

GLENKIRK CHURCH



WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

DEVO

AUGUST 4 - 8, 2025





Read **Acts 2:42-47; Ecclesiastes 4:9-10; Proverbs 18:1**

In the New Testament, Christ followers typically met in house churches, particularly before church buildings existed. These gatherings (*ekklesia*) were small, intimate, teaching-centric, and prayerful, often including meals. This week's featured text, Acts 2:42, characterized the early Church while modelling Christian small groups.

Small groups tap deeply human needs: connection, growth, and shared purpose. They enable authentic relationships and spiritual depth difficult to cultivate in a crowd. In Christian small groups, people can wrestle with Scripture together, ask honest questions, and encourage one another. Small groups echo the rhythm of life-on-life discipleship. They foster support; when life gets messy, it's easier to share in a trusted circle—praying together, celebrating victories, and walking alongside one another amidst struggles. Small groups enable closeness and fellowship, sometimes elusive in larger congregations wherein one might feel (and act like they're) invisible.

There are several different types of Christian small groups. Some are study-oriented, whether the Bible, recent sermons, Christian books, and/or relevant topics. Some are fellowship-focused, forming around similar interests, life stages and/or specific support needs (grief, etc.). Others emphasize mission and service; outreach is a common byproduct. A particular small group can be temporary, seasonal, or ongoing.

Like the Church, ongoing small groups should not become inwardly-focused, stagnant, nor aloof. They are not “social clubs” with participants showing up like consumers “joining only to get needs met” or be entertained, networking for commercial purposes and/or merely “reconnecting with friends” (while not being worshipful nor attentive otherwise). They should be Christ-centric, with fruits of the Spirit abounding: *agapē*, self-giving, sacrificial love; mercifulness; faithfulness; gentleness and self-control; joy; etc. Every Christian small group, like the greater Church and individual believers, exists to glorify God: worshipful, prayerful, truth-seeking, generous, noble, and caring.

Remember: “*Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour*” (1 Peter 5:8). Lions don't pursue the herd—they target the isolated, vulnerable ones who've drifted off. Isolation weakens us spiritually, cutting us off from the encouragement, correction and fortification that true Christian community offers. Are you in a small group? If not, why not? Glenkirk offers many, accommodating about any schedule.

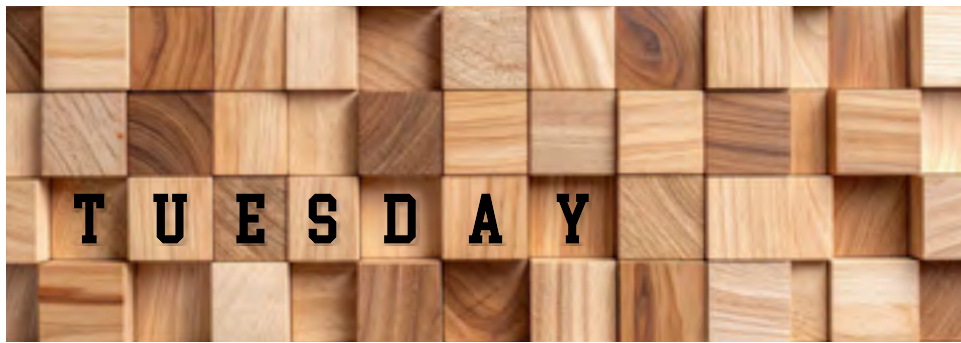
REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS

How was the fledgling Acts 2 Church a model for contemporary small groups? Which reasons for Christian small groups do you find most compelling? How is involvement in a small group one way to protect yourself?

PRAYERS

Shepherd's Pantry

Pray for divine wisdom as the Shepherd's Pantry staff seeks a permanent facility so that this pantry may continue to uplift those in need.



Read **1 Samuel 18:1-4; Daniel 6:5-10; John 12:1-8**

“And they devoted themselves ...” (Acts 2:42). Devotion is declining in America. About 44.6% of US marriages end in divorce. (The Hive Law) Americans are joining fewer community groups, spending less time with neighbors, and experiencing increasing social isolation (Daniel Cox, Sam Pressler). Median job tenure for American wage and salary workers in January 2024 was 3.9 years, down from 4.1 years in 2022 and 4.6 years a decade ago. (Bureau of Labor Statistics)

Devotion to Christ, biblical truth, and fellow believers undergirded the early Church. The Greek word used for “devoted” in Acts 2:42 is *proskartereó*, connoting earnest, persistent commitment, often despite persecution. (Bible Hub) The early believers were all-in, spiritually, relationally, and communally. They believed “**on** the Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 16:31, KJV, emphasis added), not merely in Him. Theirs wasn’t a passing interest—it was a lifestyle.

The Bible is rich in examples of godly devotion. David and Jonathan’s story profoundly depicts devotedness—a bond forged not by blood but by covenant, loyalty, and sacrificial love. Crown prince Jonathan bound himself to David after this shepherd boy defeated Goliath, though David’s ascent would likely disable Jonathan’s inheriting Israel’s throne from his father, King Saul. After Jonathan’s death, King David sought out his son, Mephibosheth, to “*show him*

kindness for Jonathan’s sake” (2 Samuel 9:1). David restored Mephibosheth’s estate, hosting him at the king’s table thereafter.

Even under legal threat of death, the prophet Daniel continued his daily rhythm of prayer, prompting his being cast to lions. His unwavering devotion to God was exploited by opportunistic rivals. Daniel faithfully survived, his treacherous enemies perishing in the same lions’ den. Mary of Bethany sat at Jesus’ feet, listening intently while others were preoccupied. She anointed His feet with expensive spikenard, demonstrating costly love and devotion. Mary probably used her marriage dowry to purchase the ointment, sacrificing future opportunities to wed. Jesus praised her for choosing “*what is better*” (Luke 10:42).

Lord, stir my heart to seek You above all! Help me love what You love, pursue what pleases You and remain faithful. Deepen my devotion that I may walk closely with You always. Amen!

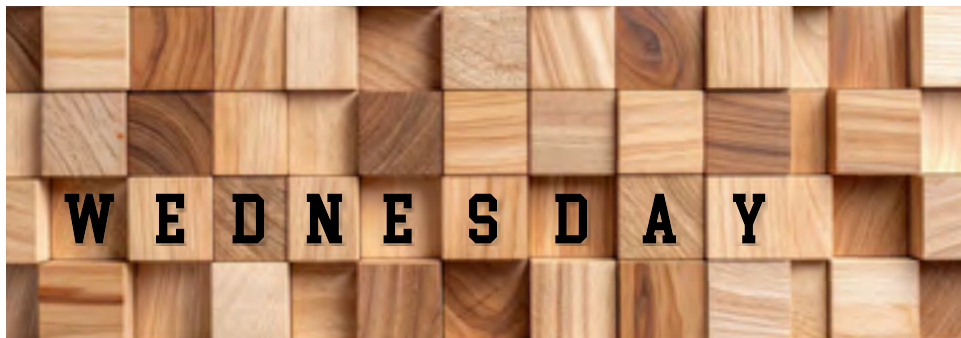
REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS

Which of the trends illustrating devotion’s decline in America most troubles you? Which of the biblical examples of devotion shared today stir you the most? Where is God calling you to renewed, even greater devotion?

PRAYERS

Shepherd’s Pantry

Pray for the Lord’s blessing upon the Shepherd’s Pantry to receive the resources needed to sustain the hearts, bodies, and spirits of those who are served by this ministry.



Read **Acts 17:10–12, 18:24–26; Ruth 1:15–18**

“... to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship” (Acts 2:42).

Yesterday we considered the devotedness of early Christians and other biblical examples. Today focuses upon two objects of their devotion: sound doctrine and community. *“Teaching”* and *“fellowship”* were inseparable in the Acts 2 Church. Fellowship without teaching could sink them into becoming a mere social club or service organization like so many secular ones. Teaching alone might have produced an isolating inward focus, thereby disabling Jesus’ commission to *“go and make disciples of all nations”* (Matthew 28:19).

“The apostles’ teaching” refers to the foundational truths about Jesus—His life, death, resurrection and teachings. Before the New Testament was penned, the apostles’ oral teaching and Old Testament scrolls were the sources of doctrine. The earlier believers hungered for truth, shaped by it. Their emphasis anticipated the Bereans, whom Paul later praised for eagerness to receive his teaching while examining the Scriptures to verify it—enthusiasm tempered with discernment.

Married couple Priscilla and Aquila likewise embraced sound teaching amidst fellowship. They hosted a home-based church and helped instruct Apollos—a gifted speaker—more accurately in the way of God, enabling him to support greater Church-building

efforts. They weren’t just present; they actively taught and shaped theology alongside Paul. Some maintain that Priscilla penned the book of Hebrews (whose human author is anonymous).

The Greek word for *“fellowship,” koinonia*, means more than just hanging out—it’s about *deep, mutual participation*. This included sharing resources, burdens and joys. The early Church was a unique, engaging community where no one stood alone. The story of Ruth and Naomi illustrates such devoted fellowship. Their bond transcends family—it’s a story of loyalty, sacrifice and faith. Ruth the Moabitess’ declaration to her mother-in-law, *“Where you go I will go ... your God will be my God”* (Ruth 1:16), shows profound commitment to Naomi along with God and His people. God honored this: Ruth became King David’s great grandmother, thus in the Messiah’s lineage.

Is your Christian fellowship and “Bible study” limited to Sundays only? Is that God’s best for you? With whom will you commit to *“teaching ... [bound in] fellowship”*?

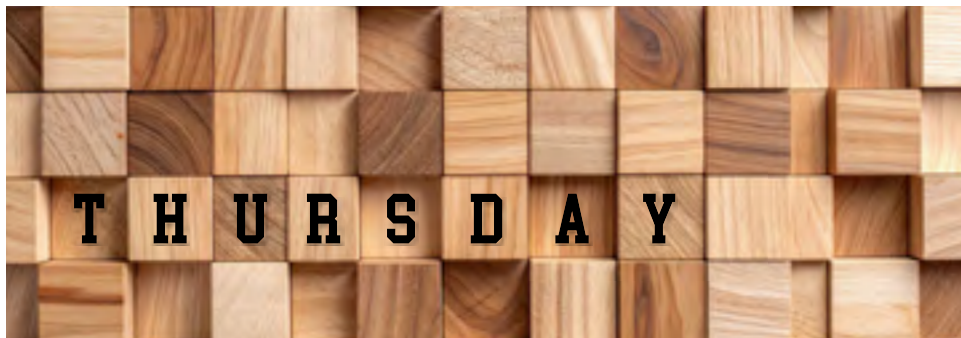
REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS

What are some of the problems occurring when biblical teaching and fellowship get separated? How can you become “more Berean” in your churchgoing and personal study? How did God honor Ruth’s godly devotion?

PRAYERS

Shepherd’s Pantry

The Shepherd’s Pantry asks for your prayer support for the financial needs of this ministry.



Read **Mark 14:22-24; John 6:1-14; Luke 24:27-31**

“... to the breaking of bread” (Acts 2:43) likely refers both to shared meals and the Lord’s Supper. It aligned with remembering Christ’s sacrifice and celebrating His presence, even Jesus’ willingness to “eat with tax collectors and sinners” (Matthew 9:11) despite enemies resultantly labeling Him “a glutton and a drunkard” (Luke 7:34).

In ancient times, sharing a meal was far more than just satisfying hunger—it was a deeply symbolic act weaving together hospitality, social bonds, and spiritual meaning. Meals were a way to affirm kinship and/or friendship, celebrate festivals, and mark important life events. Eating together signified peace, trust, and covenant. For example, when Jacob and Laban shared a meal in Genesis 31:54, it sealed their truce agreement. Hospitality was a revered ancient virtue—offering food to a guest, even strangers, and honoring them through kindness. Abraham’s welcoming and feeding the three visitors in Genesis 18 pictured such grateful, knowing generosity.

The ultimate “*breaking of bread*,” Communion, was far from an empty social ritual—it was a relational anchor, both community-facing and God-honoring, a communal sacrament placing believers in God’s heavenly presence. “We might say that the early Church was formed around the dinner table, ... a new family with Christ as the Host. ... Jesus is really present in the sacrament, not by

His coming down to the feast, but by the people of God ascending spiritually to heaven.” (ECO)

A couple of notable bread-breaking biblical stories include Jesus’ feeding of the 5,000, wherein He took “*five small barley loaves and two small fish*” (John 6:9), gave thanks, broke and distributed them—demonstrating God’s loving provision and abundance through shared food. After the resurrection, Jesus broke bread with two disciples in Emmaus. “*Then their eyes were opened and they recognized Him*” (Luke 24:31)—picturing the Lord’s Supper Jesus had shared with His disciples just three evenings earlier, a powerful moment of revelation through a shared meal.

Hopefully you receive Communion regularly at Glenkirk services, the first Sunday of every month. However, that shouldn’t be the only time you break bread with others to celebrate Christ’s sacrifice and God’s love, goodness, mercy, grace, and provision.

REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS

How does the Lord’s Supper tie into ancient practices? How is it “a communal sacrament placing believers in God’s heavenly presence”? Can you see how Jesus’ feeding the 5,000 illustrated God working through community while the Lord’s supping with the Emmaus travelers reinforced that saving faith is personal?

PRAYERS

Shepherd’s Pantry

Pray for our staff and volunteers as we continue to strive to make changes to improve the systems we use.



Read **Matthew 6:9-13, 14:30; Luke 18:1-14**

“... and to prayer” (Acts 2:43). Prayer was the heartbeat of the early church, as it should be for us. It should be our spiritual oxygen, whether personal prayer or corporate prayer, and our Spirit-led calls to God. Prayer connected Acts 2 believers to Yahweh and to one another, fueling their mission and unity.

You’ve likely heard Christian objections to prayer, including: “Why pray when all-knowing God already knows our needs?” Or, “My prayers aren’t going to change God’s mind.” Or, “I’ve had so many unanswered prayers—what’s the use?” Prayer isn’t sharing a list of requests with the Creator; rather, it’s “showing up for duty.” It isn’t about changing sovereign God, but changing us. And every prayer is answered, but the answers can be: “Yes”; “No”; “Not now (wait)”; or “I’ve got something better for you.” Prayer is a “tuning fork,” aligning us with God’s will.

Even Jesus prayed continuously. Remember: during His 3½-year earthly mission, the Lord operated 100% within human limitations (Philippians 2:7). His miraculous acts and seemingly omniscient insights were prayer-fueled, fully enabled by the Father and Holy Spirit. There are 25 distinct Gospel instances regarding the Savior’s prayers, including: at His baptism (Luke 3:21); before choosing the 12 disciples (Luke 6:12); upon feeding the 5,000 (John 6:11); at

Lazarus’ tomb (John 11:41-42); in Gethsemane (Matthew 26:36-46); and on the cross (Matthew 27:46).

There are several varieties of Christian prayer, including: adoration, worshiping God for who He is; thanksgiving; confession and repentance; intercession, praying for others; lament; dedication, offering yourself for service; supplication, asking God to meet personal needs; and listening, contemplative prayer. Jesus’ “Parable of the Persistent Widow” (Luke 18:1-8) illustrated prayer as persistent petition—encouraging faith-filled perseverance. The tax collector in the temple prayed, “*God, be merciful to me, a sinner*” (Luke 18:13). Just seven words ... and Jesus commended him. While being stoned by enemies, Stephen prayed, “*Lord Jesus, receive my spirit*” and “*Do not hold this sin against them*” (Acts 7:59-60). Stephen’s final prayer echoed Jesus’ own from Calvary’s cross, radiating loving forgiveness.

How is your prayer life? What’s keeping it from being even more vibrant and consistent?

REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS

What does “prayer is a ‘tuning fork’” mean to you? Which of the types of prayer is most comfortable for you? Which do you need to focus on increasingly?

PRAYERS

Shepherd’s Pantry

Pray that the volunteers and staff members of Shepherd’s Pantry will continue to put God first in their daily work for this ministry.

Sources



- The Hive Law's quote is taken from <https://www.thehivelaw.com>.
- Daniel A. Cox's and Sam Pressler's August 22, 2024 article, "Disconnected: The Growing Class Divide in American Civic Life," can be found at The Survey Center for American Life's website: <https://www.americansurveycenter.org/research/disconnected-places-and-spaces/>.
- Bureau of Labor Statistics data is from <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/tenure.pdf>.
- Bible Hub's breakdown of "devoted" can be found at <https://biblehub.com/greek/4342.htm>.
- The ECO quotes can be found within its published "The Lord's Supper—Theology and Resources" document, 2021 edition, pp. 11, 81.

These devotionals are written by a team of Glenkirk volunteers who represent a range of beliefs within the evangelical spectrum. As such, some of the expressed views may not necessarily represent those of pastoral leadership. If you find yourself challenged by a devo, explore why that might be and, should you have questions or concerns, please reach out to Pastor Kate Wallace Nunneley at KNunneley@GlenkirkChurch.org. If you are interested in joining those who pen Glenkirk devotionals, please contact Pastor Kate.