



# The Fellowship

*“As we launch our new series focused on the Fellowship of Believers, we are going to highlight both a practice and the overall structure of the text in Acts 2:42-47. A lost art in our modern world is the public reading of Scripture, where the Word is read aloud and then discussed in Biblical Community. This beautiful practice is something we will be prioritizing during this series as we seek to read the entire section of text each week and reflect on aspects of it together in the sermon. This week we are going to look at the framework of the literary whole and the formula the Spirit of God seems to work in this early church context and contemplate whether or not He may still work like this in His church today.”*

## INTRODUCTION ACTIVITY:

Watch this BibleProject video: [https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/public-reading-scripture/?utm\\_source=web\\_social\\_share&medium=shared\\_video](https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/public-reading-scripture/?utm_source=web_social_share&medium=shared_video)



## MEMORY VERSE:

**Acts 2:42-47**

*“42 And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. 43 And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. 44 And all who believed were together and had all things in common. 45 And they were selling*

*their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. 46 And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.”*

## **SCRIPTURE READING:**

### **Deuteronomy 31:9-13**

*“9 Then Moses wrote this law and gave it to the priests, the sons of Levi, who carried the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and to all the elders of Israel. 10 And Moses commanded them, “At the end of every seven years, at the set time in the year of release, at the Feast of Booths, 11 when all Israel comes to appear before the Lord your God at the place that he will choose, you shall read this law before all Israel in their hearing. 12 Assemble the people, men, women, and little ones, and the sojourner within your towns, that they may hear and learn to fear the Lord your God, and be careful to do all the words of this law, 13 and that their children, who have not known it, may hear and learn to fear the Lord your God, as long as you live in the land that you are going over the Jordan to possess.”*

### **Joshua 8:34-35**

*“34 And afterward he read all the words of the law, the blessing and the curse, according to all that is written in the Book of the Law. 35 There was not a word of all that Moses commanded that Joshua did not read before all the assembly of Israel, and the women, and the little ones, and the sojourners who lived among them.”*

### **Judges 2:10**

*“10 And all that generation also were gathered to their fathers. And there arose another generation after them who did not know the Lord or the work that he had done for Israel.”*

### **2 Kings 23:1-3**

*“Then the king sent, and all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem were gathered to him. 2 And the king went up to the house of the Lord, and with him all the men of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem and the priests and the prophets, all the people, both small and great. And he read in their hearing all the words of the Book of the Covenant that had been found in the house of the Lord. 3 And the king stood by the pillar and made a covenant before the Lord, to walk after*

*the Lord and to keep his commandments and his testimonies and his statutes with all his heart and all his soul, to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book. And all the people joined in the covenant.”*

### **Nehemiah 8:8**

*“They read from the Book of the Law of God, making it clear and giving the meaning so that the people understood what was being read.”*

### **1 Thessalonians 5:27**

*“I charge you before the Lord to have this letter read to all the brothers and sisters.”*

### **Colossians 4:16**

*“After this letter has been read to you, see that it is also read in the church of the Laodiceans and that you in turn read the letter from Laodicea.”*

### **1 Timothy 4:13–14**

*“Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching.”*

## **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. Is gathering in a synagogue, church, or Bible study to hear the story of Scripture the same as people gathering to watch a play or a film? What’s similar? What’s different?
2. Read Deuteronomy 5:15. Notice that part of the fourth commandment is simply to remember what God has done. Does breaking this commandment cause us to break the others as well? Why or why not?
3. After the time of Joshua comes an era of Judges in Israel’s history. Read Judges 2:6-23 which introduces a brand new generation in verse ten. Keep flipping through your Bible and discuss other periods where Israel forgot their identity. Imagine ways the story could have been different if Israel was faithful in publicly reading Scripture.
4. Paul says believers are “living epistles” (2 Corinthians 3:2). How is sharing the good news of Jesus similar or different to publicly reading Scripture? How was your identity transformed when you heard the gospel story?
5. Jesus is the Word, the very incarnation and fulfillment of the Scriptures living within us. How does our life in Christ transform our understanding of the Bible? Check out 2 Corinthians 3:14 and John 5:39-40 for talking points.

## **CLOSING PRAYER ACTIVITY:**

Invite someone to close the group in prayer.