**THE BOOK OF ACTS BIBLE STUDY NOTES**

**THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE BELIEVERS**

(ACTS 2:40-47; 3:1-10)

**ACTS 2:40-47**

*And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, “Be saved from this [*[*l*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts%202&version=NKJV#fen-NKJV-26990l)*]perverse generation.”****41****Then those who [*[*m*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts%202&version=NKJV#fen-NKJV-26991m)*]gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them.****42****And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ [*[*n*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts%202&version=NKJV#fen-NKJV-26992n)*]doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.****43****Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles.****44****Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common,****45****and [*[*o*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts%202&version=NKJV#fen-NKJV-26995o)*]sold their possessions and goods, and divided[*[*p*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts%202&version=NKJV#fen-NKJV-26995p)*] them among all, as anyone had need.*

***46****So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart,****47****praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added [*[*q*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts%202&version=NKJV#fen-NKJV-26997q)*]to the church daily those who were being saved.*

Verse 41 tells us the response. “So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and there were added that day about three thousand souls.” Though we do not know the total size of the group that was listening, a very large number of these devout Jews did understand Peter’s message and followed through with repentance. We need to remember that this was a radical departure from their practice of Judaism. Though repentance and ceremonial cleansing were always a part of Judaism, being baptized in the name of Jesus Christ was new. In addition, it has only been just over seven weeks since Jesus had been crucified, so this was a very risky action in view of the hatred the religious leaders had for Jesus. But about 3,000 of them understood that there was greater risk in remaining unrepentant, so they publically identified themselves with Christ as a sign of their repentance. They probably used the ceremonial baths that were located at the base of the temple for the baptisms.

1. **Those that were saved continued in the Apostle’s doctrine**

But the response of these 3,000 did not stop at baptism, for verse 42 says that “they were continually devoting themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.” Salvation from sin is not about some deed of righteousness to gain forgiveness of sin, but rather it a repentance that turns from a false faith to faith in Christ and a radically changed way of life. The church has just been born and these new believers quickly recognized four basic elements that were to be the focus of their lives.

Continually devoting” is the idea of “giving constant attention to,” of “being steadfast” and “persevering.” These early Christians set the proper example for us to follow in “continually devoting themselves” to these basic elements of church life. I think it is safe to say that most professing Christians today do not follow this example. They make a false dichotomy between secular and sacred so that “church life” is separate and distinct from the rest of life. They claim that being a Christian is part of what they are, but it is not the focus of their life. There are many other things that make up their life and Christianity is something that is just added to the mix of those many things. The result is both a weak church and weak Christians. When the body does not function correctly, then both the whole and the individual parts that make it up are unhealthy.

1. **The continued to have concern for one another**

We will see throughout Acts that these early Christians had a commitment to Christ and one another that defined who they were. As Paul put it in [Galatians 2:20](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gal%202.20), he was crucified with Christ and no longer lived, but the life he now lived was Christ living in him. Being followers of Christ is to be first and foremost with the other things of life added to that and not the other way around.

1. **They continued to commune with the congregation**

**Fellowship** is the next basic element of church life. Many people think of fellowship as just getting together and talking. That is just socializing. Fellowship is much more than that. The word for fellowship, koinwniva, / koinônia, is the same word we translate as communion. It signifies close mutual relationships and partnerships with one another because of some common bond. For the Christian, that bond is salvation in Jesus Christ. While socialization is a part of it, fellowship goes way beyond that to sacrificially ministering to one another according to how God has gifted you. It is putting into practice all the “one another” verses – love, devotion, building up, encouraging, accepting, forbearing admonishing, caring, being kind, helping, esteeming, comforting, etc. The is the “body life” described in [Eph. 4](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.%204) in which each one helps the other become more mature in Christ.

1. **They continued to celebrate while the Lord added converts**

This was before persecution arose so they would meet in large groups in the temple as well as in smaller groups in homes. They did this day by day, not week by week, for the church consists of people, not buildings, and its strength is the relationship between those people. They were unified “with one mind” because they all had a common faith. The temple meetings were probably focused on prayer since Jesus had said that was supposed to be a house of prayer ([Mt. 21:13](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.%2021.13)). They would not have been participating in any of the sacrifices since Jesus was the sacrifice that had been made once for all ([Heb. 9:12](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb.%209.12)). It is a safe assumption that they were also telling others at the temple about Jesus Christ.

The meetings from house to house would have included the four elements in verse 42, discussion of the apostles’ doctrine, fellowship, the Lord’s supper, and prayers while also sharing a meal together. They did all of this with great joy and humble hearts giving praise to God. It is no wonder that they were having good will from all the people. Happy, humble people are the kind of folks anyone likes to be around. Does that description fit you? Do you like being with God’s people? The meetings from house to house would have included the four elements in verse 42, discussion of the apostles’ doctrine, fellowship, the Lord’s supper, and prayers while also sharing a meal together. They did all of this with great joy and humble hearts giving praise to God. It is no wonder that they were having good will from all the people. Happy, humble people are the kind of folks anyone likes to be around. Does that description fit you? Do you like being with God’s people?

ACTS 3:1-10

**ACTS 3:1-10**

*Now Peter and John went up together to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour.****2****And a certain man lame from his mother’s womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to [*[*a*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts%203&version=NKJV#fen-NKJV-26999a)*]ask alms from those who entered the temple;****3****who, seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, asked for alms.****4****And fixing his eyes on him, with John, Peter said, “Look at us.”****5****So he gave them his attention, expecting to receive something from them.****6****Then Peter said, “Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk.”****7****And he took him by the right hand and lifted him up, and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength.****8****So he, leaping up, stood and walked and entered the temple with them—walking, leaping, and praising God.****9****And all the people saw him walking and praising God.****10****Then they knew that it was he who sat begging alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple; and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.*

1. **His Condition**

This man had been crippled all of his life. Friends of his would carry him to the gate of the temple so that he could beg for alms from the people. There would have been several good places for begging, but this would have been one of the most effective because those entering the temple would have already been in a mindset for giving alms as they went in to pray or offer their sacrifices.

The particular location they would place him was at a gate called “Beautiful.” It is thought that this was probably the Nicanor gate on the east side of the temple that separated the Court of the Women from the Court of the Gentiles. This particular gate was noteworthy because it was made of Corinthian brass and was very large. Josephus comments that it took 20 men to close the doors.

When this beggar saw Peter and John coming to the temple he begins to ask them for alms.

1. **His Command**

Since this man had been at this gate on a daily basis begging for alms, we do not know why he had not met Jesus at some earlier time, or if he had met Jesus why he had not been healed earlier. We can be certain that he had heard from others about the miracles of healing that Jesus had performed, but being lame he could not have searched for Jesus himself. We also do not know what Peter saw in the man while he was staring at him, but we do know from verse 16 that there was some indication of faith on this man’s part. Perhaps it was the reaching up to take Peter’s right hand in response to Peter’s words.

Notice that Luke, a physician, describes in detail the events of this healing. Peter takes him by the right hand and lifts the beggar up. There is an immediate strengthening of this man’s feet and ankles. Verse 8 further describes what this man was able to do immediately. (vs. 8) “And with a leap, he stood upright and [began] to walk; and he entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God.”

1. **His Cure**

This is not a case of Peter pulling the man up, but as Peter begins to lift him up the man feels the strengthening and stands up with a leap and begins to walk. Remember that this man had been lame from birth. He had never done this before. This is also a miracle of not just medical healing, but also immediate training of his brain to be able to walk. People have learn to walk, and every parent knows there a lot of falls as their little ones learn that ability.This man’s first step is a leap up and the text says that he continued to do so. He followed Peter and John into the temple walking and leaping and praising God. He had received something not only better than silver and gold, but undoubtedly beyond his greatest dreams.

1. **His Celebration**

Verses 9 & 10 record the immediate response of the people. 9 “And all the people saw him walking and praising God; 10 and they were taking note of him as being the one who used to sit at the Beautiful Gate of the temple to [beg] alms, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.” The people recognized him immediately because they had been seeing this lame beggar by the Beautiful Gate on a daily basis. Now he is walking around in the temple and praising God. No wonder they were filled with wonder and amazement. But that was exactly what the miracles, signs and wonders of the apostles were supposed to cause.