

# Readings

## Scripture

<sup>42</sup> And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. <sup>43</sup> And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. <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, <sup>47</sup> praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

- Acts 2:42-47 (English Standard Version)

## Reflection

"The very existence of the church in the world creates a missionary condition.... Ministry has sometimes been defined as a function of an ordained office. A focus on who has the credentials and proper authority to do ministry has at times overshadowed the work of ministry itself. And rather than the organization of the church serving to mobilize members into ministry, all too often the members have been expected to serve the organization. This reverses the biblical order: the church's teachings and structures are intended to empower ministry."

- *The Essence of the Church*, Craig Van Gelder (p. 125-126)

# Sermon Outline

**The Community Created by the Holy Spirit**  
Acts 2:42-47

*Acts of the Apostles*  
Stephen Baldwin

*In our passage the Lord is showing us, in kernel form, the shape of the community he created by his Spirit...*

### The community created by the Spirit is:

**A sign of the Kingdom of Heaven.** (Acts 2:42-45)

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**A foretaste of the Kingdom of Heaven.** (Acts 2:44-47a)

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**An instrument of the Kingdom of Heaven.** (Acts 2:47)

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### Reflection Questions (taken in part from the Serendipity Study Bible for Groups)

- What do you think of the statement "the church is a voluntary organization that exists to meet personal needs"?
- Do you feel that the church's structures help or hinder its ministry? Why?
- When you think of the life of Valley Springs, do you think of a community that has been sent by the Spirit of God? To whom are we sent?
- Do you see our homeland as a mission field?
- Does the reflection quote at left challenge any of your views regarding America as a Christian nation?