ." Acts 6:1ff, further details organization and delegation of responsibilities.
2. This form of communal sharing eliminated dire need for the necessities of life: the principle was "from those continually with" to "those continually without."
3. That widows are singled out as special recipients of these gifts indicates that the majority did not live from this common fund, Acts 6:1.
4. Private property was not eliminated: various believers always had something to sell as 4:32ff proves.
5. Private property was not condemned: even after Ananias had sold his land, Peter told him that the money he had obtained was his own to dispose of as he pleased, Acts 5:4.
6. This community of goods, apparently only practiced at Jerusalem, was totally volitional: it was never enforced by rule or coercion.
7. Did this practice contribute to the poverty of Jerusalem believers 20 years later? Yes. See Paul's efforts to collect special offerings for them in Romans 15:25-26 and 2 Corinthians 8:1-4ff.
8. This effort at Jerusalem was to relieve persistent needs, not to do away with private property (it initially began with the 3,000 sojourners who got saved and stayed around for instruction). Paul speaks of rich and poor constantly without condemning either, 1 Timothy 6:17-19; Galatians 2:10; 2 Corinthians 8:13-15; 1 Corinthians 16:2; Philemon, wealthy slave owner.
9. This is a clear example of Acts as descriptive, not prescriptive.