

COMMUNITY



4. Community in the Early Church

We have been learning what it means to live in community. This begins with our family, and over the past weeks we have shared about our parents and siblings.



Let's talk about the place where we lived during our childhood. Perhaps you lived in a number of different houses, but choose just one to tell us about.

What would you do if three thousand people suddenly joined your church? This is what happened in the early church. After Jesus had risen from the dead and ascended back into heaven, a hundred and twenty of his followers gathered in a room to pray. On the Day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit was poured out upon them, and they began to speak in tongues. People ran to see what was going on, and so Peter began to speak to them. Many repented of their sin and believed in the Lord Jesus, and the number kept growing. There was no place big enough to meet in, so they went to the temple courts to hear the apostles preach, and then they met in one another's homes.



Acts 2:42-47

- ❶ What did these first believers do when they met together in homes? See verses 46-47
- ❷ One of the things they did together was to break bread. What did this signify? See Luke 22:19, Luke 24:30-31, Acts 20:7

We are going to break bread together today. (*Prepare a cup of grape juice or something similar and a bun in advance.*)

- ❸ Read together 1 Corinthians 10:16-17.
- ❹ *Take the cup.* When we take the cup we are participating in the blood of Christ. This reminds us that he died and shed his blood so our sin can be forgiven. Let's examine our hearts and confess any sin in our lives. Then drink and give thanks for what he has done for you.
- ❺ *Take the bread.* The bread represents the body of Christ which was broken for us. It reminds us that we have received the life of Jesus and we all belong to one body. It cost Jesus his life, so we could become one and be a true community. Eat the bread and give thanks that we are now part of the Body of Christ.

Each of us who believes in the Lord Jesus are part of his body. In Romans 12:5 it says, "So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another." When we gather together as believers, whether it is in a special building or a home, we are a community. Jesus promised that when we gather together, he will be among us. Your family may not be believers yet, but you belong to the family of God. It's important that each one of us find a group, a community, a church, we can be a part of, so that we can be encouraged and encourage others. As it says in Hebrews 10:25, "Let us not neglect our meeting together, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near."