

Cutting Straight the Word of the Truth on Acts 2:42-47

What were the Practices of the Early Church Life in Acts 2?

The book of Acts portrays the propagation of the resurrected Christ in His ascension, by the Spirit, through the disciples, for the producing of the churches – the kingdom of God. Luke's Gospel ends with the Lord's ascending into heaven (Luke 24:51), and his Acts begins with it. His Gospel is a narrative of the ministry of the incarnated Jesus on earth; his Acts is a record of the continuing ministry of the resurrected and ascended Christ in heaven, carried out through His believers on earth. In the Gospels His ministry on earth, carried out by Himself, only sowed Himself as the seed of the kingdom of God into His believers, with no church being built up yet. In the Acts His ministry in heaven, carried out through His believers in His resurrection and ascension, spread Him as the development of the kingdom of God for the building up of the church (Matt. 16:18) throughout the entire world to constitute His Body, which is His fullness (Eph. 1:23) for His expression, and which is even the fullness of God (Eph. 3:19) for God's expression.¹

Acts 2:42-47 presents a vivid picture of the beginning of the church life. Verse 42 says, "And they were continuing steadfastly in the teaching and the fellowship of the apostles, in the breaking of bread and the prayers." The first group of believers produced through the apostles' preaching and ministering of Christ on the day of Pentecost continued steadfastly in four things: teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayers. Teaching is the unveiling of God's New Testament economy concerning Christ and the church. Fellowship is the communion and communication between the believers in their communion and communication with God the Father and Christ the Son. Breaking of bread is the remembrance of the Lord in His accomplishment of God's full redemption. Prayer is cooperation with the Lord in heaven for the carrying out of God's New Testament economy on earth.²

The first two matters, teaching and fellowship, conjoined by "and" to be one group, are of the apostles, but breaking of bread and prayers are not of the apostles. This indicates that besides the teaching and fellowship of the apostles, the believers in Christ should not have any other teaching and fellowship. In God's New Testament economy there is only one kind of teaching revealed and recognized by God—the teaching of the apostles. Likewise, there is only one kind of fellowship which is of God and acceptable to Him—the fellowship of the apostles, which is with the Father and the Son Jesus Christ (1 John 1:3) and which is the unique fellowship of the unique church, the Body of Christ. The last two matters, the breaking of bread and prayer, conjoined also by "and" to be another group, are practices of the believers' Christian life. These practices are not related directly to God's economy for the keeping of the oneness of the church, the Body of Christ.³

These four matters together with eleven other positive practices in Acts 2:42-47 illustrate the revival at the beginning of the church life after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost: (1) apostles' teaching; (2) fellowship of the apostles; (3) breaking of bread; (4) prayer; (5) fear; (6) wonders and signs; (7) meeting together; (8) having all things in common; (9) selling their possessions; (10) day by day; (11) one accord; (12) breaking bread from house to house; (13) partaking of food; (14) praising God; (15) having grace.

TEACHING OF THE APOSTLES (vs. 42a)

Acts 2:42 says, “And they were continuing steadfastly in the teaching and the fellowship of the apostles, in the breaking of bread and the prayers.” This verse indicates that all the three thousand who were saved on the day of Pentecost continued in the teaching and the fellowship of the apostles. In this verse there are two things pertaining to the apostles: the teaching and the fellowship.⁴ The teaching of the apostles is the teaching concerning the Lord Jesus, and it is the teaching the Lord commanded the disciples to observe in Matthew 28:20. On the day of Pentecost Peter, James, and John observed the Lord’s word and taught others concerning what the Lord had commanded them. Their teaching became the apostles’ teaching.⁵

In the New Testament the term “the teaching of the apostles” was used first in Acts 2:42.⁶ In the term *the apostles’ teaching*, the word *apostles’* is plural, but the word *teaching* is singular. The apostles’ teaching is the teaching of the apostles.⁷ The Lord Jesus’ direct teaching in the four Gospels became the first part of the apostles’ teaching. Then Acts records that Peter taught the new believers based upon the Lord Jesus’ teaching. That became the second part of the apostles’ teaching. Then following Peter, Paul taught, and his teaching became the third part of the apostles’ teaching. John taught in his Gospel, in his Epistles, and in Revelation, and some others like James and Jude wrote some Epistles in the New Testament. All of these writings became the last part of the apostles’ teaching. All these parts of the apostles’ teaching are the contents of the New Testament, which is concerning God’s New Testament economy.⁸ First, God’s speaking is in the person of the Son (Heb. 1:1-2). Second, God’s speaking is in the person of the Spirit (John 16:12-15). God spoke first in the Son as the man in the four Gospels. In the Acts, in the Epistles, and in Revelation, God spoke further, in the Son as the Spirit through the apostles.⁹

The apostles’ teaching is the entire speaking of God in the New Testament. This teaching is concerning God’s New Testament economy from the incarnation of God to the consummation of the New Jerusalem, and it includes the entire New Testament from Matthew to Revelation. The items of the apostles’ teaching are the incarnation of the Triune God, the all-inclusive death of Jesus Christ, the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the ascension of Christ, and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit for the baptizing of all the believers into one Body. The church is the Body of Christ, the bride of Christ, the universal new man, the household of God, the temple of God, the called-out assembly, the kingdom of God, and the kingdom of the heavens.¹⁰

The new believers continued steadfastly in the teaching of the apostles. The only proper teaching in the New Testament is the apostles’ teaching. Any teaching other than the apostles’ teaching is not scriptural or orthodox. The orthodox teaching is that of the apostles recorded in the twenty-seven books of the New Testament from Matthew through Revelation. Therefore, Paul said to Timothy, “Even as I urged you, when I was going into Macedonia, to remain in Ephesus in order that you might charge certain ones not to teach differently” (1 Tim. 1:3). To teach differently is to teach differently from the teaching of the apostles. If we have different teachings, we shall be divided into different groups. But if we have only the teaching of the apostles, we shall be one.¹¹ The apostles’ teaching contains the contents of the full gospel of God (Rom. 1:1-4) and is the constitution of the Christian faith (Jude 3; 1 Tim. 1:19; 6:12; 2 Tim. 4:7).¹²

FELLOWSHIP OF THE APOSTLES (vs. 42b)

Just as the teaching of the apostles is unique, the fellowship of the apostles is also unique. All Christians should have one fellowship, the unique fellowship, which is the fellowship of the apostles. This fellowship is mentioned in 1 John 1:3: “That which we have seen and heard we report also to you, that you also may have fellowship with us, and indeed the fellowship which is ours is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.” The Greek word for fellowship is *koinonia*, meaning joint participation, common participation. It is the issue of eternal life, and it is actually the flow of eternal life within all the believers who have received and possess the divine life. It is illustrated by the flow of the water of life in the New Jerusalem (Rev. 22:1). Hence, as indicated by Acts 2:42, all genuine believers are in this fellowship. It is carried on by the Spirit in our regenerated spirit. Therefore, it is called “the fellowship of the Holy Spirit” (2 Cor. 13:14) and “fellowship of [our] spirit” (Phil. 2:1). It is in this fellowship of eternal life that we, the believers, participate in all that the Father and the Son are and have done for us; that is, we enjoy the love of the Father and the grace of the Son by virtue of the fellowship of the Spirit (2 Cor. 13:14). Such a fellowship was first the apostles’ portion in enjoying the Father and the Son through the Spirit. For this reason it is called the fellowship of the apostles and “the fellowship which is ours [the apostles’]” in 1 John 1:3, a fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. This fellowship is a divine mystery.¹³

The word “fellowship” used in Acts 2:42 and 1 John 1:3 indicates the putting away of private interest and the joining with others for a certain common purpose. Hence, to have fellowship with the apostles, to be in the fellowship of the apostles, and to have fellowship with the Triune God in the apostles’ fellowship, is to put away our private interests and join with the apostles and the Triune God for the carrying out of God’s purpose. Our participation in the apostles’ enjoyment of the Triune God is our joining with them and with the Triune God for His divine purpose, which is common to God, the apostles, and all the believers. According to Acts 2:42, in the first church life there was only one fellowship, and that fellowship was of the apostles. The apostles’ fellowship included all genuine believers. In the church life in the Lord’s recovery we follow and practice the fellowship of the apostles.¹⁴

The grammatical construction of 2:42 is significant. The new believers continued steadfastly in two groups of things: first, in the teaching and the fellowship of the apostles; second, in the breaking of bread and the prayers. In each group of two there is the conjunction “and.” This conjunction joins the teaching and the fellowship of the apostles; it is used again to join the breaking of bread and the prayers. However, this conjunction is not used to join these two groups. In other words, these four matters—the teaching, the fellowship, the breaking of bread, and the prayers—are not one group of four items. Rather, teaching and fellowship are one group, and breaking of bread and prayers are another group. The teaching and the fellowship are of the apostles, but the breaking of bread and the prayers are not of the apostles. The teaching and the fellowship belonged to the apostles, but not the breaking of bread and the prayers. This implies that although we can pray at any place and at any time, we cannot have more than one kind of fellowship. There is only one fellowship, the unique fellowship, the fellowship of the apostles. Likewise, although we can break bread at any time and at any place, we cannot have a teaching different from that of the apostles. On the contrary, as believers we should have only one teaching, the unique teaching – the teaching of the apostles.¹⁵

BREAKING OF BREAD (vs. 42c)

The church, as the pillar and base of the truth (1 Tim. 3:15), meets together to express the Lord corporately in its locality. The meetings of the church perform a special function that no other gatherings of the believers can. The most important meeting of the church is the Lord's table meeting, or the bread-breaking meeting (1 Cor. 10:14-22; 11:17-34). In this meeting we the believers gather to participate in the fellowship of our Lord's blood and body for our enjoyment (1 Cor. 10:16-17) and to remember the Lord for His enjoyment (1 Cor. 11:24-25). The bread we partake of signifies not only our Lord's physical body, which was once broken for us on the cross, but also His mystical Body, of which we are the many members. In partaking of the Lord's table, we "discern the body," as the apostle Paul exhorts us to do (1 Cor. 11:29); that is, we examine ourselves concerning the Lord's Body, asking whether we are divisive individually or whether our meeting is a meeting in division. Here our standing as the church, expressing the oneness of the Body of Christ, is made manifest. We participate in, partake of, and display openly this oneness through our gathering at the Lord's table.¹⁶

The breaking of bread in the New Testament replaces the Passover in the Old Testament. Thus, after the breaking of bread, we should keep the feast of unleavened bread as the Israelites did, removing from our life all evil and all that corrupts us. We would only live a holy life free from sin by the Lord's holy and sinless life, which is the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth, to be those who truly keep the feast of unleavened bread.¹⁷

The early believers continued steadfastly in the breaking of bread that they did it on a daily basis (Acts 2:46). At the time, because they were fervent toward the Lord and loved Him deeply, they spontaneously broke bread every day. Later on, they gradually acquired the habit of doing it once a week on the first day (1 Cor. 11:20). The first day of the week, which is the Lord's Day, is the day of the Lord's resurrection and the beginning of a new week, signifying that the old things are passed away and a new life has begun. Therefore, it is most appropriate to break bread to remember the Lord on this day. Furthermore, although we display the Lord's death when we break bread, we are actually remembering Him in resurrection.¹⁸ To eat the bread also implies that we are participating in the mystical Body of Christ, comprising all the saints, that is, we are fellowshiping with all the saints universally from ancient times until today. We need to see that the remembrance of the Lord at His table implies His redemption, His Body, and His entire New Testament economy.¹⁹

At Pentecost over three thousand people were saved. Day by day, they continued steadfastly with one accord in the temple and broke bread from house to house (Acts 2:46). Due to their great number, the believers met regularly from house to house. They met in the temple only when they all needed to gather together. Other than these times, the brothers and sisters assembled in different homes.²⁰

According to Acts 20:7 and 1 Cor. 11:20, the early believers also came together in one place to eat the Lord's supper. This must have occurred in a larger place. There is the sweet and intimate flavor of a small meeting when we gather to break bread in the homes. There is also the rich and uplifted atmosphere of a large meeting when we gather together in one place. The believers may break bread in separate homes or in one place, and this should be decided on by the church according to the need and the situation.²¹

PRAYER (vs. 42d)

The book of Acts tells us that after the Lord's resurrection, He remained with the disciples for forty days (1:3). Then the Lord ascended into heaven (1:9; Luke 24:51). Before the Lord departed, He instructed them to wait in Jerusalem until they received the outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost (Acts 1:4; Luke 24:49). Following the Lord's ascension to the heavens, the disciples were left to wait in Jerusalem for the Spirit's outpouring without any apparent help under the constant threat of persecution. During this waiting period, all the disciples could do was pray (Acts 1:14-15). The Spirit was poured out upon them for the purpose of preaching the gospel. Before they preached, they prayed for ten days. In the Bible the number ten represents fullness or completion, especially as it relates to man. The disciples fulfilled their responsibility by praying in a complete way. From the time of the Lord's ascension to the day of Pentecost, when the Spirit was poured out, about a hundred twenty disciples prayed in one accord for ten full days. Then they preached the gospel on the day of Pentecost in a very prevailing way. On the day of Pentecost, the Spirit came upon the disciples after much prayer and they were filled with the Spirit to speak the word of God. They prayed and they spoke. Even after the day of Pentecost, the disciples continued to pray and preach the word.²²

After the Lord's ascension, the one hundred twenty prayed together and became the kind of persons who were in one mind, in one will, with one purpose around their soul and heart. For them to be in one accord meant that their entire beings were one. No other book of the Bible uses the word for "one accord" as much as Acts.²³ The early disciples prayed in the way of being in one accord. The Greek word *homothumadon* here is quite meaningful. It indicates that they all had the same one mind, will, and purpose. They were all one, not only in one spirit to pray in the spirit, but they were in one mind, in one will, and in one purpose.²⁴

The first group of Christians in the early days served the Lord by means of prayer. In every case all the different serving ones took only one way, and that was the way of prayer. Every part of their service and every bit of their work for the Lord was initiated by prayer. They had no other way, used no other method, and took no other means for the Lord's work, for His service, but the unique way of prayer. In the early days of the churches, the apostles and all the saints served the Lord in the way of prayer; they had no other way, no other method, and no other means.²⁵ If we read through the book of Acts, we cannot find one hint that in the early days the apostles and the disciples tried to use any means other than prayer to solve their problems and to carry on their work. Prayer was the only way, the unique way, for them to meet every situation.²⁶

Not only did the apostles, the first group of serving ones, pray in this way, but the first group of new converts after the day of Pentecost continued to pray in the same manner. "They were continuing steadfastly in the teaching of the apostles and in the fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers" (Acts 2:42). They continued to pray in this way because they saw the example. They were brought to the Lord by a group of serving ones who prayed in this way. Therefore, after they received the Lord, they became the same as those leaders. Those serving ones prayed, and these who were converted through them prayed in the same way. In the first chapter of Acts there are the praying serving ones, and in the second chapter there are the praying converts.²⁷

FEAR (vs. 43a)

Acts 2:43 says, “And fear was upon every soul...” The word “fear” was mentioned many times in the book of Acts. Although there were persecutions, the church was not in the fear of men. Rather the church went on in the fear of the Lord lest the church offend the Lord by being put down or even subdued by persecution, or lest she offend the Lord in other things. This healthy fear of the Lord brought about the comfort of the Holy Spirit. According to 9:31, the church was going on also in the comfort of the Holy Spirit. This indicates that the church was suffering affliction through the persecutions, in which she feared the Lord and enjoyed the comfort of the Holy Spirit.²⁸

What is fear? It is a condition of the heart; it is being afraid of the presence of the self in everything and constantly being in fear of offending God. Godliness is a way of living; it is expressing God in our daily living. There is genuine godliness when a person, in a fearful way, becomes apprehensive of his self-activity and constantly refuses, opposes, and condemns all ungodly thoughts, words, acts, moves, and attitudes to the extent that he becomes restricted in his outward behavior. We must learn to fear and exercise ourselves unto godliness.²⁹

In 1 Peter 1:17 Peter says, “And if you call upon as Father the One who without respect of persons judges according to each one’s work, pass the time of your sojourning in fear.” In this verse Peter comes to the matter of God’s government, the particular point that he covers in his Epistles. The judgment of God is for the carrying out of His government. As holy children, we should walk in a holy manner of life. Otherwise, the Father will become the Judge (4:17) to deal with our unholiness. He begat us with life inwardly that we may have His holy nature. He disciplines us with judgment outwardly that we may partake of His holiness (Heb. 12:9-10). His judgment is according to our work, our conduct, without respect of persons. Hence, we should pass the time of our sojourning in fear. If we call upon Him as our Father, we should also fear Him as our Judge and live a holy life in fear. This is a holy fear, as in Philippians 2:12. It refers to a healthy, serious caution for us to behave in a holy manner. To pass the time of our sojourning in fear means to walk in a holy fear of God all the time. The words “pass the time” include every minute of our daily life.³⁰

The apostle Paul not only loved the Lord but also feared Him. In 2 Corinthians 5:14 Paul says that the Lord is loving. At the same time Paul indicates in this chapter that we need to fear Him because one day we shall all stand before His judgment seat (2 Cor. 5:10). Furthermore, we know from 1 Corinthians 11 that even today the Lord is exercising disciplinary judgment over His children.³¹ Three times in his Epistles did Paul mention that he was *in fear and trembling* (1 Cor. 2:3; Eph. 6:5; Phil. 2:12). Fear is the inward feeling (or motive); trembling is the outward appearance (or attitude).³²

We need to see the truth concerning God’s judgment and have a holy fear of God. As Paul indicates in 1 Corinthians 11, we need to be careful in taking the Lord’s table. It is a great blessing to partake of the Lord’s table. However, we need to take of the bread and of the cup with discernment. If we are careless in this matter, we shall eat and drink judgment upon ourselves. This judgment is God’s discipline, a discipline that is a dispensational judgment exercised over the believers who are wrong in certain matters. This is one of the basic teachings of the apostles; it was taught by both Peter and Paul.³³

WONDERS AND SIGNS (vs. 43b)

Acts 2:22 says, “Jesus the Nazarene, a man demonstrated by God to you by works of power and wonders and signs, which God did through Him in your midst.” The Greek word translated “demonstrated” here literally means to point out, to exhibit, to show forth, in the sense of proving by demonstrating, thus bringing about an approval. This indicates that the Lord’s work was God’s demonstration of Him, His exhibition of Him. While Christ was ministering, whatever He did was an exhibition of the work done by God through Him. In the four Gospels we have the exhibition of a wonderful person, the God-man, who was fully tested, proved, and approved by God.³⁴

In the three and a half years of our Lord’s earthly ministry He did two categories of work. First, He ministered His life to God’s chosen people which was His main work (John 10:10b). He died on the cross so that He could release the divine life (John 12:24) and He resurrected to become the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45b) that He could impart the divine life through His death into God’s chosen people. Second, He performed some auxiliary miracles. When the Lord performed miracles, though, these were not the real goal of His ministry. Many saw the signs which Jesus did and believed in Him, but Jesus would not entrust Himself to them (John 2:23-25). The signs which the Lord did proved to everyone that He was God’s sent One. But the Lord would never entrust Himself to those who believed in Him because of seeing the signs. He had no confidence in the miracle seekers.³⁵

In Mark 16:17-20 we see that there were five signs that accompanied the saved believers. According to the divine revelation in the Acts and the Epistles, what the Lord said in Mark 16 does not mean that every saved believer should have all five signs. It means that each saved believer may have some of these signs but will not necessarily have all.³⁶ When Stephen was full of grace and full of power, he did great wonders and signs among the people (Acts 6:8). In Pentecostalism many of the so-called miracles and healings are false. But what Stephen did was the genuine manifestation of grace. That was God’s visitation. God was there.³⁷

Acts 2:43 says, “And fear came upon every soul; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles.” Then Acts 5:12 says, “And through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders took place among the people.” The record here is very similar to that in 2:43, where we are told that “many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles.”³⁸

In Acts 14:3, as the Lord testified to the word of His grace, He granted signs and wonders to be done through the hands of Paul and Barnabas.³⁹ However, wonders and signs are not part of God’s central testimony of the incarnated, crucified, resurrected, and ascended Christ. Neither are they part of His full salvation. Rather, wonders and signs are only evidences that what the apostles preached and ministered and how they acted were absolutely of God and not of man (Heb. 2:3-4). This means that wonders and signs are neither a part of God’s central testimony nor a part of God’s salvation. Wonders and signs are means used by God to prove that the preaching and ministry of the apostles are of God. At the apostles’ time there was the need for signs and wonders to be done through them. No doubt, that caught the attention of the multitude. However, we today should not emphasize wonders and signs.⁴⁰

MEETING TOGETHER (vs. 44a)

In the first century, all the Christians were so church conscious and so church related. In their concept there was nothing of individualism. Whatever they did, they did it church consciously; whenever they met, they met for the church. Acts 2:44 says, “And all those who believed were together....” This, of course, was their meeting. And so we can see that the believers at that time were meeting people. They were the people who came together all the time, and this was their meeting.⁴¹

In Acts 4:23, immediately after Peter and John were released from prison, they went to their own, and it was to a meeting, and there was a meeting going on. The same thing occurred when Peter was released from prison in Acts 12:12. He came to the house of Mary, and when he arrived, there were many in that house praying; a meeting was in progress. In Acts 11:26 we read that Barnabas found Saul and brought him to Antioch. And the Word says that for “a whole year they assembled themselves with the church.” In the early days the Christians were not separated ones, but gathered ones. They were a gathering people: all the time they were coming together. We Christians must be such a people.⁴²

The church is a people meeting together. This is the *ekklesia*, a people called out to meet together. Suppose there is no meeting. Where then is the church? If there is no meeting, there is no church. The church is just the meeting. The church is not only the meeting people, but the people meeting. The meeting people may not meet. But when the people are meeting, surely everybody is in the meeting.⁴³

Christians should not only meet often but should also meet to the extent that meetings become a habit, and thus, a meeting life is produced. We need to see that meeting is not an occasional act of Christians; rather, it is the Christian life, just as eating and washing daily are part of the human life. We need to wash our hands several times a day. Furthermore, we need to eat three meals a day and drink water many times. These are not occasional acts; rather, they constitute our living. The meeting of Christians is the same; it is a living, not an occasional act. If Christians do not meet, it means that they do not live. If man does not eat, he cannot live. He will starve to death. Likewise, if Christians do not meet, it is the same as committing suicide. They are killing the Christian life. It seems as if the believers at the time of Pentecost did nothing but meet. They met from morning until night. Meeting is the Christian life. As soon as Christians stop meeting, they stop living.⁴⁴

God has also ordained that Christians must meet in order to live or survive. To Christians, meeting is like water to fish or air to birds. Just as fish need to live in water and birds need to live in the air, Christians need to maintain their life by meeting. Once a Christian stops meeting, he is like a fish out of water or a bird that is not in the air. He has no way to survive. Once we are saved, we are a person in the church, and we cannot be individual Christians. To be a Christian, we must be one in the assembly, and this assembly is the church. The meaning of the term *church* is the gathering of the called-out ones. This implies that the nature of the church involves meeting. Without meeting, the church cannot exist, and there will be no church. The life of the church hinges on meeting. Therefore, the church is intimately related to meeting. This is God’s ordination.⁴⁵

HAVING ALL THINGS COMMON (vs. 44b)

On the day of Pentecost the believers put all their possessions together and had all things common. Acts 2:44 says, “And all that believed were together, and had all things common.” They practiced what may be called a communal life. This practice continued in Acts 4:32 which says, “And the multitude of them that believed was of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that aught of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common”.⁴⁶ They had all possessions common and increased with new believers day by day (2:43-47; 4:32-37).⁴⁷

In the early church life the saints had their material possessions in common. However, this is not the practice of a so-called communism.⁴⁸ To have our possessions in common is to share what God has given to us with the fellow saints who have need. We care for each other out of love, and we also care for the general expenses of the church. In this portion of the Scriptures, having all things common is not merely a sign of love; it is a sign of Christ’s dynamic salvation that saved the believers from greediness and selfishness.⁴⁹

God wants the believers to share their abundance with those who lack that there may be equality. In 2 Corinthians 8:12-15 Paul says that we should give willingly according to what we have. Those who gather much will have no excess, and those who gather little will have no lack. The result of such giving and receiving is what Paul calls “equality”: “At the present time your abundance for their lack, that their abundance also may be for your lack, so that there may be equality” (v. 14). Equality equals having everything common. God’s principle is to have equality. Even in the Old Testament there was the divine way to balance social wealth. None of the Jews could sell their property forever. At the most, they could sell it only for fifty years. In the year of jubilee everything was returned to the original owner (Lev. 25:8-17). God’s way is to keep equality.⁵⁰

Having material possessions in common, following the principle of equality, is a strong sign that we have overcome the usurping power of enticing and deceiving riches (1 Tim. 6:9-10, 17-19; Matt. 13:22). Riches are very enticing and deceiving. However, by Christ as our victory in His overcoming life, we can overcome the usurping power of enticing and deceiving riches.⁵¹

The Lord also said that we should not be anxious about our life, what we should eat and what we should drink, and what clothes we should put on. Our Heavenly Father knows that we need all these things. There is no need for us to be anxious about them. If we seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, all these things will be added to us. We can see a development of this seed in Acts 4:32. It is clear that the believers in the early church were not anxious concerning material things. Their attitude toward their riches was so liberated, so free. On the contrary, people in the world anxiously grasp everything they possess. We Christians should not be like that. We need to be liberated from the possession of material things.⁵²

Throughout the centuries many believers have appreciated the communal life in Acts 2 and 4 and have also tried to have all things common. A certain group in north China practiced this kind of communal life. Anyone who joined that group had to agree to give

up his material possessions and have everything in common.⁵³ Brother Lee himself testified of the revival that resembles that of Acts 2:44 when seventy saints from Chefoo migrated to inner Mongolia in 1943 for the spread of the church life.⁵⁴

However, during the time of Acts, this was practiced only for a short period of time at the initiation of God's New Testament economy. It did not continue for the long run as a practice of legality in the church life during Paul's ministry, as proven by his words in 2 Corinthians 9 and other places.⁵⁵ Even as early as chapter six, problems began to arise, and not too long afterward that communal life was discontinued.⁵⁶

Acts 6:1 tells us that there was a murmuring of the Hellenists against the Hebrews, because their widows were overlooked in the daily dispensing. This indicates that the failure in being overcome by racial differences was in the matter of eating. The problem in Acts 6 in the matter of eating caused the practice of having all things common (Acts 2:44-45) to wane. Eventually, that practice was discontinued because it did not work well. The reason the practice of having all things common did not work well was mainly the racial difference. The Hellenistic Jews were somehow despised and mistreated by the typical Jews. As a result, there was murmuring concerning the daily dispensing. This led to the waning of the practice of having all things common.⁵⁷

In the writings of Paul we can see that the communal life described in Acts 2 and 4 was no longer in practice. From Paul's Epistles we see that the proper Christian living is not a communal living, a living of having all things common; it is a living by grace. This grace comes from four directions; from God, from Christ, from the apostles, and from the saints.⁵⁸

SELLING THEIR PROPERTIES AND POSSESSIONS (vs. 45)

Acts 2:45 says that the believers sold their possessions and properties and divided them according to need. This also is an evidence of the Lord's dynamic salvation, which caused the believers to overcome their earthly possessions, which occupy, possess, and usurp fallen mankind (Matt. 19:21-24; Luke 12:13-19, 33-34; 14:33; 16:13-14; 1 Tim. 6:17).⁵⁹ The same is true with Acts 4:34-35 which say, "For neither was anyone among them in need; for as many as were owners of lands or of houses sold *them* and brought the proceeds of the things which were sold and placed *them* at the feet of the apostles; and it was distributed to each, as anyone had need."

From the case of the sin of Ananias and Sapphira lying to the Holy Spirit in Acts 5:4, there is a word related to having all things common: "While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And when it was sold, was it not in your authority?" This indicates that to sell possessions and distribute them to others was not considered by the apostles a practice of legality. The believers were not required to have all things common. That was something that should have been done willingly.⁶⁰

Although the dynamic salvation of God caused the believers to forget about earthly possessions, having all things common did not become a formal practice in the church life.⁶¹

DAY BY DAY (vs. 46a)

The early believers continued so steadfastly with one accord in the breaking of bread that they did it on a daily basis. At the time, because they were fervent toward the Lord and loved Him deeply, they spontaneously broke bread every day.⁶²

Acts 2:46-47 says, “And day by day, continuing steadfastly with one accord in the temple and breaking bread from house to house, they partook of their food with exultation and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added together day by day those who were being saved.” This is the normal standard of the Christian life.⁶³

The Gospel of John implicitly reveals the day-by-day Christian life. The phrase *day by day* is very critical to our living as Christians for God’s purpose, and they are quoted from 2 Corinthians 4:16, which says that we should be in the process of the Lord’s inward renewing “day by day.” Regarding the proper daily Christian life, John shows us that Christ is not only our life but also the daily necessities of our Christian life. By *necessities* we mean that which is needed to maintain the life that we have received through our regeneration. Just as our human life must be maintained for our physical health, the divine life in our spirit must be maintained for our spiritual health. In the physical realm, air, water, food, light, and a dwelling place are basic and vital necessities. In the spiritual realm, these basic and vital necessities are the same. The marvelous thing is that all of these necessities for the maintenance of our spiritual life are Christ Himself. John reveals that Christ Himself is our real, divine, and spiritual air for us to breathe (20:22), our water for us to drink (4:10, 14; 7:38-39), our food for us to eat (6:35, 57), and our dwelling place in which we can abide (15:5). All of these items of what Christ is to us must be our day-by-day experience—we need to breathe Him, drink Him, eat Him, and abide in Him day by day, even moment by moment.⁶⁴ Day by day we are partaking of Christ as our portion by enjoying Him and experiencing Him.⁶⁵ By doing this we will grow with the Lord and in the Lord, and the Lord Himself will increase in us day by day.⁶⁶

The early believers were the kind of people full of the Holy Spirit. To be full of the Holy Spirit means to be in the condition of being continually filled with the Triune God. This was the daily situation, the daily walk, and the daily condition of the early disciples. At this time, the Holy Spirit is the full realization of the Triune God, the real embodiment of the Triune God. When we are full of the Holy Spirit, it means that we are filled with the Triune God. This is why the Lord Jesus did not tell them that they were to be preachers, but witnesses. “But you shall receive power, after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you; and you shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8). They were not preachers, but witnesses, because they were in the Triune God, and the Triune God was in them. They and the Triune God were one. In other words, the indwelling of Jesus was their daily living; so in such a condition they were full of the Holy Spirit.⁶⁷ In them we see a group of people in whom Christ was living daily and through whom Christ was poured out as the gospel preaching. The real outreach is just the indwelling of Christ. The indwelling of Christ is the processed God as the life-giving Spirit so nigh to us. Moment by moment we open ourselves to Him, confessing all our sinfulness. Then we will be under the cleansing of His blood and we will be filled with the fullness of the Holy Spirit.⁶⁸

ONE ACCORD (vs. 46b)

Acts 2:46 says, “And day by day, continuing steadfastly with one accord in the temple and breaking bread from house to house, they partook of their food with exultation and simplicity of heart.” The Greek words rendered “with one accord” may also be translated “with one mind.”⁶⁹ This word in Greek also refers to the harmony in a musical composition.⁷⁰ In the book of Acts the one hundred twenty prayed together in one mind, in the same mind, in the same will with the same purpose around and within the soul and the heart. After the Lord’s ascension, the one hundred twenty became the kind of persons who were in one mind, in one will, with one purpose around their soul and heart. For them to be in one accord meant that their entire beings were one. No other book of the Bible uses the word for “one accord” as much as Acts.⁷¹

The book of Acts begins with the one accord and stresses the one accord. The early disciples could not have maintained or kept this one accord, however, if they had had different ways, means, agents, or substances for them to carry out the Lord’s move on this earth. In the book of Acts, the way they took to carry out God’s move on this earth to fulfill His New Testament economy was entirely by three main substances—prayer, the Spirit, and the Word. Not only in Acts but also throughout the entire New Testament, prayer, the Spirit, and the Word were used for the carrying out of God’s economy. In order to maintain the unique one accord we all have to learn to do the same thing by the same way. The substances which constitute the unique way for the Lord’s move are prayer and the Spirit, which result in the Word.⁷² The one accord is the key and the life pulse of prayer, the Spirit, and the Word. We may pray much, seek the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and acquire a lot of knowledge from the Word, yet if we are short of the one accord we cannot see the blessing.⁷³

If there had been no one accord on the earth in Acts 1, the powerful and dynamic Spirit could have never been poured out. There would have been no vessels to take Him, receive Him, contain Him, and express Him. Thus, the one accord is critical. It is a response to God’s doing, a coordination or cooperation offered to God for His move. The Lord’s move on God’s side depends upon the consummated Spirit and on our side depends upon one accord. Before the pouring out of the Spirit, there was a group of people praying together with one accord (Acts 1:14). That one accord was a preparation for them to receive the pouring out of the Spirit. After this pouring out, they remained and continued in this one accord along with the three thousand saved on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:46). This one accord was the basic factor of the Lord’s move through the entire book of Acts.⁷⁴

The entire record of the book of Acts also shows us a group of people who always acted as the Body. From the very first chapter neither Peter, John, nor those one hundred twenty acted individually. Rather, all the actions of this group of people were the actions of the one Body. The one hundred twenty prayed together with one accord, and they received the baptism in the Holy Spirit, preached the gospel, bore the testimony of Jesus, and always moved and acted as one Body (1:14; 2:1, 4, 14, 46-47). From chapter one to chapter twenty-eight, the actions of this group of people were the actions of one Body.⁷⁵ The Acts contains a beautiful picture of the one accord in the activities, work, and move of the believers. They always moved in the Body and for the Body.⁷⁶

BREAKING BREAD FROM HOUSE TO HOUSE (vs. 46c)

In the early days, the church in Jerusalem had more than ten or twenty thousand members (Acts 21:20—footnote 1).⁷⁷ On the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit was poured out. As a result three thousand were saved (Acts 2:41).⁷⁸ On another day they had about five thousand (4:4). We are also told that the believers were all the more being added to the Lord and that they multiplied greatly (5:14; 6:1, 7).⁷⁹

After the newly saved ones were baptized into the name of the Lord (v. 41), they immediately began to meet together. The way they met was clearly recorded in the second chapter of Acts. Acts 2:46 says, “And day by day, continuing steadfastly with one accord in the temple and breaking bread from house to house...”⁸⁰ In chapter five, the last verse says, “And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and announcing the gospel of Jesus as the Christ” (v. 42). The early believers did two things. The first thing they did was teach people. We believe that what they taught was surely based on the truths they heard from Peter and John, and they taught from house to house. The second thing they did was announce the gospel of Jesus as the Christ.⁸¹

This verse also shows us that at Pentecost, when the Christians began to meet, their meetings were of two kinds. On the one hand, they had meetings in the temple; these were big meetings. On the other hand, they had meetings in the homes, from house to house; these were small meetings. The actions of the believers on the day of Pentecost were altogether the actions of the Holy Spirit who was poured out upon them. After the newly saved ones were baptized, they began to have big meetings in the temple and also small meetings from house to house.⁸² They had only heard that one message of Peter’s. When they met together, they surely spoke the same thing that Peter did, and they continued to speak from house to house, day by day. The way to meet in mutuality and in speaking is the way God invented, the way God ordained. This way is God’s created way. We must learn to practice the Lord’s Day morning meeting in the way of mutuality in speaking. More people could be saved in this kind of meeting with mutuality and speaking (1 Cor. 14:24).⁸³

The big meetings were held in the temple so that people could be brought in order to gain them. In order to gain the Jewish people, the big meetings in the temple were necessary. This is similar to our practice today. We preach the gospel in the gospel meetings to lead people to salvation. After they have been baptized, we turn them over to the small meetings held from house to house. In these small meetings held from house to house, the newly saved ones can function comfortably, be preserved, and learn to take care of others.⁸⁴

Teaching and preaching were practiced by the believers from house to house. First Corinthians 14 describes the Christian way of meeting when “the whole church comes together in one place” (v. 23). In verse 26 Paul says, “Whenever you come together...”⁸⁵ Thus, the New Testament indicates that each one of us should have a meeting in our home. These home meetings should not be just with our own family; they should also include others. The New Testament also shows us that in addition to having the group meetings in the homes, the entire church should also come together in one place (1 Cor. 14:23).⁸⁶

PARTAKING OF FOOD WITH EXULTATION AND SIMPLICITY OF HEART (vs. 46d)

In the apostle's time the believers had a custom of coming together for supper, the main meal of the day, with the rich bringing more and better food for the mutual enjoyment and the poor, less food. This was called a love feast (2 Pet. 2:13; Jude 12), and it came from the background of the Passover feast (Luke 22:13-20). At the end of their love feast they ate the Lord's supper with the bread and the cup to remember the Lord (vv. 23-25).⁸⁷

The meals among the brothers and sisters cannot be an ordinary meal together. They must be a kind of *agape* as described in Jude 12. That word can be translated as "love feast." In the original language, there is only the word love, not feast. It is in the eating that the love is expressed. In the early churches, the believers often took meals together for the sake of fellowship and worshipping together in love (Acts 2:46). Such feasts were often linked to the Lord's supper (1 Cor. 11:20-21, 33); they were called the *agape*. Hence, when we come together to eat, we express our mutual love one for the other.⁸⁸

In 2:46 we see that the believers "took their food with exultation and simplicity of heart." The believers in this verse not only enjoyed their food, but they partook of it with exultation. To exult means to praise by giving a ringing shout.⁸⁹ Exultation is rejoicing, a crazy joy, a kind of ecstasy. In Acts this eating food with exultation was related to the home meetings. Every day the believers broke bread from house to house and they ate food with exultation, praising God.⁹⁰

The Greek word for "simplicity", *apheloteti*, also means singleness. It describes the heart being simple, single, and plain, having one love and desire and one goal in seeking the Lord. These early believers were simple, single, sincere, and pure in heart.⁹¹ In the book of Acts we see the example God set forth for His church in the beginning. Such were conditions in the early days of the Church's history.⁹²

However, it is apparent that later on some of the believers did not do it properly as in the case of the Corinthian believers. They did not wait for one another (cf. 1 Cor. 11:33). Each took his own supper first. The rich became drunken and the poor were hungry (v. 21). This caused divisions and parties among them (v. 18) and spoiled the Lord's supper. Thus, their eating was not the eating of the Lord's supper (v. 20).⁹³ In this regard the apostle Paul exhorted them to either wait for one another before eating, or if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home before coming to the meeting (vv. 33-34).

Although Brother Nee encouraged the brothers and sisters to open their homes and invite three to five brothers and sisters over for meals and fellowship, he advised them not to prepare anything special. If they prepare too much or too elaborately, the elders have to step in and intervene.⁹⁴ Likewise, in exhorting the preaching of the gospel in the new way, Brother Lee encouraged the saints to open their homes and invite people to their house for meals: "But if you invite people into your homes to have tea and to talk, they will spontaneously be open. If we do this often, the blessing will pour in like great waters. I believe that after half a year you will see sprouts everywhere. Soon there will be a harvest, and the number of people will more than double."⁹⁵

PRAISING GOD (vs. 47a)

According to 2:47a, the believers in the early church life praised God and had favor with all the people. They lived a life that expressed God's attributes in human virtues, as Jesus the Man-Savior did (Luke 2:52).⁹⁶

The Bible tells us that whenever the people of God come together, they should make not merely a joyful voice, but a joyful noise (Psa. 100:1).⁹⁷ Brother Nee once said that if a Christian has never been beside himself, he is not qualified to be a Christian. As Christians we must be outside of ourselves, praising God and having favor with all the people. These are the conditions for the proper increase. In such a condition the Lord can add to the church day by day.⁹⁸

The early believers praised God in their daily living. Praise is the highest work carried out by God's children. We can say that the highest expression of a saint's spiritual life is his praise to God. God's throne is the highest point in the universe, yet He sits "enthroned upon the praises of Israel" (Psa. 22:3). God's name and even God Himself are exalted through praise. We should not only pray to God but also learn all the more to praise God. We need to see the significance of praise at the very beginning of our Christian walk. We must praise God unceasingly. David received grace from God to praise seven times a day. It is a good exercise, a very good lesson, and a very good spiritual practice to praise God every day. We should learn to praise God when we get up early in the morning. We should learn to praise Him when we encounter problems, when we are at a meeting, or when we are alone. We should praise God at least seven times a day.⁹⁹

We do not praise only when there is no burden; we also praise when the burden becomes too heavy. When we encounter unusual circumstances and problems and are bewildered and feel like collapsing, just remember to praise. If we offer our praise at that moment, God's Spirit will operate in us, open all the doors, and break all the chains. Prayer is a warfare, but praise is a victory. Prayer signifies spiritual warfare, but praise signifies spiritual victory. Whenever we praise, Satan flees. Satan hates our praising the most. He will use all his strength to stop our praising. God's children are foolish if they stop praising when they suffer under adverse environments and downtrodden feelings. But as they come to know God more, they will find that even a Philippian jail can become a place of songs (Acts 16:25). Paul and Silas sang hymns. They sang praises to God. They were brought by God to the point where the jail, the shame, and the pain were no longer a problem to them. They could praise God. When they praised in such a way, the doors of the jail opened, the chains fell off, and even the jailer was saved.¹⁰⁰

If we are filled with the Spirit essentially, we will be filled with joy (Acts 13:52). Joy is the very essence of the Spirit because the essential Spirit is the Spirit of joy. Acts 13:52 tells us that when the disciples were filled with the Spirit essentially, they were filled with joy. Joy cannot be separated from the Spirit. Joy is the essence of the inner Spirit and is one of the attributes of the Spirit. Speaking the word of praise, of teaching, and of exhortation is also the result and manifestation of the infilling of the Spirit (Eph. 5:18-19; Col. 3:16). According to Ephesians 5 and Colossians 3, when a saint properly and adequately speaks a word of praise or gives a word of teaching or a word of exhortation in a meeting, he bears the sign of the inward infilling. When one can speak the word of praise to God, the word of teaching to others, or the word of exhortation to the saints, his speaking is a strong manifestation of the infilling of the essential Spirit.¹⁰¹

HAVING GRACE WITH ALL THE PEOPLE (vs. 47b)

Verse 47 says, “Praising God and having grace with all the people.” Grace is the Triune God Himself, processed that we may enter into Him and enjoy Him. In the deepest sense, grace is the Triune God as our enjoyment. It is more than unmerited favor and more than mere outward blessing. We are not merely under God's blessing; we are in His grace (Rom. 5:2).¹⁰² In living a life of praising God daily, the Triune God received and enjoyed by the believers and expressed in their salvation, change in life, holy living, and the gifts they exercised in their meetings, all of which could be seen by others.¹⁰³

In Acts 15:11 we see that the believers were saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus. This grace comprises the Lord's person (Gal. 2:21) and His redemptive work (Rom. 3:24).¹⁰⁴ The grace that Apollo enjoyed in the Lord (Acts 18:27) is God Himself in Christ as the portion to the believers in Christ.¹⁰⁵

In 1 Corinthians 15:10 Paul said, “But by the grace of God I am what I am; and His grace unto me did not turn out to be in vain, but, on the contrary, I labored more abundantly than all of them, yet not I but the grace of God which is with me.” The Grace, mentioned three times in this verse, is the resurrected Christ becoming the life-giving Spirit (v. 45) to bring the processed Triune God in resurrection into us to be our life and life supply that we may live in resurrection. Thus, grace is the Triune God becoming life and everything to us. (John 1:17; Gal. 2:21) It is by this grace that Saul of Tarsus, the foremost of sinners (1 Tim. 1:15-16), became the foremost apostle, laboring more abundantly than all the apostles. His ministry and living by this grace are an undeniable testimony to Christ's resurrection.¹⁰⁶

Paul exhorted the believers in Ephesians 4:29: “Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but only that which is good for building up, according to the need, that it may give grace to those who hear.” Grace is Christ as our enjoyment and supply. Our word should convey such grace to others. The word that builds up others always ministers Christ as grace to the hearer.¹⁰⁷

It is by this grace, which is the resurrection life of Christ, the Macedonian believers overcame the usurpation of temporal and uncertain riches (2 Cor. 8:1) and became generous in ministering to the needy saints.¹⁰⁸ Then in 2 Corinthians 8:7 Paul said, “But just as you abound in everything, in faith and in word and in knowledge and in all earnestness and in the love in you from us, abound in this grace also.” Grace is the act of love shown in the giving of material things to the needy saints. The believers' grace was the issue of God's grace, which was motivating them. In the fellowship concerning the ministry to the saints, the apostle referred to the grace of four parties: (1) the grace of God, which was given to the Macedonian believers to motivate them and enable them to give with liberality (vv. 1-2); (2) the grace of the apostles, which allowed the believers to participate in the ministry to the needy saints (v. 4); (3) the grace of the believers, which was their ministering of material things to the needy ones (vv. 6-7); and (4) the grace of Christ, that He became poor that we might become rich (v. 9). This indicates that the believers' offering of material possessions to the Lord for any purpose should be absolutely a matter of grace, not of human maneuvering.¹⁰⁹

Finally, Acts 2:47c says, “And the Lord added together those who were being saved from day to day.” For the Lord to add together those who were being saved means that He added them together to the church. The Lord added the saved ones together, and their togetherness was the church. This indicates that from the very beginning of their Christian life the early believers were brought into the corporate church life, not living individualistically as Christians separated from one another. We thank the Lord for this picture of the first church life.¹¹⁰

ANALYSIS

From Acts 2:42-47 we find the fifteen practices which the believers firmly and faithfully attended to in the early days of church history after the outpouring of the economical Spirit upon them on the day of Pentecost. They portray the state of the wonderful beginning and prevailing church life in Jerusalem, notwithstanding all the reproach cast upon them, and the afflictions they endured for their faith and practices. In a nutshell:

1. They continued steadfastly in the teaching of the apostles;
2. They continued steadfastly in the fellowship of the apostles;
3. They continued steadfastly in the breaking of bread;
4. They continued steadfastly in the prayers;
5. Fear was upon every soul;
6. Many wonders and signs took place through the apostles;
7. They met together;
8. They had all things common;
9. They sold their properties and possessions and divided them to all;
10. They had a “day by day” church life;
11. They continued steadfastly in one accord;
12. They broke bread from house to house;
13. They partook of their food with exultation and simplicity of heart;
14. They praised God;
15. They had grace with all the people;

Due to the love and enthusiasm of the early believers toward the Lord, they continued steadfastly in one accord in practicing the following *every day*: attending to the teaching of the apostles, remaining in the fellowship of the apostles, teaching the truth, preaching the gospel, meeting together, sharing all things in common, breaking bread from house to house, and partaking of love feasts. They practiced these every day *in the temple* and *from house to house* (Acts 2:46; 5:42).

In Acts 2:46 and 5:42, the Greek word for “from house to house”, *kat’ oikon*, means *house by house* or simply, *in the house* or *at home*. After the church was produced on the day of Pentecost, there were only two places where the early believers in Jerusalem gathered together to meet: the temple and the house of the believers (2:46; 5:42). They reviewed and prophesied to one another what was taught and fellowshiped by the apostles in the temple and in the believers’ homes (2:46); they taught the truth and preached the gospel also in the temple and in the believers’ homes (5:42). But pertaining to the breaking of bread and partaking of food together, Luke only mentioned that they practiced them in the believers’ homes. Such was the situation in the church at that time; it is not difficult to know why.

In the apostle's time, the believers had a custom of coming together for supper for fellowship and worshipping together in love. This was called “*agape*” or a love feast (2 Pet. 2:13; Jude 12), and it came from the background of the Passover feast (Luke 22:13-20). At the end of their love feast they ate the Lord's supper with the bread and the cup to remember the Lord (vv. 23-25). Such feasts were linked to the Lord's supper (1 Cor. 11:20-21, 33). It was customary for the newly converted Jewish believers to hold such feasts not anywhere else but at home, as was in the time the Lord instituted the Lord's table (Matt. 26:26), which had become an everyday practice for them.

Besides, the believers' home, being the only other meeting place, was the only possible venue for the daily supper which was followed by the breaking of bread; it was not practical for them to have their daily Lord's supper at the temple. In teaching and preaching, most likely they met in Solomon's Portico of the temple (cf. Acts 3:11; 5:12) where the Lord Jesus also taught (cf. John 10:23). Solomon's Portico or porch was a covered colonnade along the east side of the outer Court of the Gentiles in Herod's Temple where rabbis normally taught. People regularly gathered there to hear teaching. Hence, the disciples could meet there in the temple to teach and preach, but not to hold a daily feast for a private group of believers, most especially as the Lord's table is a practice which was strange to the unbelieving Jews.

Inasmuch as we do not see in the book of Acts that the early believers rented or bought meeting halls for their assembling together, it is only but normal under the Spirit's leading that they met at where the church regularly met – at home, like the way many churches started. They opened their homes to invite their neighbors, friends, and relatives to preach the gospel to them; they opened their homes for home meetings to cherish and nourish the new believers; they opened their homes for “Bible-study” and to prophesy the teaching and fellowship they heard from the apostles; they opened their homes for prayer. Similarly, they opened their homes for bread-breaking.

In Acts 2:42-47, “breaking of bread” was mentioned twice. It was first mentioned in 2:42: “And they were continuing steadfastly in the teaching and the fellowship of the apostles, in the breaking of bread and the prayers.” The Greek word for “breaking of bread” in this verse is *e klasis touartou* which particularly refers to *the* one and the same bread-breaking which the Lord instituted for the believers to do in remembrance of Him (Luke 22:19). Whereas in Acts 2:46 which says, “And day by day, continuing steadfastly with one accord in the temple and breaking bread from house to house, they partook of their food with exultation and simplicity of heart.” The Greek word for “breaking of bread” in this verse is *klontes arton* which generally refers to common meals (Luke 24:30, 35; Acts 20:11; 27:35) which the believers partook of at home. This is evident from the connection: “breaking bread from house to house, they partook of their food...” The bread of the Hebrews was made commonly into cakes which are thin, hard, and brittle, so that it was broken with hands instead of having it cut with a knife. It was that breaking of bread which they “partook of their food”.

This, however, does not negate the fact that the early believers broke bread to remember the Lord every day in their house, for, as previously mentioned, their daily partaking of a regular meal was followed by their remembrance of the Lord, much like the first Lord's table the Lord had with His disciples (Matt. 26:26).

Nevertheless, the descriptive practice of “house-to-house bread-breaking” in Acts 2:46 does not necessarily convey special emphasis on the believers’ homes where the bread-breaking took place, for everything they practiced they had them in the homes, which happened to be the *only* meeting place owned by the believers; the other being the public portico in the temple, which was not conducive for the Lord’s supper. In short, the partaking of the food and the venue in which the Lord’s supper was held are not the focus of Acts 2:46; rather, the daily partaking of it and the one accord with which the early believers practiced in connection to their corporate living and service are most significant. The venue was *not* and should not be an issue or point of emphasis. In fact, after Acts chapter two, house-to-house Lord’s table meeting was *not* mentioned again. Conversely, in later times the believers met together in one place on the Lord’s Day to break bread together as the Lord provided them the suitable larger venue (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:20).

All these demonstrate that as the early believers took supper together and broke bread daily in the believers’ house, they preached the gospel to unbelievers, shepherded and taught the truth to the newly saved, prophesied what they heard and learned from the apostles to one another – *all* in the believers’ homes. The believers’ home was where the early believers met as the church; it follows that the church broke bread at where they met.

Elsewhere in the New Testament, we find some examples of the church meeting in the house of the believers. The church in Rome met in the house of Prisca and Aquila (Rom. 16:5). While the couple were living in Ephesus (Acts 18:18-19), the church in Ephesus met in their house (1 Cor. 16:19). We also know that the church in Laodicea met in the house of Nymphas (Col. 4:15), and the church in Colossae met in the house of Philemon (Philem. 2). Most certainly the churches that met in these ones’ homes did not meet for bread-breaking only. There as in Acts, the believers must have met together in homes for prayer, preaching, mutual shepherding and teaching, and the breaking of bread. The truth of the matter is: there is no record in the New Testament where we see the believers’ homes were opened solely or primarily for Lord’s table meeting use.

Today, many churches have their own meeting place commonly called a *meeting hall*, which is either built, procured or rented. Other churches have more than one meeting hall. The number and the size of the meeting hall depend on the size of the assembly and other factors of consideration. Nonetheless there are smaller or newly established churches that meet in the believers’ homes, just like what we have seen in the Scriptures. Many churches also have their district bread-breaking meetings in homes, on top of practicing home meetings and small group gatherings from house to house. The house where the church meets is the meeting place of the church in general and not merely for the Lord’s table meeting of the household and neighbors in particular.

Today it is very common to see in the Lord’s recovery churches that are subdivided into districts according to the leading of Brother Lee for a church life structure based on the God-ordained way of gospel, homes, groupings, and districts. The preaching of the gospel is for begetting. The homes are opened for home meetings which are mainly for the feeding and nourishing of the saints, especially new ones. Small group gatherings are for the teaching of the truth. The districts are for the perfecting and building up of the members of the Body of Christ mainly through prophesying.

As regards the bread-breaking meeting, during the initial laboratory stage of the new way in 1986, Brother Lee briefly experimented on setting up bread-breaking meetings at the new ones' home after a certain period of home meetings with them, but always with a view that the new ones will be weaned from the home meetings to the small groupings and larger gatherings of the church. In a year or two Brother Lee conclusively declared that while there may be various venues for the breaking of bread, the district is the *best* venue for bread-breaking meeting on the Lord's Day alongside the district prophesying meeting. Such district meetings for prophesying and breaking of bread may be in the meeting halls, rented venues or in saints' homes. This practice causes the new believers to enjoy the mutuality in speaking while being perfected and built up with other members of the Body.

CONCLUSION

From the above-cited excerpts from the ministry of brothers Nee and Lee and the preceding analysis, we realize that of the fifteen practices of the early believers at the beginning of the church life in Jerusalem mentioned in Acts 2:42-47, there are four items that are most essential and extremely crucial for the believers to have continued steadfastly in, namely, the apostles' teaching, the fellowship of the apostles, the breaking of bread, and the prayer (v. 42). While all the fifteen items speak of the wonderful and prevailing church life in Jerusalem, each having spiritual meaning and significance particularly applicable to the initial church life, some are descriptive, time-specific, and situation-specific:

First, wonders and signs (Acts 2:43) are neither a part of God's central testimony nor a part of God's salvation; they are means used by God to prove that the preaching and ministry of the apostles are of God. At the apostles' time there was the need for signs and wonders to be done through them. No doubt, that caught the attention of the multitude. However, we today should not emphasize wonders and signs.

Second, as called out ones, many of the early believers lived together and met together every day. At a certain point they even assembled themselves a whole year with Barnabas and Saul (Acts 11:26). All the time they were together (Acts 2:44). However, such a practice was no longer continued in later parts of the New Testament. While a church may occasionally experience a day-by-day meeting life as they did in Chefoo for 100 days in 1943, in general we do not come to meet together every day anymore.

Third, on the day of Pentecost the believers put all their possessions together and had all things common (Acts 2:44). They practiced what may be called a communal life. But even as early as chapter six, problems began to arise, and not too long afterward that communal life was discontinued. In the writings of Paul we can see that the communal life described in Acts 2 and 4 was no longer in practice.

Fourth, Acts 2:45 says that the believers sold their possessions and properties and divided them according to need. Although the dynamic salvation of God caused the believers to forget about earthly possessions, having all things common did not become a formal practice in the church life and is not emphasized among the churches.

Fifth, Acts 2:46 says, “And day by day, continuing steadfastly with one accord in the temple and breaking bread from house to house, they took their food with exultation and simplicity of heart.” Due to the love and enthusiasm of the early believers toward the Lord, they met at the believers’ house every day to break bread and to partake of food together.

In the only biblically recorded practice of house-to-house Lord’s table meeting in Acts 2, three things were involved: every day (time), house to house (venue), and breaking of bread (food). According to Acts 2:46, the Lord’s table meeting was held every day, from house to house, and preceded by a meal. These three items describe the house-to-house Lord’s table meeting in Acts 2:46.

Regarding “every day”, instead of partaking of the Lord’s table every day like in earliest church life depicted in Acts 2:46, not long thereafter the believers in Paul’s time partook of it once a week – on the Lord’s Day, the first day of the week which is the day of resurrection (1 Cor. 16:2).

Regarding the venue, after chapter 2, the house-to-house breaking of bread was not mentioned again in Acts or in any of the Epistles. Instead, we see that the early believers came together in one place for the bread-breaking meeting (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:20).

Regarding the food, it is apparent that later on some of the believers did not do it properly as in the case of the Corinthian believers. In this regard the apostle Paul exhorted them to either wait for one another before eating, or if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home before coming to the meeting (1 Cor. 11: 33-34).

It is clear that the Bible is silent regarding the practice of house-to-house Lord’s table meeting after the earliest believers practiced it in Acts 2:46. If this were a point of emphasis in the Word, it would surely have been reemphasized elsewhere in the Scriptures by Paul, Peter, John or any of the other apostles. The attendant details are markedly missing. Only the breaking of bread itself was emphasized, not the details pertaining to its venue or even time. What happened in Acts 2 was the work of the Holy Spirit, and Brother Lee pointed out that the way to meet in the early days was invented and ordained by the Spirit.

The practices of the seminal church life in Acts were not meant for us to follow legalistically without consideration. Rather, with help from the ministry, the divine record opens our eyes to see the principles behind such a prevailing church life full of revival and blessings. While the church in Jerusalem reaped enormous benefits from a daily church life in Acts 2, this did not become a blueprint for other churches to follow altogether. In fact, as previously pointed out, the daily breaking of bread had, by Paul’s time, been transformed into a weekly meeting. To merely copy the “house-to-house” aspect of the Lord’s table meeting in Acts 2:46 and forsake the other two aspects of practicing it every day and the partaking of food preceding it makes it evidently partial, selective, and subjective. If one is to insist on repeating the practices of the early believers at the beginning of the church life as shown to us in Acts 2:42-47 to the letter, shouldn’t he also practice the other items such as wonders and signs, meeting every day, having all things in common, and selling possessions and properties to share among all?

Therefore, to disregard the other points while overemphasizing any of the fifteen practices, especially the extrinsic and non-essential items, makes us not only an unturned cake, but in danger of introducing what may be biblical but yet become factors of discord and division, especially if such minor items are highlighted while totally neglecting the more important and intrinsic ones. We should not be biblical in letter but unscriptural in spirit, manipulating the letter of the Word to advance our proposition with thoughtless unconcern as to its spirit and intent. One should not, for example, push the practice of house-to-house Lord's table meeting in Acts 2 while neglecting, or worse, denying the aspect of the larger Lord's table gatherings of the church. Similarly, one should not supply one's own interpretation of the missing attendant details in the practices in Acts 2 and impose our version of it as the "scriptural way" that others must take. Even more, one should not make the mistake of elevating a descriptive practice such as praying in homes or house-to-house Lord's table meeting into an absolute teaching and truth that others must follow or be disdained.

We must emphasize again that this section of the Word stresses not any outward method or practice but the intrinsic oneness and practical one accord as the solution to all problems and key to all New Testament blessings. Such oneness and one accord was realized in the sphere of the apostles' teaching and fellowship. The believers continued steadfastly in the teaching and fellowship of the apostles. This became the constitution and sphere for their living and work. All their practices stemmed out of such a faithful following. Within such an ambit of teaching and fellowship, they were protected. Under such ministry of the apostles, which was a continuation of the Lord's ministry on earth, the believers received the clear blueprint on how to go on in the church life. In carrying out this blueprint through prayers in one accord, the church prevailed both in condition and in number over the environmental difficulties to carry out the propagation of the resurrected Christ in His ascension, by the Spirit, for the producing of the churches, the kingdom of God.

If there are items which may be considered non-negotiable in Acts 2, it is not the practice of house-to-house Lord's table meeting or selling our possessions to have everything in common, but steadfastly continuing in the apostles' teaching and fellowship. Our focus should be on the teaching and fellowship, because practices result out of our teachings and fellowship. If we do not handle the Word properly by adding or subtracting to it or misrepresenting it, such deviations from the truth will result in misaiming and deviational practices. Truly, many divisions have been brought about by the best of intentions to carry out God's work successfully using methods that may be gleaned from the Bible, yet such do not carry out God's economy but in fact frustrate it. If our fellowship is not universal, we may introduce teachings and practices that are seemingly innocuous and even beneficial to us or our locality, but in reality bring damage to the testimony and oneness of the Body of Christ. To put it plainly, we cannot have any healthy and prevailing practice if we hold on to, or worse, espouse different or erroneous teachings, especially the ones that contradict God's divine administration.

Brothers Nee and Lee both led us in truth and in practices in a very balanced way. In unveiling the divine revelation to us in their ministry, they also led the saints and churches into various healthy practices through which we may accomplish and realize the divine revelation, but they never introduced any practice without basis on the Word. Neither have they ever initiated any practice without regard for the proper teaching and

without sufficient, universal, and protecting fellowship. They were always controlled and directed by the vision of the universal Body of Christ.

Over the last quarter century, the churches and saints have all endeavored to advance according to the blueprint of the Scriptural and God-ordained way for the increase and building up of the church through gospel, homes, groupings, and districts as led by Brother Lee. We all recognize this to be the structure of a proper church life for the building up of the church. Undeniably, despite much frustration from the enemy, the churches in the Lord's recovery have grown in number and in substance. We need not reinvent the wheel at this consummate stage of the recovery, or try to invent something peculiar and brandish it as God's ordained way other than what we have received and learned from the apostles. We simply need to be faithful to follow the footsteps of the flock in practicing what the Lord has revealed to us in these last days through the ministry of the age of our two brothers.

It is most inexpedient for one to use any of the items in Acts 2 as basis for sowing and fomenting discord and rebellion in the church or in the work. Neither the Bible nor brothers Nee and Lee intended for Lord's table meetings to be established outside the fellowship and administration of the church, for to do so would be to establish a divisive table. Such practices were never meant to violate church administration or the order of the Body. On the contrary, the proper practices uphold and benefit the Body, being manifestations of its healthy state. A proper Lord's table meeting expresses the oneness of the universal Body of Christ through the local church under one administration of the eldership. Both brothers Nee and Lee were very mindful and careful of this. Brother Nee never pushed the churches to be under his ministry or to practice something that the leading ones of the church would not take. In his leading on the practice of the God-ordained way, Brother Lee repeatedly charged returning trainees to be humble and to be subject to their elders and not to promote something that will bring about problems in their locality. Doing otherwise will cause us to lose the oneness and one accord, and consequently, the church and the work will suffer loss.

If we are short of the one accord, we will miss the blessing. This blessing does not necessarily equate to a mere increase in number, but to the building up of the universal Body of Christ. It is possible for us to gain an increase in number and build up a seemingly prevailing work which in reality is a private work that does much harm and damage to the Body and the Lord's testimony. This is why it is imperative from the record of Acts 2 that we hold on to the Head and take the Body as our goal, means, and sphere in our living, and more especially in our service.

Moreover, to do a work in the Body is not only to invite people from other places to visit us to learn from us, but to really be open, limited and adjusted by other members in every way. It is not just to seek for the increase of the Body without regard for any abnormal growth, but to seek for its healthy and proper growth. It is to honor and submit to the authority of the Body and the order in the Body as God has ordained. When the early church realized that certain practices which had been beneficial had become a frustration in the church life and a factor for discord, such as the practice of having all things in common, these practices were discontinued. Like them, we need to see, honor and care for the Body and not just the increase or the success of our work. In Acts, the success followed the oneness and one accord, and not the other way around.

May the Lord save us from being awry members propounding lopsided extremes to being balanced members functioning properly in the Body. We must bear in mind that it is not any method or way that will carry out God's economy and bring the Lord back. Rather, it is oneness and one accord that bring forth the commanded blessing. Such an intrinsic oneness manifested in the practical one accord was the reason for a prevailing church life. We must also be mindful that we cannot purport to practice oneness with the Triune God without the practical one accord with the believers. We cannot serve without being a member of the Body, and we cannot have the practical one accord if we do not each carry the cross to be terminated and give ourselves without reservation to be tempered, balanced, blended, restricted, and limited in and by the Body.

March 11, 2010

¹ *Holy Bible Recovery Version, footnote 2, Acts 1:11, LSM*

² *W. Lee, Life-Study of Acts, Msg. 12, Section 1, LSM*

³ *W. Lee, Life-Study of Acts, Msg. 12, Section 1, LSM*

⁴ *W. Lee, The Apostles' Teaching, Chapter 1, Section 1, LSM*

⁵ *W. Lee, Crucial Words of Leading in the Lord's Recovery, Book 2: Leading the Saints to Practice the New Way Ordained by the Lord, Chapter 8, Section 2, LSM*

⁶ *W. Lee, The Ministry of the New Testament and the Teaching and Fellowship of the Apostles, Chapter 2, Section 1, LSM*

⁷ *W. Lee, The Apostles' Teaching, Chapter 1, Section 1, LSM*

⁸ *W. Lee, Elders' Training, Book 09: The Eldership and the God-Ordained Way (1), Chapter 6, Section 5, LSM*

⁹ *W. Lee, The Apostles' Teaching, Chapter 1, Section 2, LSM*

¹⁰ *W. Lee, The Apostles' Teaching, Chapter 6, Section 1, LSM*

¹¹ *W. Lee, Life-Study of Acts, Chapter 12, Section 1, LSM*

¹² *W. Lee, The Apostles' Teaching and the New Testament Leadership, Chapter 1, Section 1, LSM*

¹³ *W. Lee, Life-Study of Acts, Msg. 12, Section 2, LSM*

¹⁴ *W. Lee, Life-Study of Acts, Msg. 12, Section 2, LSM*

¹⁵ *W. Lee, Life-Study of Acts, Msg. 12, Section 3, LSM*

¹⁶ *W. Lee, Our Meetings, Chapter 1, Section 1, LSM*

¹⁷ *W. Lee, Life Lessons, Vol. 2 (#13-24), Chapter 5, Section 3, LSM*

¹⁸ *W. Lee, Life Lessons, Vol. 2, Chapter 17, Section 2, LSM*

¹⁹ *W. Lee, Basic Lessons on Service, Lesson 3, Section 3, LSM*

²⁰ *W. Nee, The Collected Works of Watchman Nee, (Set 3) Vol. 62: Matured Leadings in the Lord's Recovery (2), Chapter 10, Section 1, LSM*

²¹ *W. Lee, Life Lessons, Vol. 2, Chapter 17, LSM*

²² *W. Lee, Preaching the Gospel on the College Campuses, Chapter 2, Section 1, LSM*

²³ *W. Lee, Elders' Training, Book 07: One Accord for the Lord's Move, Chapter 1, Section 2, LSM*

²⁴ *W. Lee, To Serve in the Human Spirit, Chapter 5, Section 2, LSM*

²⁵ *W. Lee, To Serve in the Human Spirit, Chapter 5, Section 1, LSM*

²⁶ *W. Lee, To Serve in the Human Spirit, Chapter 5, Section 2, LSM*

²⁷ *W. Lee, To Serve in the Human Spirit, Chapter 5, Section 3, LSM*

²⁸ *W. Lee, Life-Study of Acts, Chapter 28, Section 1, LSM*

²⁹ *W. Nee, The Collected Works of Watchman Nee, (Set 2) Vol. 37: General Messages (1), Chapter 27, Section 2, LSM*

³⁰ *W. Lee, Life-Study of 1 Peter, Chapter 11, Section 3, LSM*

³¹ *W. Lee, Life-Study of 1 Peter, Chapter 31, Section 3, LSM*

³² *Holy Bible Recovery Version, footnote 2, 1 Cor. 2:3, LSM*

³³ *W. Lee, Life-Study of 1 Peter, Chapter 28, Section 4, LSM*

³⁴ *W. Lee, The Conclusion of the New Testament, (Msgs. 001-020), Chapter 16, Section 5, LSM*

³⁵ *W. Lee, Elders' Training, Book 05: Fellowship Concerning the Lord's Up-to-Date Move, Chapter 8, Section 3, LSM*

³⁶ *Holy Bible Recovery Version, footnote 1, Mark 16:17, LSM*

³⁷ *W. Lee, Crystallization-Study of the Epistle to the Romans, Chapter 23, Section 3, LSM*

³⁸ *W. Lee, Life-Study of Acts, Chapter 17, Section 3, LSM*

³⁹ *W. Lee, Life-Study of Acts, Chapter 39, Section 1, LSM*

⁴⁰ *W. Lee, Life-Study of Acts, Chapter 17, Section 3, LSM*

⁴¹ *W. Lee, How to Meet, Chapter 2, Section 1, LSM*

⁴² *W. Lee, How to Meet, Chapter 2, Section 1, LSM*

⁴³ *W. Lee, Experiencing Christ as the Offerings for the Church Meetings, Chapter 3, Section 2, LSM*

⁴⁴ *W. Lee, Lessons for New Believers, Chapter 8, Section 2, LSM*

⁴⁵ *W. Lee, Lessons for New Believers, Chapter 8, Section 1, LSM*

⁴⁶ *W. Lee, Life-Study of 2 Corinthians, Chapter 46, Section 2, LSM*

⁴⁷ *W. Lee, The Satanic Chaos in the Old Creation and the Divine Economy for the New Creation, Chapter 2, Section 8, LSM*

⁴⁸ *W. Lee, The Conclusion of the New Testament, (Msgs. 157-171), Chapter 6, Section 5, LSM*

⁴⁹ *W. Lee, Truth Lessons, Level 3, Vol. 4, Chapter 6, Section 5, LSM*

⁵⁰ *W. Lee, The Conclusion of the New Testament, (Msgs. 157-171), Chapter 6, Section 5, LSM*

⁵¹ *W. Lee, The Conclusion of the New Testament, (Msgs. 157-171), Chapter 6, Section 5, LSM*

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- ⁵² W. Lee, *The Kingdom*, Chapter 43, Section 6, LSM
- ⁵³ W. Lee, *Life-Study of 2 Corinthians*, Chapter 46, Section 2, LSM
- ⁵⁴ W. Lee, *The History of the Church and the Local Churches*, Chapter 9, Section 6, LSM
- ⁵⁵ W. Lee, *Life-Study of Acts*, Chapter 12, Section 3, LSM
- ⁵⁶ W. Lee, *Life-Study of 2 Corinthians*, Chapter 46, Section 2, LSM
- ⁵⁷ W. Lee, *The Conclusion of the New Testament*, (Msgs. 221-239), Chapter 1, Section 3, LSM
- ⁵⁸ W. Lee, *Life-Study of 2 Corinthians*, Chapter 46, Section 2, LSM
- ⁵⁹ W. Lee, *Life-Study of Acts*, Chapter 12, Section 3, LSM
- ⁶⁰ W. Lee, *Life-Study of Acts*, Chapter 17, Section 3, LSM
- ⁶¹ W. Lee, *Truth Lessons*, Level 3, Vol. 4, Chapter 6, Section 5, LSM
- ⁶² W. Lee, *Life Lessons*, Vol. 2 (#13-24), Chapter 5, Section 2, LSM
- ⁶³ W. Lee, *Fellowship Concerning the Urgent Need of the Vital Groups*, Chapter 7, Section 2, LSM
- ⁶⁴ Ed Marks, *A Day-by-Day Christian Life, Affirmation & Critique*, p.34, LSM
- ⁶⁵ W. Lee, *Crucial Principles for the Proper Church Life*, Chapter 2, Section 3, LSM
- ⁶⁶ W. Lee, *Experiencing the Mingling of God with Man for the Oneness of the Body of Christ*, Chapter 4, Section 1, LSM
- ⁶⁷ W. Lee, *The Indwelling Christ in the Canon of the New Testament*, Chapter 6, Section 1, LSM
- ⁶⁸ W. Lee, *The Indwelling Christ in the Canon of the New Testament*, Chapter 6, Section 3, LSM
- ⁶⁹ W. Lee, *Life-Study of Acts*, Chapter 5, Section 2, LSM
- ⁷⁰ W. Lee, *Lessons for New Believers*, Chapter 12, Section 1, LSM
- ⁷¹ W. Lee, *Elders' Training, Book 07: One Accord for the Lord's Move*, Chapter 1, Section 2, LSM
- ⁷² W. Lee, *Elders' Training, Book 07: One Accord for the Lord's Move*, Chapter 2, Section 1, LSM
- ⁷³ W. Lee, *Elders' Training, Book 07: One Accord for the Lord's Move*, Chapter 1, Section 2, LSM
- ⁷⁴ W. Lee, *Elders' Training, Book 07: One Accord for the Lord's Move*, Chapter 8, Section 1, LSM
- ⁷⁵ W. Lee, *A General Sketch of the New Testament in the Light of Christ and the Church - Part 1: The Gospels and the Acts*, Chapter 8, Section 4, LSM
- ⁷⁶ W. Lee, *A General Sketch of the New Testament in the Light of Christ and the Church - Part 1: The Gospels and the Acts*, Chapter 8, Section 4, LSM
- ⁷⁷ Holy Bible Recovery Version, footnote 1, Acts 21:20, LSM
- ⁷⁸ W. Lee, *On Home Meetings*, Chapter 3, Section 1, LSM
- ⁷⁹ W. Lee, *The Life and Way for the Practice of the Church Life*, Chapter 12, Section 1, LSM
- ⁸⁰ W. Lee, *Life-Study of Acts*, Chapter 12, Section 3, LSM
- ⁸¹ W. Lee, *Speaking for God*, Chapter 5, Section 1, LSM
- ⁸² W. Lee, *Speaking for God*, Chapter 5, Section 1, LSM
- ⁸³ W. Lee, *Elders' Training, Book 05: Fellowship Concerning the Lord's Up-to-Date Move*, Chapter 5, Section 1, LSM
- ⁸⁴ W. Lee, *Speaking for God*, Chapter 5, Section 1, LSM
- ⁸⁵ W. Lee, *Elders' Training, Book 05: Fellowship Concerning the Lord's Up-to-Date Move*, Chapter 5, Section 1, LSM
- ⁸⁶ W. Lee, *The Holy Word for Morning Revival, Topics for New Believers*, Vol. 1, Chapter 6, Section 6, LSM
- ⁸⁷ Holy Bible Recovery Version, footnote 1, 1 Corinthians 11:21, LSM
- ⁸⁸ W. Nee, *The Collected Works of Watchman Nee*, (Set 3) Vol. 62: *Matured Leadings in the Lord's Recovery* (2), Chapter 10, Section 4, LSM
- ⁸⁹ W. Lee, *Fellowship Concerning the Urgent Need of the Vital Groups*, Chapter 7, Section 2, LSM
- ⁹⁰ W. Lee, *The Home Meetings*, Chapter 2, Section 2, LSM
- ⁹¹ W. Lee, *Life-Study of Acts*, Chapter 12, Section 3, LSM
- ⁹² W. Nee, *The Normal Christian Church Life*, Chapter 9, Section 7, LSM
- ⁹³ Holy Bible Recovery Version, footnote 1, 1 Corinthians 11:21, LSM
- ⁹⁴ W. Nee, *The Collected Works of Watchman Nee*, (Set 3) Vol. 62: *Matured Leadings in the Lord's Recovery* (2), Chapter 10, Section 3, LSM
- ⁹⁵ W. Lee, *Rising Up to Preach the Gospel*, Chapter 2, Section 6, LSM
- ⁹⁶ W. Lee, *Life-Study of Acts*, Chapter 12, Section 3, LSM
- ⁹⁷ W. Lee, *Fellowship Concerning the Urgent Need of the Vital Groups*, Chapter 7, Section 2, LSM
- ⁹⁸ W. Lee, *Fellowship Concerning the Urgent Need of the Vital Groups*, Chapter 7, Section 2, LSM
- ⁹⁹ W. Lee, *Praising*, Chapter 1, Section 1, LSM
- ¹⁰⁰ W. Nee, *Messages for Building Up New Believers* (1), Chapter. 16, LSM
- ¹⁰¹ W. Lee, *The Scriptural Way to Meet and to Serve for the Building Up of the Body of Christ*, Chapter 14, Section 1, LSM
- ¹⁰² Holy Bible Recovery Version, footnote 2, Rom. 5:2, LSM
- ¹⁰³ Holy Bible Recovery Version, footnote 1, Acts 11:23, LSM
- ¹⁰⁴ Holy Bible Recovery Version, footnote 1, Acts 15:11, LSM
- ¹⁰⁵ Holy Bible Recovery Version, footnote 1, Acts 18:27, LSM
- ¹⁰⁶ Holy Bible Recovery Version, footnote 1, 1 Cor. 15:10, LSM
- ¹⁰⁷ Holy Bible Recovery Version, footnote 3, Eph. 4:29, LSM
- ¹⁰⁸ Holy Bible Recovery Version, footnote 1, 2 Cor. 8:1, LSM
- ¹⁰⁹ Holy Bible Recovery Version, footnote 5, 2 Cor. 8:7, LSM
- ¹¹⁰ W. Lee, *Life-Study of Acts*, Chapter 12, Section 3, LSM