



## STUDY NINE

# “COMMUNITY OF LOVE”

### NOVEMBER 11, 2007

#### MEMORY VERSE

Acts 2:42, “They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and prayer.”

#### INTRODUCTION

The biblical account in Acts 2 reflects the beginning of the early church. The Holy Spirit descended on the followers of Jesus at Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4) and all the people present were “amazed and perplexed.” The apostle Peter was inspired by the Holy Spirit to preach and thousands of people responded by putting their faith in the risen Lord. Acts 2:42-47 clearly portrays the beginnings of the early church. The thousands of new believers were united with other believers, taught by the apostles, and they began meeting together in small groups on a regular basis. The apostles realized the only way these believers would mature in their faith and stand firm against the attacks, persecution, distractions and trappings of this world would be if they built a biblical community that was focused solely on Jesus Christ. These early believers gathered together in small groups to learn more about God’s Word, build a community that met needs, supported each other, encouraged one another, served one another, emphasized prayer continually and focused on remembering Christ in all things. These people met together regularly with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily. It’s a story of ordinary people who became extraordinary as they lived in a community founded on God’s love. This was and still is Christ’s design for His Church. As we study this passage together this week, ask the Lord to reveal to you how our Church reflects this design and how it does not. Let’s all commit to be a people who meet together regularly with glad and sincere hearts, seeking to know Christ intimately and personally and striving to be a lighthouse for Him in this community and beyond.

#### LEARNING FROM GOD’S WORD

Read Acts 2:42-47 (The Early Church)

1. What are some ways we can devote ourselves to the “apostle’s teaching” today? Why is it important to do this together? (Read Romans 12:3-8; Ephesians 4:1-16; 2 Timothy 3:16-17)

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2. How can you devote yourselves to “the fellowship?” How is fellowship more than just friendliness on Sundays or meeting together midweek? What else does it include?
  
  3. Why is the Lord’s Supper important? (Luke 22:14-23; 1 Corinthians 10:16-17, 11:23-26)
  
  4. What is prayer and why is it so important? Why should you devote yourselves to prayer with other Christians?
  
  5. What other significant details of the early life of the Church do you observe in Acts 2:42-47, 4:32-37, 6:1-7?
  
  6. In what enterprise are Christians partners? (Matthew 28:19-20; Philippians 1:5)  
How do you live in light of this fact?

### OUR WALK WITH GOD

1. Why don’t we typically experience a biblical community as vibrant and attractive as the one portrayed in Acts 2? What changes would you need to make in your life in order for you to participate fully in the type of community described in Acts 2?
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2. “Fellowship” in Acts 2:42 is the Greek word *koinonia*, which means “sharing what we have in common” because of Jesus. What aspect of this sharing would you like to see your biblical community to grow in? What steps do you need to take this week in order for this to occur?
  
3. What characteristics does our community at RiverLakes share with the believers in Acts? How is it different? Are Christians today viewed as “highly regarded by the people?” Why or why not? What difference would it make in our witness if Christians were regarded in this way?

### GOING DEEPER

Read Luke 12:32-34; 2 Corinthians 8:1-15; 9:1-15; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15; 1 Timothy 5:3-16. Should modern Christians all sell their property and give the proceeds to the Church? Why or why not? Do you think the modern Church should take on the responsibility for caring for all Church members who cannot support themselves and whose family cannot support them? Why or why not? Has a change in our culture changed the Church’s obligations?

### SERVING AND BEING SERVED

In the spirit of building our biblical community at RiverLakes, we are asking each of our small groups to show “Crazy Love” to another small group in our body. We will link you up with another small group and encourage you to participate in this opportunity to build up our body. Over the next couple of weeks, think of creative ways you might show love and support to your fellow believers. You might send them a fellowship card or note of encouragement, provide them with a meal or dessert at their group meeting, give them a special gift, or think of other creative ways you can reach out and shower them with love. This is a great opportunity for us to live out “Crazy Love” amongst one another and we encourage all of you to participate.

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SUGGESTED SMALL GROUP STUDY FORMAT  
**CRAZY LOVE SERIES – “COMMUNITY OF LOVE”**  
STUDY NINE – NOVEMBER 11, 2007

CONNECT ..... 25 MINUTES

Time of Fellowship

Opening Prayer

Icebreaker Questions:

1. What was one team or community that you belonged to that had a significant impact on your life? What were some of the things that made it a great place for you?
2. Name some recent movies or popular songs on the theme of love. What message did they reflect about love?

MEMORY VERSE (Memorize and say aloud in your group) ..... 5 MINUTES

*Acts 2:42, “They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and prayer.”*

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS ..... 35 MINUTES

SERVING AND BEING SERVED ..... 5 MINUTES

Begin thinking about and discussing how you will show “Crazy Love” to your assigned small group at RiverLakes.

PRAYER AND PERSONAL SHARING ..... 30 MINUTES

1. Ask the Lord to challenge your small group to identify ways they might better reflect the biblical community reflected in Acts 2.
  2. Pray the Lord will provide the members of your small group opportunities to reflect the love and grace of Christ and share the Good News of Jesus with people during this coming week.
  3. Pray for the personal needs of one another in your small group.
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