

The First Church

42 All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord's Supper), and to prayer.

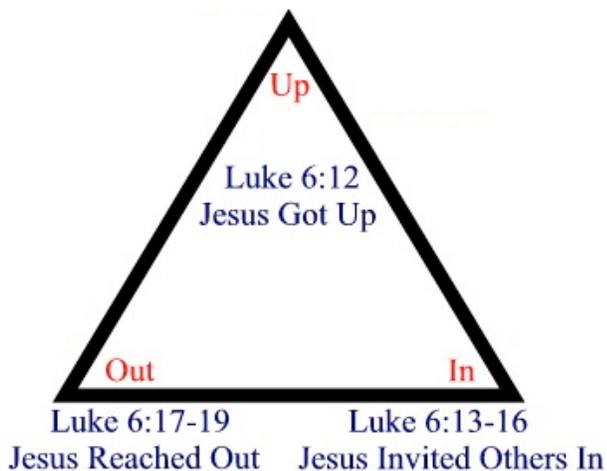
43 A deep sense of awe came over them all, and the apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders. 44 And all the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had. 45 They sold their property and possessions and shared the money with those in need. 46 They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity— 47 all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved. Acts 2:42-47 (NLT)

**CRITICAL NOTE!!!:** This passage MUST go beyond head knowledge. If our church/your group simply sits and talks about this passage in historical context (what they did), in theory (churches should in general...), or with finger pointing (that church over there/in my past did this part bad)... then let's be honest, we missed the point.

This passage really needs to be taken to heart, and let it cut us & shape our community. I would highly recommend that you observe the text quickly (it's packed yet straight forward), answer any questions about it quickly (interpretation), and move into application for the majority of your time (let this text be a mirror!!!)

**CRITICAL NOTE #2:** As we're talking in Home Group Leader Training, sometimes passages are descriptive (this is what the early church did, how should we apply it in today's culture?), sometimes passages are prescriptive (do this....). And, determining this isn't an exact science. This should be held in tension. For example, v.44-45, if it's just "descriptive," the tendency is to explain it away (and simply live our isolate American lifestyles). On the other hand, if it's "prescriptive," the tendency is to become legalistic and become the lifestyle police. All this to say, ENTER INTO THE TENSION OF THIS, no trite answers will do, and it needs to be discussed as a mirror to our lives/community, not in theory!!!

**CRITICAL NOTE #3:** Keith taught this passage using a Triangle describing three "spheres" of relationships, based on Jesus and the Acts 2 Passage. This guide is written with that as a framework... it's by no means the only way to discuss this passage,... in fact, it's probably very high level and doesn't go as deep as one could take the passage. But, if we are using this passage as a mirror and focusing on application, it works real well!



\* As discussed in Riverside's HGLT (Home Group Leader Training), these guides are to be starting points for home group leaders to develop their own guides and approaches to leading group discussions. This is a resource tool, not a rigid "go through this guide word-for-word." There are intentionally too many questions for a single home group time. This guides rely heavily on a few other study guides; including: Serendipity NT for Groups by the Young Life ministry (ISBN is N/A), "Acts: Seeing God's Power in Action" by Phyllis LePeau (ISBN 9780830830077), "Acts: Seeing the Spirit Work" by John Stott (ISBN 0851113907), "Acts" by N.T.Wright (ISBN 9780830821853), "Acts" by NavPress (ISBN 0891091122), "Acts" by Blackaby (ISBN 9781418526429), "Acts: The Spread of the Gospel" by John MacArthur (ISBN 9781418508746), "Book of Acts" by Max Lucado (ISBN 0849953006).

**Observation** (what does the text say?) **Interpretation** (what does it mean?) **Application** (what does it mean to me/us?)

**Discussion/Topic Starters** (Ice Breakers)

- If you were to ask 10 people on the street what the “church is” and what the “church is about”, what do you think the different answers would be?
- O: What things in the text strike you or jump out at you? Why?

**v.42-47**

- O: What are the ways the Church Pursued God together (UP)?
- O: What are the ways the Church Pursued deep community together (IN)?
- O: What are the ways the Church made an impact of the world around it (OUT)?

I: Any questions about the early church after observing the text?

A: What area is going well in your (individual life)? What area might be lagging?

A: Which of these three areas do you see our home group strong in? Why?

A: Which of these three areas do you see our home group lagging in? Why? BE HONEST!

Now.... how can we do better as a group? Note: be very practical, and honest with yourselves.

A: Which of these three areas do you see our church as a hole lagging in? Why? BE HONEST!

Now., how can you individually/us as a group help take the lead in strengthening this area for our church?  
Note: be very practical, and honest with yourselves, and don't let the “well they should do a better job of 'xyz'” surface. WE are the church, so how can we help the broader church grow in this area!?

**Recommended Follow-up:**

- Read: Next week's sermon (10/14//2012) will focus on Acts 3.1-10. Take time prior to next Sunday to read & study the passage, pray through the passage, meditate on the passage, etc.