

“MEMBERSHIP HAS ITS PRIVILEGES”

Acts 2:42-47

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INTRODUCTION

In Acts 2:41 we see that the first converts to the Christian faith “received the Word” (were saved), were “baptized” (made a public profession), and were then “added to” the assembly (became members of the body).

Question: **Have you done these three things?** *Notice that these early believers had no hesitation to join the church and to identify themselves with the other Christians.*

Why do some hesitate today?

Some Good reasons

- Check for Scriptural doctrines
- Ability to grow through the teaching
- Are there godly standards?
- Can there be wholesome fellowship?
- Are the people loving and friendly?
- Is the church too “inclusive”?
- Is the leadership dictatorial?
- Does the church go to seed on minor Issues? (translations, dress, etc.)
- Is there a wholesome emphasis on evangelism and missions?

Some Bad Reasons

A bad experience in some other church or with a pastor
Membership may require some life changes.
Might be pressure on me to give/tithe.
I might be expected to get involved
I can do it myself at home—not important.
I disagree with some minor interpretations.
I don’t like to “join” organizations.
I come from a different background.
My family opposes me joining.

We are not perfect—who is? We do have challenges! You can help us meet them and overcome them.

Now, if you won’t join SUCH A CHURCH (not limited to this one), you are being disobedient.

Once these new believers joined the Jerusalem church, what good habits did they practice?

“A church with good habits will experience the habitual blessing of God.”

The Church must demonstrate DEVOTION, LOVE, and POWER.

I. THE HABITS OF THE BELIEVERS

A. Demonstration of Devotion [*In Activities, areas, and attitudes.*]

1. Activities (42)—“they continued steadfastly”—persistently (same verb in 1:14; 2:46)

a. **Apostolic** _____—Here for catechism and discipleship (*kerygma* in speeches) What kind of desire do you have for Bible Study? The apostles were the scribes of the kingdom. Their words became a tradition—a deposit. They became recorded in Scripture—Gospels, Acts, Speeches, Epistles. True Apostolic succession is when churches continue in the **apostolic teachings**.

b. _____—With the apostles, yes; but much broader.

- With Christ (I Cor. 1:9)
- Through the Spirit (II Cor. 13:13)
- With the Father (I Jn. 1:1-3 We become “partakers of the divine nature.”)
- As brethren with one another.
- Includes common life (v. 44—eating, Lord’s supper, etc.; common worship (v. 46); common work (Phil. 1:5); common suffering (Phil. 3:10); common sharing (Acts 2: 44-45); IT EVEN INCLUDES BUSINESS MEETINGS!

Life for believers used to center around the church!

c. **Breaking of** _____ (cf. Acts 20:7; I Cor. 10:16; 11:24)

d. _____—At the Temple; in home gatherings of believers.

Prayer was a huge priority for early believers. So it should be for us!

2. Areas (46)

a. “Together” (44, 46)

b. In the _____ (Joint gatherings)

c. _____ (Small groups, later becoming house churches)

3. Attitudes

a. _____ of God (43a) Everyone kept feeling a sense of awe.

b. Unity of _____ (46a) Day by day continuing with one mind.

c. Exuberant _____ (46b; 47a): “gladness”; “praising God”

d. _____ (46b) “sincerity” or “simplicity” of heart.