

The Apostles Teaching - 18 Mar 2018

Acts 2:42 -47

What was the lifestyle that these new followers of Christ adopted? They DEVOTED themselves to the apostles' teaching, to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to prayer. In the 21st Century, I think this looks like followers of Christ setting aside time and energy to study God's Word, to participate in a local body of believers, to share food (both the Lord's Supper and fellowship meals) and to pray.

To [devote](#) yourself means to "concentrate on a particular task." It can also mean "to appropriate by or as if by a vow." How would my life and my discipleship look different if I really and truly concentrated on those four areas? If I committed myself to them as if by a vow?

The four activities of the earliest church are introduced to us as priorities of the church, a healthy church is therefore one that carries these four activities. These are the four things to which these saints devoted themselves. These were not options. These were the fruit of a genuine conversion and of life in Christ, therefore we should also also devote ourselves to these four things – the apostles' teaching, to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

Today we will look at one of these activities

"the apostles' teaching" = Peter's sermons in [Acts 2](#) through 4. ie = gospel and the saving work of Jesus was the fulfillment of many Old Testament prophecies. Peter's teaching of the Gospel can be summed up as, Jesus had to be rejected, crucified, buried, and raised from the dead. And the later teachings in the letters or epistles, written by the other apostles including Paul who would be recognised as an apostle to the Gentiles.

Not a perfect church – still made up of fallen sinners; bear in mind that the apostles still learning i.e. setting aside the old Jewish food laws (as per [Mark 7:19](#)). the church was for Jew and Gentile believers ([Ephesians 2-3](#)). The issue of circumcision and law-keeping for Gentiles was to be tackled in chapter 15 (the Jerusalem Council).

Reverential awe came over everyone, and many wonders and miraculous signs came about by the apostles ([Acts 2:43](#)). God blessed the church ∴ following God's will (but care also for false signs?)

The apostles' teaching has been preserved in the New Testament Scriptures, so that we have their instruction as well as the early church. We need to take this on board and apply it

The word apostle that appears in the New Testament come from the Greek word [apostolos](#) which means "messenger" or "sent one." The original twelve apostles were chosen and commissioned by Christ to carry the message of the Gospel to the world. When Jesus commissioned his men in [Matthew 28:18-20](#) he told them to "teach all that I have commanded you." So the apostles were given a teaching assignment from the start!

So what were they teaching? We see in Acts 1 and 2 and throughout the Book of Acts that they were teaching from the Hebrew Scriptures (the Old Testament) and using them to point to Jesus as the long-promised Messiah. They were also teaching what Jesus had said and done, and it was obvious to the people who heard them they had been with Jesus ([Acts 4:13](#)). Their experiences with Jesus were later written down as the Gospels, and combined with their letters (epistles) they form the bulk of the New Testament.

The bottom line is that "the apostles' teaching" that the early Christians were devoted to in [Acts 2:42](#) was what we now refer to as The Bible. Our devotion to Jesus Christ, the Living Word, will be reflected in our devotion to the Bible, the written Word of God, Timothy's second letter tells us "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in

righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work”. (2Ti 3:16-17 NIV).

Just like the early church, we want to make more than converts: we want to make disciples. And to do this, we must be rooted and built up in Christ ([Col 2:6-7](#)) through our interaction with his Word. With the enabling of the Holy Spirit, we can devote ourselves to study, memorization, and meditation on the Word of God. In other words, to the apostles’ teaching.

They grew in knowledge of the truth by attending to the teaching of the Apostles, not a formulated doctrine to which they gave their consent, as that did not exist at that time – our understanding grows over time and is not static, however as we understand more, it does not contradict that which came before, if someone tells you something (even if its the Church Leaders or Preacher) that contradicts your understanding, check it against the scriptures – if it contradicts them, then it is almost certainly wrong; in this world, the devil (which means deceiver), always tries to confuse and mis-lead us, John warns us “Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God”. (1Jn 4:1-3 a NIV).