

### APPLICATION

- Church community is more than just attending a worship service together. Starting this week, what can you do to build and strengthen your relationships in church? How do you think Christians can grow in their love for one another?
- Is there something preventing you from sharing your life and building with your church community? Take some time this week to reflect, pray, and ask God for wisdom on what to do next. A conversation with a fellow believer may be helpful.
- Ask God for two or three people that you can encourage this week. Determine practical things you can do to help them.

### PRAYER

- Thank God for your church community. Ask Him for the grace to continue building and sharing your life with God's people beyond the worship service and the Victory group meeting.
- Ask God to use you to encourage people to keep on meeting together as a church community. Pray that God will use you to bless others.
- Pray for those who may be having difficulty connecting in the church and now prefer meeting online. In spite of the available alternatives, pray that people will not lose their zeal in meeting together face-to-face and praying for one another.

### WARM-UP

- Have you ever joined a group of people that share a common interest or hobby? Tell us about your experience.
- Recall an unforgettable meal you had with your family or friends. What made this experience special?
- Tell us about one of the greatest sacrifices a family member or friend made for you. What did you learn from this experience?

**WORD** *And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.*

**ACTS 2:42**

(Read also **ACTS 2:43-47**.)

Acts 2 started with an account of what happened on the day of Pentecost. People had just experienced a powerful manifestation of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-4). After this, Peter preached a sermon that gripped the hearts of people, which resulted in around 3,000 people putting their faith in Jesus Christ and being added to the Church. After hearing of Jesus' love and sacrifice and putting their trust in Him, they wanted to know Him more. As a result, the Church grew not just in number but also in devotion to God and their relationships in community. We will look at this today.

**1** | The Church was devoted to loving God and one another.

*And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. ACTS 2:42*

The early Church displayed hunger to know God more. They spent time with Him as they prayed together. They not only studied God's word (*the apostles' teaching*) together, but also spent time to fellowship, eat, and partake of communion (*the breaking of bread*) as a community. Why is it important to study God's word with other believers? How have the last few years limited our face-to-face interactions with our church community? How have you learned to value fellowship with believers in spite of limitations and restrictions?

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**2** | The Church was devoted to sharing lives and making sacrifices for one another.

*<sup>44</sup>And all who believed were together and had all things in common. <sup>45</sup>And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. <sup>46</sup>And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts . . .*

**ACTS 2:44-46**

Believers gathering together and sharing all they had in common speak of communion and participation. The early Church not only shared their time and food with one another, they also shared their lives. They worshiped God together, welcomed people in their homes, and sacrificially gave to help those in need. Just like any relationship, our relationship with God and with God's people grows in quantity and quality time. Sharing lives in a church community includes being sensitive to the needs of others and to the leading of the Holy Spirit to address those needs. It means doing things together as a group of believers. How do Matthew 25:34-40 and 1 John 4:20-21 relate loving God to loving and sharing our possessions with one another? What are practical things Christians can do today to grow in their love for one another?

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