

Forgetting what lies behind

One word

Communion

Unity

Selfless

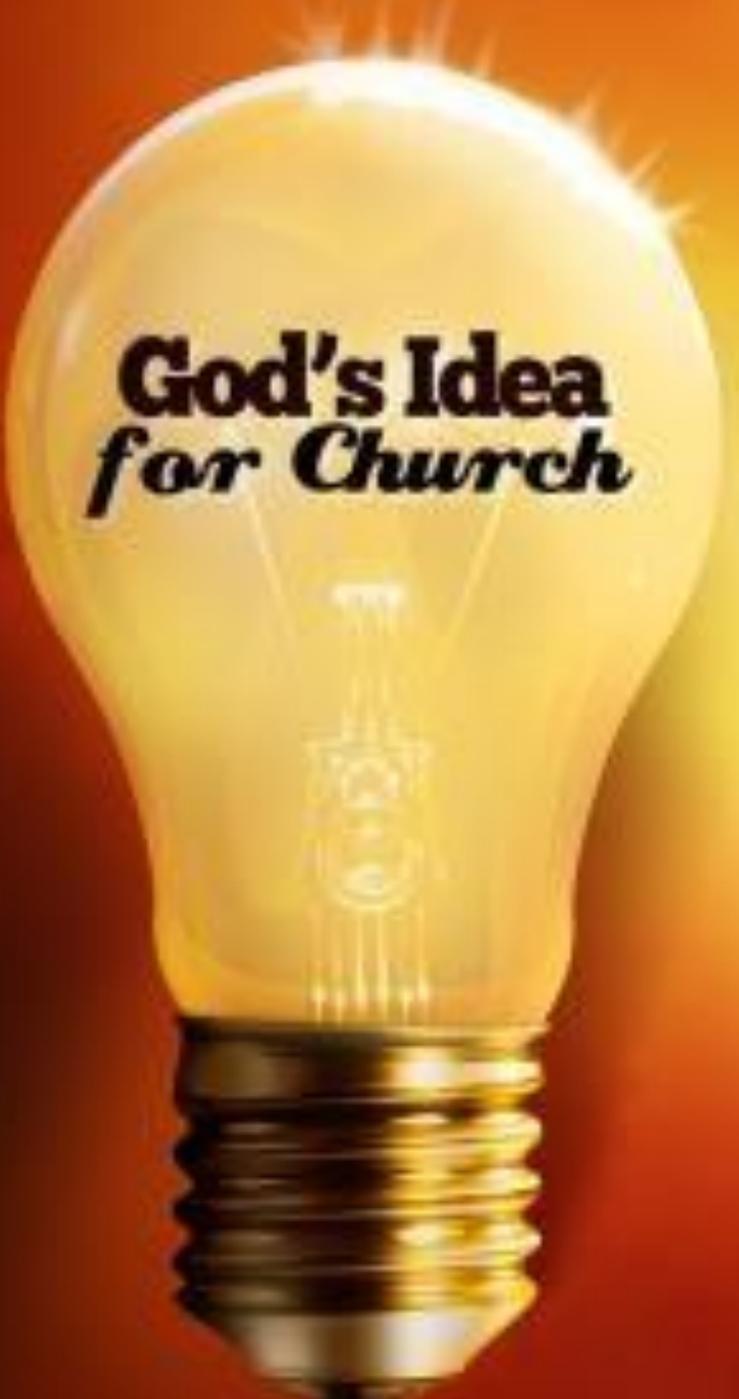
Encourage

Determined





**ARE YOU
CONNECTED**

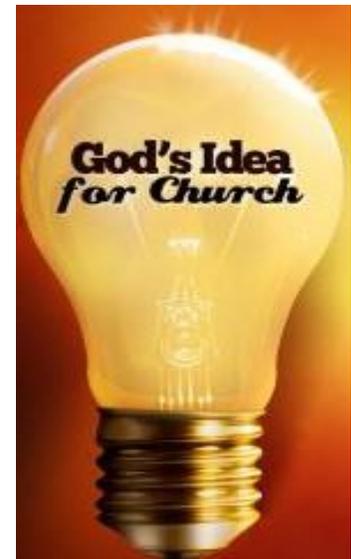
A glowing lightbulb is positioned on the left side of the image. The text "God's Idea for Church" is written on the bulb in a bold, black, sans-serif font. "God's Idea" is on the top line, and "for Church" is on the bottom line, both in a slightly italicized style. The lightbulb is illuminated from within, creating a bright yellow glow that fades into the background.

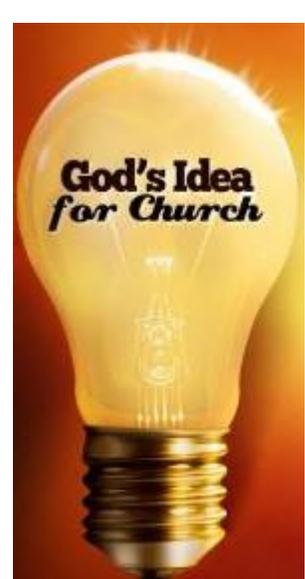
**God's Idea
for Church**

Devoted to.... FELLOWSHIP

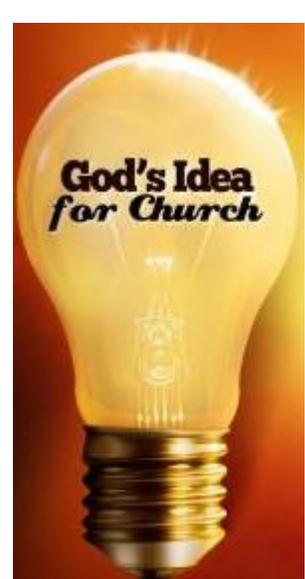
Acts 2:42-47

- Acts 2:41-47 So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and there were added that day about three thousand souls. 42 And they were continually devoting themselves to **the apostles' teaching** and to **fellowship**, to the **breaking of bread** and to **prayer**. 43 And everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles. 44 And all those who had believed were together, and had all things in common; 45 and they began selling their property and possessions, and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need. 46 And day by day continuing with **one mind in the temple**, and **breaking bread from house to house**, they were **taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart**, 47 **praising God**, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved. NASB





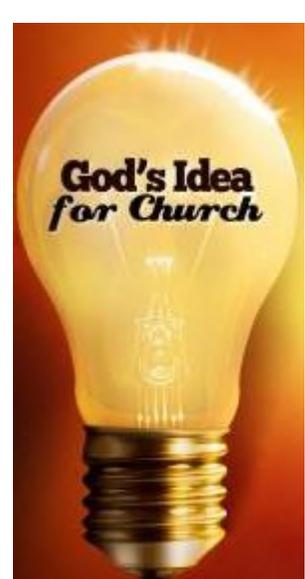
- The word “devoted” is a key word. To be devoted means **“to attach oneself”**, or **“to hold firm”**, or **“to spend much time in”**. Their coming together was not accidental. It was not occasionally, it was intentional. They were devoted to the fellowship and the breaking of bread. They were devoted to learning and giving. It sounds like an amazing community.
- What are we devoted too?
- They were devoted to FELLOWSHIP!
- The Greek word fellowship means to “share something in common.” The rest of the passage fleshes out this concept as we learn that they were “all together”, they met together in the temple courts, and they ate together.
- Shared meals played an important role in the life of the early church.



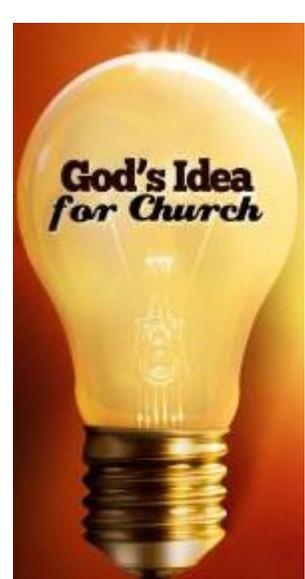
- **You and I were created for community.**

- Genesis 2:18-20 Then the Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper who is just right for him." 19 So the Lord God formed from the ground all the wild animals and all the birds of the sky. He brought them to the man to see what he would call them, and the man chose a name for each one. 20 He gave names to all the livestock, all the birds of the sky, and all the wild animals. But still there was no helper just right for him.

- God made one human being and said, "It is not good for man to be alone."
- We're not here on our own we've been created to be in community with others.
- While we long for community, we also run from it. It has been said that when humankind fell from grace, we inherited not only a tendency to hide from God, but a tendency to hide from one another as well.

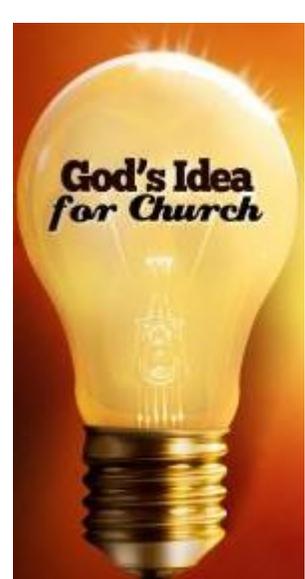


- Jesus prayed, John 17:22-23 “The glory you gave to me I have given to them, that they may be one just as we are one - 23 I in them and you in me - that they may be completely one, so that the world will know that you sent me, and you have loved them just as you have loved me.”
- But for that to happen many walls have to fall down. Suspicion has to be replaced with openness; uncertainty has to be replaced with willingness; and fear has to be replaced with love.
- On the day of Pentecost, that is precisely what happened — the barriers came falling down. The Holy Spirit of God moved in and produced a wonderful unity in that first group of believers.
- I believe that deep down within us, we all long to be close, to be part of the same family, to be in tune -- and in touch with one another.

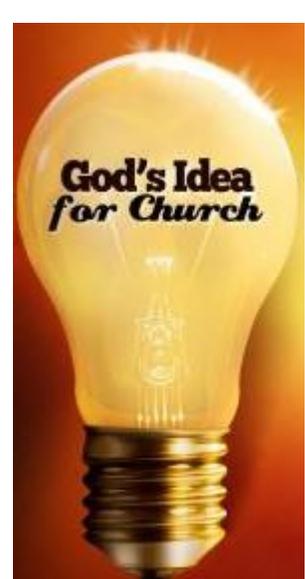


- **A Mystical Unity**

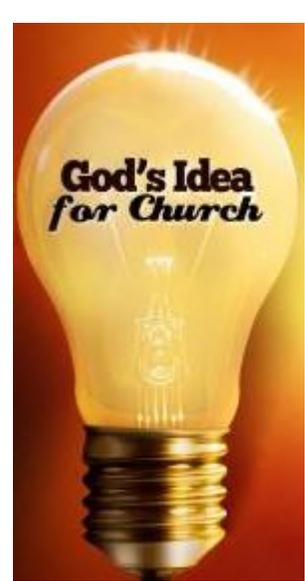
- Acts 4:32 Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common. ESV
- Notice the three words mentioned in the first part of this verse: **“believers,” “heart”, and “mind.”** Unity was evident in these three areas.
- It was a unity of faith, a unity of emotions, and a unity of will.
- There can be no real biblical fellowship without correct belief.
- 1 John 1:7 says, "But if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another."
- It is only as we walk in the light of the truth of God’s Word that we can enjoy true fellowship with one another. A common faith unites us.



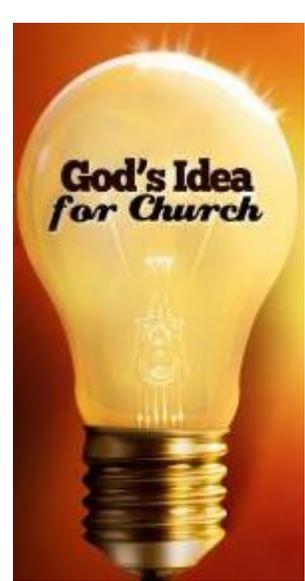
- They were not only united by their faith, **they were also united in heart.**
- But they were also one in mind.
 - The mind has to do with our decision-making processes.
 - They not only believed the same things, and had a desire to follow Jesus -- they made a decision to do so together in community with one another.
 - **If we, as the Church of Jesus Christ, are ever going to express the unity of the Spirit, we must not only desire to do so, we must decide to do so.**
- Is it possible to have this same kind of unity today? I believe it is. But it's something which can only be done by the power of the Spirit of God working in the hearts of people committed to Him. We can experience this kind of unity when we yield to the Holy Spirit to produce it in us.



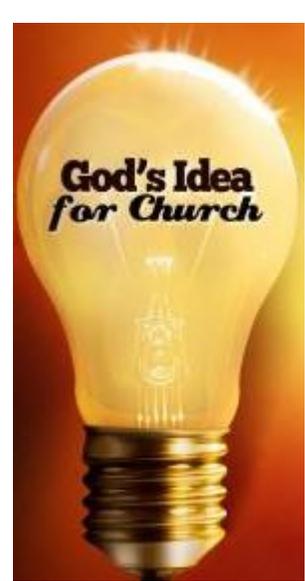
- **A Ministering Unity**
- **6 Key Lifestyle Values**
 - Instruction in God's Word! Get the Word into our heads, our hearts, and our hands.
 - Fellowshiping and sharing meals
 - Prayer
 - Worshipped together! We are to see God as awesome and worship Him with reverent and rejoicing hearts both corporately and in our individual lives.
 - Caring for one another
 - All the while praising God



- It seems that today the focus for many is “What is in it for me?” The focus of this early group of believers seemed to be about Christ and equally important “one another”
- The question we must ask ourselves is do we really see the importance of being together?
 - Regularly sharing in the 6-key lifestyle “ministering’s”
- Could you not tarry one hour – Could you not meet more than Sunday morning?
- **Are we devoted to fellowship?**
- **Do we want real biblical fellowship?**



- **A Material Unity**
- Look with me now at 4:34-35: “There were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles’ feet, and it was distributed to anyone as he had need.”
- **They valued people over possessions.** This is something which was born from within, not something which was imposed from without. They cared, and so they gave.
- There are many things that we aspire to do for Christ, which we may not be able to do, even though we have the desire. But one thing all of us have within our power to do is to give.



- Do these three principles resonate within you this morning? Do you value and live by them?
 - 1. Community over Isolation
 - 2. Togetherness over Busyness
 - 3. People over Possessions

- Have we put people out on the side of the road?

- Do we know people who are standing at the side of the road who need to be picked up?

