



In Acts 2:42, we are told what the early believers in the Body of Christ were taught and what they learned concerning their relationship with Jesus and what that actually meant. We read, *“And they continued steadfastly in the **apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.**”* We see the believers continually stayed in the “Apostles' Doctrine.”

That is such an important scripture for true believers today. We see that the new believers “stayed in the apostles' doctrine.” In other words, they remained and adhered to the words that the original disciples of Jesus had told them about their time with Jesus. They were understanding how Jesus truly opened their scriptures to them as they were meant to be understood. Now, being filled with the Holy Spirit, they were actually learning the truth from the scriptures they had, the “Old Testament.” They learned how Jesus lived out and fulfilled those scriptures - both as Messiah and as the Son of God.

Apostolic doctrine is authoritative and vital to our understanding of who and what our God has done for those who truly believe. It is the teaching that those who were with Jesus, and those whom Jesus called even after His death and resurrection, presented, not just to those who believed but it was opened to the world with the hope that they would choose to believe in Jesus as their Savior and Lord.

Those writers were literally chosen for the purpose of bringing the correct teachings about the Father, Jesus and the Holy Spirit to those who were and are presently in the Body of Christ. They presented to the believers in Jesus, the “Old Testament” writings in a new way, the way of Jesus, with the understanding of the Holy Spirit which was given on that day of Pentecost. We now have a better grasp of what the Old Testament scriptures were telling us as we read the New Testament.

The term “doctrine” literally means a principle, or a body of principles and teachings, that are given to have people live their lives and to follow after. For believers in Jesus they are the basic fundamentals of who Jesus is and what He has done. They are concepts and truths of the fullness of God, the Trinity - Yahweh, the Father, Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

The word “apostle” literally means “one who is sent.” The term “doctrine” simply means “teaching.” So “Apostolic doctrine” is the teaching that comes to us through the original Apostles as found in the what we know as the “New Testament.” These Apostles were specifically chosen by Jesus to carry and bring forth His teachings to the world.

Those Apostles spent 3½ years with Jesus. After Jesus rose again, He came back and retaught the disciples everything He had originally taught them when he was with them for those 3½ years. He spent 40 days with them before returning to heaven. Then 10 days later, on Pentecost, the Father imparted the Holy Spirit within them. We also know that those Apostles then spent time in “sorting out” what Jesus said and taught them, and how it all lined up with the Word of God as found in their scriptures, our “Old Testament.”

It is unfortunate that in many churches these days, you can learn more about psychology than the Word of God. They will throw in a reference about a scripture now and then to give it an appearance of being biblical. They may make a passing reference to a scripture or of God's help. They may even mention the name of Jesus because, after all, they still call it “church.”

We must remember that the correct “Apostles’ Doctrine” has absolutely nothing to do with philosophy or “Christian” psychology. It is simply all about Jesus and what He has done for us and what we now have by believing in all that He has done. The Apostles and the early church needed to grasp and understand the correct teachings concerning Jesus.

Jude writes to believers concerning this aspect of the Body of Christ. Originally Jude wanted to write a letter concerning the believer’s “common salvation.” Something caused him to change his purpose for writing as he states, “...*it was needful for me...to exhort you to **earnestly contend** for the faith...*” Jude was concerned because “the faith,” the true message of the gospel, the Good News of Jesus, was under attack from false teachers who were spreading dangerous heresies. If we look around us today, we see that the “truth” is still under attack.

All believers, not just leadership, but **ALL BELIEVERS** are called to know and defend the truth of Jesus Christ. Jude intends to stand against those who claim to receive “new” revelations of truth. Through Jesus’ personal teachings and the work of the Holy Spirit, we have been given the full message of the truth. We have the writings of both, the New and the Old Testaments.

There are basic fundamentals or “doctrines” of what and why we believe what we believe. The early writers called it – “the faith.” It was also referred to as “the way.” They were the teachings of Jesus. He taught the true meaning of the “Old Testament” scriptures – Torah, the Writings, the Prophets. This was what they needed to teach and preach. It became known as the “Apostles’ doctrine.”

The basic fundamentals of “*the faith*” that we are to “*earnestly contend for*” are as follows:

- Jesus is “the Christ, the Son of the Living God.” (Matthew 16:16)
- Jesus, the Christ (Messiah), was crucified (1Corinthians 1:23)
- Jesus, the Christ (Messiah), has risen (1Corinthians 15:20)
- Jesus, the Christ (Messiah), will come again (Acts 1:10-11)
- Until He returns, we are to love God **and** love others as Jesus had loved the Father and each of us.

In other words all believers should be saying the same thing concerning the basic fundamentals of “the faith.” All of the New Testament writers say the same thing. Why – because there was, not just a unity but a “oneness” in and with The Father, Jesus and the Holy Spirit. This was the “Apostles’ Doctrine.”

Going back to Acts 2:42 we see a second function that was to be a most important part of this “new church.” I am referring to the aspect of “fellowship.” The term “fellowship” is an attempted translation of the Greek word “koinonia.” This word “koinonia” means an intimate sharing of one's self with another. It means a very close intimate relationship where communication between each other is vital.

In Act 2:41-42, we read that the believers were together and had all things in common. The word “common” is “koinos,” the same root as “koinonia.” They would commune with each other which meant that they demonstrated a type of “oneness” that we share in Christ. Jesus taught us in John 17 that His prayer to the Father was that we would be in “Oneness” with the Father as He and the Father are one.

This does not mean simply a “unity.” Rather, it means exactly what it says – that we are to be “one” with the Father. It means that we are no longer separated but rather we are connected with our Father. We are connected with the Father through the blood of Jesus and through the power of the Holy Spirit. We are a “new creature in Christ.” We are now “one” with Him. Just as Jesus **is one** with the Father, we who are now are part of the Body of Jesus are also made “**one**” with the Father, Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

As believers in Jesus we are all a part of the “Body of Christ.” This is such a beautiful demonstration of oneness or “koinonia.” It was done often in the early church. In Acts 2:46 we see that the believers, “...continued steadfastly in the **apostles' doctrine and fellowship**, and in breaking of bread...” They had constant relationship with each other. They were as “one” with each other and with the Father.

The “breaking of bread” was a vital part of the early believer’s lifestyle. What the early believers in Jerusalem would do was that they would go to Temple on the Sabbath. Then, on the first day of the week, to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus, the believers would gather together and have times of “relationship building” with other believers by “*breaking bread*” or in other words eating at what they would call “love feasts.” This was such a beautiful demonstration of “oneness” or “koinonia.”

In Acts 2:42, we see that it tells us that they would meet from “*house to house*” and they ate their food with gladness and singleness of heart towards each other. It was a time of relationship building, encouragement and becoming “one” with each other as they were “one in Christ.”

There is a thinking that the breaking of bread from house to house meant that they had an early form of what we refer to today as “communion” with the bread and wine referring to the body and blood of Jesus. It is a possibility. Although communion as we know and do today came later on in the life of the church. Which ever it was, it was a time of building “oneness” with each other in the Body of Christ.

We also see that it mentions that the believers were to be “*...in prayer.*” This was one of the functions of the early church. It was an important priority with the Apostles along with the study of the Word. This is an element that we many times are sadly missing in the today’s churches. Today, there is a great emphasis on “Christian service” which is an important aspect of Body life.

However, we must never forget that prayer is the catalyst that will show us what exactly is God’s will for us at that moment of time or for what we will be doing in the future. “Christian service” is great but we must remember that if it is not God’s will for that particular ministry or for a specific individual, then we will ultimately be “spinning our wheels.”

True prayer is “binding the strong man of the house, and taking the spoils.” Ours is a spiritual battle, thus the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but they are mighty through God to the pulling down of those strongholds of the enemy. We refer to it as “spiritual warfare.” The apostle Paul in Ephesians tells us of this as he declares that we are to, “*Pray with all prayer and supplications in the Spirit*” and to “*let your requests be made known unto God.*” Prayer is a vital aspect to being a the true child of God.

These things that we read of in Acts 2:45 are a result of what actually took place in Acts 2:44 as it states, “*And all that believed were together, and had all things common...*” There was a singleness in

their thinking concerning Jesus and who they were in Him. At that time they thought that Jesus was coming back within a few days or at the most a few weeks. We know that they were mistaken in that thinking. That was why they decided to sell everything they had and pool all of their resources.

If we look and read the scriptures, we see that neither the Father, Jesus or the Holy Spirit ever said or mentioned to them that they were to do anything of the sort. They did that on their own. They didn't realize that God had a plan. His plan was that they were to actually go out and tell the world about Jesus. This meant that even the Gentiles could be saved.

That is why we must never take what we think God is doing and run with it. God has told us in His Word how we are to live and what we are to do. Yes, we are to help others if we have the resources and the ability to do so – most definitely. However, we must know that God is going to tell us what we need to do. We are not to lean on our own understanding in these areas. Hmm... That is a difficult one for us to grab a hold on to... Let's pause and think on that...

Yes, the early believers had a “singleness of heart” concerning the foundations and fundamental teachings of Jesus. This became known as and was referred to as the “Apostle's Doctrine” or, in other words, the teachings of the Apostles. These are the “core tenets” of our faith. The “Apostles' doctrine” sheds light on the unparalleled love and grace of Jesus. They emphasize the pivotal role of faith in Jesus and all that He did as the cornerstone of our faith and our belief in the Living God.

The Apostles' Doctrine encompasses the profound message of God and who He is and the love that He chose to show His creation – all of mankind. The main point of what we refer to the “Apostles' Doctrine,” is that it is all about the profound message of God's love and salvation. Our God desires so much to bring us back into relationship with Him. He desires that no one would perish but that all would come to the saving knowledge of Jesus.

We must remember that was what the first Apostles taught and what the entire New Testament teaches. It is not an abandonment of the teachings of what we refer to as the “Old Testament.” Rather, it shows us that we can now, under God's grace and mercy and through the power of the Holy Spirit who dwells within us because of a born again spirit through Jesus, live out the Ten Commandments and every other aspect of the moral aspects of the Law found in the “Old Testament.”

Of course, Jesus was the final sacrifice so there is no longer any need for the animal sacrifice aspect which was the other part of the Law. Now, the scriptures tell us that we, our selves, are to offer up ourselves as a “living sacrifice” to the Lord God. We do this by following the Holy Spirit who will assist us in doing the moral aspects found within the Law.

That is what the Apostles were understanding and realizing when they were “locked in their room” studying the Old Testament, the Word of God, as we read in Acts 6:2,4. They were not writing new doctrine but rather they were learning how they and everyone else who professed Jesus as their personal Savior and Lord could now boldly live out the Law in their lives – not under the bondage of the Law but rather now, through Jesus, in God’s grace and mercy, as children of the Most High God!!!

We all may have different views on certain aspects of the Christian walk. However, we must never differentiate from the basic core fundamentals of “the faith.” Throughout the New Testament the writers were coming against the “apostasy” that was trying to enter the Body of Christ. It is the same today. It is abounding in the world we are in. It is abounding because it is getting closer to the last days.

I pray that we all come together as “one in Jesus.” If we believe in who Jesus is and what He has done than we are “one in Christ.” The time is getting short. We will need each other to encourage each other to stand fast in what will be difficult times ahead.

I pray that we stand as “one” in Jesus Christ and hold firm to the simple truths laid out for us by Jesus and the first Apostles. It is referred to as the “Apostles’ Doctrine.” I don’t care what you call it. I simply urge each one of us to simply live it out and declare it to as many people as we can until Jesus returns.

Jesus is “the Christ, the Son of the Living God.”

Jesus was crucified. Jesus has risen. Jesus will come again!!!