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(Continuation from last week 01/15/14)

The First Church: Worthy Traits

THE BIRTH AND GROWTH OF THE CHURCH, Acts 2:1-7:60

The First Church: Worthy Traits, Acts 2:41-47

2. (Acts 2:42) Steadfastness: the early believers were a people who “continued steadfastly” in four things.

Acts 2:42 (NASB)

⁴²“They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.”

It Was a Fellowshiping Church

Acts 2:42 (NASB)

⁴²“They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.”

Fellowship is the spiritual duty of believers to stimulate each other to **holiness** and **faithfulness**. It is most specifically expressed through the “**one anothers**” of the New Testament (cf. Romans 12:10, 16; Romans 13:8; Romans 14:19; Romans 15:5, 7, 14; Romans 16:16; Galatians 5:13; Ephesians 4:2, 25, 32; Ephesians 5:21; Philippians 2:3; Colossians 3:9, 13, 16; 1 Thessalonians 4:9, 18, 1 Thessalonians 5:11, 13; Hebrews 3:13; 1 Peter 1:22; 1 Peter 4:8-10; 1 Peter 5:5, etc.).

Romans 12:10 (NASB)

¹⁰“Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor.”

Romans 12:16 (NASB)

¹⁶“Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation.”

Romans 13:8 (NASB)

⁸“Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled *the* law.”

Romans 14:19 (NASB)

¹⁹“So then we pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another.”

Romans 15:5 (NASB)

⁵“Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus.”

Romans 15:7 (NASB)

⁷“Therefore, accept one another, just as Christ also accepted us to the glory of God.”

Romans 15:14 (NASB)

¹⁴“And concerning you, my brethren, I myself also am convinced that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able also to admonish one another.”

Romans 16:16 (NASB)

¹⁶“Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ greet you.”

Galatians 5:13 (NASB)

¹³“For you were called to freedom, brethren; only *do not turn* your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.”

Ephesians 4:2 (NASB)

²“With all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love.”

Ephesians 4:25 (NASB)

²⁵“Therefore, laying aside falsehood, **SPEAK TRUTH EACH ONE of you WITH HIS NEIGHBOR**, for we are members of one another.”

Ephesians 4:32 (NASB)

³²“Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.”

Ephesians 5:21 (NASB)

²¹“And be subject to one another in the fear of Christ.”

Philippians 2:3 (NASB)

³“Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves.”

Colossians 3:9 (NASB)

⁹“Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its *evil* practices.”

Colossians 3:13 (NASB)

¹³“Bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.”

Colossians 3:16 (NASB)

¹⁶“Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms *and* hymns *and* spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.”

1 Thessalonians 4:9 (NASB)

⁹“Now as to the love of the brethren, you have no need for *anyone* to write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another.”

1 Thessalonians 4:18 (NASB)

¹⁸“Therefore comfort one another with these words.”

1 Thessalonians 5:11 (NASB)

¹¹“Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing.”

1 Thessalonians 5:13 (NASB)

¹³“And that you esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Live in peace with one another.”

Hebrews 3:13 (NASB)

¹³“But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is *still* called “Today,” so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.”

1 Peter 1:22 (NASB)

²²“Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, ferently love one another from the heart.”

1 Peter 4:8-10 (NASB)

⁸“Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins.

⁹Be hospitable to one another without complaint.

¹⁰As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.”

1 Peter 5:5 (NASB)

⁵“You younger men, likewise, be subject to *your* elders; and all of you, **clothe yourselves with humility toward one another**, for **GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE.**”

Acts 2:42 (NASB)

⁴²“They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching **and to fellowship**, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.”

The basic meaning of *koinōnia* (fellowship) is “partnership,” or “sharing.” Those who receive Jesus Christ become partners with Him and with all other believers (**1 John 1:3**).

1 John 1:3 (NASB)

³“What we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too **may have fellowship with us**; and **indeed our fellowship** is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.

That fellowship is permanent, because our shared eternal life is forever. The joy associated with it, however, may be lost through sinful neglect of its duties.

For a Christian to fail to participate in the life of a local church is inexcusable.

In fact, those who choose to isolate themselves are disobedient to the direct command of Scripture.

Hebrews 10:24-25 charges believers to “**consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds**, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more, as you see the day drawing near.”

The Bible does not envision the Christian life as one lived apart from other believers. All members of the universal church, the body of Christ, are to be actively and intimately involved in local assemblies.