



CHAPTER THREE

Embodying the Story

ACTS 2:42-47
ACTS 4:32-37

Chapter 3: Embodying the Story

Acts 2:42-42; 4:32-37 (NRSVue)

⁴² They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

⁴³ Awe came upon everyone because many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. ⁴⁴ All who believed were together and had all things in common; ⁴⁵ they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. ⁴⁶ Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

³² Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common.

³³ With great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. ³⁴ There was not a needy person among them, for as many as owned lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold. ³⁵ They laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need. ³⁶ There was a Levite from Cyprus, Joseph, to whom the apostles gave the name Barnabas (which means "son of encouragement"). ³⁷ He sold a field that belonged to him, then brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.

Discussion Questions from the Biblical Text:

1. In this story we find the early church sharing in spiritual practices. How have the shared rituals and practice of the church been important to your faith?
2. This story also tells of the early church sharing economics? How does that part of the narrative sit with you?
3. What do you notice in this story? What wonderings are stirred for you?

Discussion Questions from *Bearing Witness in Acts and Today* by Troy M. Troftgruben:

1. Who in your life has embodied the message of Jesus for you, not necessarily in words? What do you learn from their witness? (page 50)
2. If someone were to ask random people in your larger community about your church, what do you think people would say? What do you hope people would say? (page 50)

Discussion Questions from *Opening Space: A vision for Fresh Expressions of Church and Creative Mission* by Shannon Kiser:

1. Fresh Expressions are centered on a loving-first approach. It begins with listening and relating to people, loving and serving them, "which helps them discover ways to build community and explore discipleship" (page 44). How have you embodying listening and relating to people in your neighborhood? Loving and serving those in your community?