

# New Believers Bible Study

**9. The Church** : Understanding the purpose and function of the church and our role within it.

The body of believers united in faith and fellowship is a cornerstone of Christian community, emphasizing mutual support, encouragement, and accountability. Acts 2:42-47 illustrates the early believers' devotion to fellowship, sharing meals, prayer, and resources, thus strengthening their bond as a community. This unity fosters spiritual growth and discipleship, as Hebrews 10:24-25 urges believers to "consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another." As a spiritual community, the Church provides a safe haven where members can share their joys, burdens, and struggles. Galatians 6:2 encourages believers to "carry each other's burdens, and in this way, you will fulfill the law of Christ." Through worship, the body of believers glorifies God collectively, lifting praises and prayers as a unified voice. Psalm 133:1 emphasizes the beauty of this unity: "How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity!" In essence, the body of believers serves as a spiritual family, embodying Christ's love and grace in their interactions and relationships.

## **Acts 2:42-47**

"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved."

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In this passage, Luke describes the early Christian community shortly after the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the believers. The believers were devoted to four key practices: the apostles' teaching, fellowship, the breaking of bread (possibly referring to the Lord's Supper), and prayer. This devotion to these practices indicates their commitment to learning, community, worship, and communication with God. The awe-inspiring signs and wonders performed by the apostles further strengthened the believers' faith and unity. Their unity was marked by a profound sense of sharing and generosity, as they willingly sold their possessions to meet the needs of others. Their gatherings were both in public spaces like the temple courts and in private homes, demonstrating the intimate nature of their fellowship and worship. The result of their devotion and unity was not only the favor of the people around them but also the growth of the Church, as the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved. This passage serves as a model for Christian community, emphasizing devotion to God, unity, generosity, and the growth of the Church through the power of the Holy Spirit.

## **Matthew Henry's Commentary on Acts 2:42-47:**

In his commentary on this passage, Matthew Henry emphasizes the dedication of the early believers to the essentials of the Christian faith and community. He notes their devotion to the apostles' teaching, recognizing its authority and importance in shaping their understanding of God's word. Additionally, Henry highlights the significance of fellowship among believers, which involves not only social interaction but also the sharing of resources and support for those in need. He underscores the unity and generosity within the early Christian community, where individuals willingly sacrificed their own possessions to care for others. Henry also points out the regularity of their gatherings for worship and the breaking of bread, indicating the centrality of communal worship and the celebration of the Lord's Supper in their spiritual lives. Overall, Henry's commentary highlights the vibrant and dynamic nature of the early Church,

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characterized by fervent devotion to God, mutual care, and vibrant worship.

## **Hebrews 10:24-25**

"And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching."

In these verses, the author of Hebrews exhorts believers to actively consider and stimulate one another towards love and good deeds. This call to action emphasizes the importance of mutual encouragement and support within the Christian community. The phrase "not giving up meeting together" underscores the significance of regular fellowship and communal worship among believers. By gathering together, believers can uplift and strengthen each other in their faith journey, especially in times of adversity or spiritual challenges. The author emphasizes the urgency of this mutual encouragement, particularly as the anticipated return of Christ draws nearer. Thus, Hebrews 10:24-25 underscores the vital role of Christian community in nurturing faith, promoting righteousness, and preparing for the fulfillment of God's promises.

## **Matthew Henry's Commentary on Hebrews 10:24-25**

In his commentary on these verses, Matthew Henry highlights the importance of Christian fellowship and mutual encouragement. He emphasizes that believers should be attentive to one another's spiritual welfare, considering how they can promote love and good deeds among fellow believers. Henry underscores the necessity of regular attendance at public worship, noting that some neglect this duty to their spiritual detriment. He explains that the purpose of assembling together is not only to receive spiritual nourishment but also to provide mutual support and encouragement. Henry emphasizes that as the day of Christ's return draws nearer, believers should be even more diligent in their attendance and engagement in Christian fellowship, recognizing the urgency of their shared faith and mission. In essence, Henry's commentary emphasizes the vital role of Christian community in nurturing faith, promoting spiritual growth, and preparing for the eventual return of Christ.

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## **Galatians 6:2**

"Carry each other's burdens, and in this way, you will fulfill the law of Christ."

In this verse from Paul's letter to the Galatians, he exhorts believers to support one another in times of need. The command to "carry each other's burdens" emphasizes the importance of empathy, compassion, and practical assistance within the Christian community. By sharing one another's burdens, believers fulfill the law of Christ, which is the law of love. This verse encapsulates the essence of Christian charity and mutual care, reflecting Christ's own example of sacrificial love. It underscores the interconnectedness of believers and the responsibility they have to support and uplift one another, thereby embodying the principles of Christ-like love and service.

## **Matthew Henry's Commentary on Galatians 6:2**

Emphasizes the principle of mutual support and care within the Christian community. He interprets this verse as an exhortation to believers to be compassionate and empathetic towards one another, particularly in times of difficulty or hardship. Henry stresses that the burdens referred to here are not only physical but also spiritual and emotional. He explains that by helping to bear one another's burdens, believers fulfill the law of Christ, which is the law of love. Henry underscores the importance of active involvement in the lives of fellow believers, noting that this mutual support is a fundamental aspect of Christian duty and obedience. Overall, Henry's commentary emphasizes the practical application of Christian charity and the interconnectedness of believers in fulfilling the commandments of Christ.

## **Psalms 133:1**

"How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity!"

This verse from Psalm 133 celebrates the beauty and blessing of unity among God's people. It emphasizes the goodness and pleasantness that arise when believers dwell together in harmony and accord. The imagery of unity is portrayed as something desirable and delightful, akin to the refreshing dew that descends upon Mount Zion. This verse

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highlights the spiritual significance of unity within the community of believers, reflecting the divine intention for harmony and fellowship among God's people. It serves as an encouragement for believers to strive for unity, recognizing its inherent value and the blessings that flow from it. Ultimately, Psalm 133:1 underscores the importance of mutual love, respect, and cooperation among God's children, as they seek to live in accordance with His will and purpose.

## **Matthew Henry's Commentary on Psalm 133:1:**

In his commentary on Psalm 133:1, Matthew Henry highlights the spiritual significance of unity among God's people. He emphasizes the goodness and pleasantness that arise from believers dwelling together in harmony. Henry interprets the imagery of dew descending upon Mount Zion as a symbol of the refreshing and invigorating effect of unity within the community of faith. He notes that Mount Zion represents the church, and the descent of dew upon it symbolizes the blessings and grace bestowed upon God's people when they are united in fellowship. Henry underscores the importance of unity as a source of joy and spiritual growth, reflecting God's desire for His children to live in harmony and mutual love. He encourages believers to strive for unity, recognizing its inherent value and the blessings that flow from it. Overall, Henry's commentary emphasizes the spiritual benefits of unity among God's people and encourages believers to pursue and cherish this unity in their relationships and fellowship.

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**QUIZ:** (Fill in the banks)

58. The body of believers united in \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ is a cornerstone of Christian community.

59. Acts 2:42-47 illustrates the early believers' devotion to \_\_\_\_\_.

60. Galatians 6:2 encourages believers to "carry each other's \_\_\_\_\_."

61. Hebrews 10:24-25 urges believers to "consider how we may spur one another on toward \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_."

62. Psalm 133:1 emphasizes the beauty of God's people living together in \_\_\_\_\_.

63. The Church provides a safe haven where members can share their \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.