



# THOMAS & BETH HALE MINISTRIES

## An Apostolic Multiplier

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### THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD COMPILATION (ACTS 2:42)

**Acts 2:42 (NKJV)** And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.

**Acts 2:42 (WEY)** and they were constant in listening to the teaching of the Apostles and in their attendance at the Communion, that is, the Breaking of the Bread, and at prayer.

**Acts 2:42 (NLT)** All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord's Supper), and to prayer.

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This document is a compilation of multiple theological sources on selected Bible verses. It is researched, ordered and presented by Dr. Thomas Hale. It contains personal notes and comments by Dr. Hale and selected quotations from significant theological works, both contemporary and historical. Its goal is to accelerate and enrich the personal studies of others through a structured study guide.

### SOURCES

- Adam Clarke's Commentary, Adam Clarke
- Barnes Notes on the Old and New Testaments, Albert Barnes
- Lenski's Commentary on the New Testament, R.C.H. Lenski
- Strong's Greek Hebrew Dictionary, James H. Strong
- The Complete Word Study Dictionary - New Testament, Spiros Zodhiates, Th.D.
- The Complete Word Study Dictionary - Old Testament, Warren Baker, D.R.E., Eugene Carpenter, Ph.D.
- The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Frank E. Gaebelin, Editor
- Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Edited by Gerhard Kittel, Gerhard Friedrich, Geoffrey W. Bromiley

## SYNOPSIS

1. Luke records in the book of Acts that the believers in the early church were devoted to:
  - a. The “apostles’ teaching
  - b. “Fellowship” with one another
  - c. “Breaking of bread”
  - d. “Prayer”

The verb translated “devoted” is a common one that connotes a steadfast and single minded fidelity to a certain course of action.

2. By the omission of *kai* before *ho klasis* two pairs of particulars are enumerated – the first referring to the close adherence of believers to the Apostles in teaching and fellowship, the second expressing their outward acts of worship, breaking of the bread and prayer. The first pair may be taken as expressing their relation to man, the second their relation to God.
3. The teaching by the disciples was done in public or in private, in the temple and at home (Acts 5:42;20:20), in the Christian congregation (Acts 11:26), and more generally in the meeting for edification such as Paul describes in detail in 1 Cor. 14.
4. The disciples devoted themselves to fellowship, the New Testament word (*koinonia*) meaning, “common.” This speaks of that which is common, or of concern to the culture or society. Titus speaks of our common faith and Jude of our common salvation. In Acts 2:42 the disciples are living a “common” life, expressing themselves in loving fellowship which surrenders personal ownership (cf. Luke 12:33) in order to help others (Acts 2:45). Luke simply says of them, “having all things or everything in common.”
  - a. *Koinonia* is also a metonym for contribution, collection of money in behalf of poorer churches (Rom. 15:26; 2 Cor. 9:13; Heb. 13:16). So the basis of our common care for one another extends to the giving of alms (gifts, charity, handouts) to those in need. The early believers demonstrated this kind of “fellowship.”
5. The disciples devoted themselves to breaking (*klasis*) of bread. This has two applications:
  - a. Thus the breaking of bread is a term for ordinary meals in which the believers find table fellowship in recollection of Jesus’ own table fellowship with the disciples. Anything for the sustenance of the body is “bread.”

Dr. Brooke Hort says that this word “expresses something more external and concrete than a spirit of communion; it refers to the help given to the destitute of the community, not apparently in money, but in public meals, such as from another point of view are called ‘the daily ministrations’ (cf. Acts 6:2)
  - b. Metaphorically, the bread refers to the bread of heaven - Jesus and the breaking of his body for us. *Artos* refers to the shewbread, the bread of “faces.” This is the table

of the Lord. The early church Father Ignatius, in his writings mentions the “breaking of bread.” Consequently, this is perhaps the first title of the new liturgical meal, the Lord’s Supper. The Expositor’s Bible Commentary says, “it is difficult to believe that Luke had in mind here only an ordinary meal, placing the expression, as he does, between two such religiously loaded terms as “the fellowship” and “prayer.” Lenski says, “Luke is speaking of the greatest things done in this first congregation and characterizes the celebration of the Lord’s Supper by use of the expression that was common to that time: “breaking the bread.”

6. The disciples devoted themselves to prayer. Of this phrase, Matthew Poole says, “Prayers; all those kinds of prayers mentioned by St. Paul, 1Ti 2:1, as also their frequent praying, is implied. Thus, by a united force, they laboured to pull down mercies upon themselves and others, and to do violence unto the kingdom of heaven.”

## WORD STUDY - TEACHING (DOCTRINE)

- Complete Word Study Dictionary, The - New Testament.

διδασκίη [See Stg: <G1322>]

didaché; gen. didachés, fem. noun from didáskō <G1321>, to teach. In an act. sense it means the act of teaching, instructing, tutoring (Mark 4:2; 12:38; 1 Cor. 14:6, 26; 2 Tim. 4:2); in a pass. sense, teaching which is given, that which anyone teaches, the manner or character of one's teaching (Matt. 7:28; 22:33; Mark 1:22, 27; 11:18; Luke 4:32). In an absolute sense, it denotes the teaching of Jesus (2 John 1:9, 10); the Lord (Mark 11:18; John 18:19; Acts 13:12); the Apostles (Acts 2:42; 5:28; Titus 1:9); the things taught, precept, doctrine (Matt. 16:12; John 7:16, 17; Acts 17:19; Rom. 6:17; 16:17; Heb. 6:2; 13:9). Other doctrines: of Balaam, magic, gnosticism (Rev. 2:14 [cf. 2 Pet. 2:15; Jude 1:11]); of the Nicolaitans, similar to that of Balaam (Rev. 2:15 [cf. Rev. 2:6]); of Jezebel, adultery, idolatry (Rev. 2:24). Essentially didaché is the same as didaskalía <G1319>, sometimes meaning the manner of teaching and sometimes the content of teaching. Both are used in the act. and pass. senses, i.e., the act of teaching and the content of what is taught. However, it is to be noted that the pass. sense is predominant in didaché and the act. sense in didaskalía. In didaché, we have incorporated the authority of that which is taught, and didaskalía predominates in the act or art of teaching. Didaché is used only twice in the Pastoral Epistles (2 Tim. 4:2; Titus 1:9) while didaskalía, with a stress on the art of teaching, occurs fifteen times.

Syn.: lógos <G3056>, word, doctrine or a discourse.

Ant.: áгноia <G52>, want of knowledge or perception; agnōsía <G56>, willful ignorance; agnōēma <G51>, a sin of ignorance; idiotēs <G2399>, a person who is unskilled, unlearned; agrámmatos <G62>, unlearned.

- Theological Dictionary of the New Testament

A. didáskō outside the NT.

1. Common from Homer, this word denotes teaching and learning in the wide sense of imparting theoretical and practical knowledge with the highest possible development of the pupil as the goal. There is little religious use, and the term has a strong intellectual and authoritative bearing. Thus it can also mean “to demonstrate.” When used in connection with choral training, it comes almost to have the sense “to perform.”

2. It occurs some 100 times in the LXX (mostly for the root lmd). While various kinds of instruction can be meant (cf. 2 Sam. 22:35; Dt. 31:19), God's will is the special object, with a volitional as well as an intellectual reference. God himself, the head of a house, or the righteous may do the teaching. As distinct from secular usage, where

the aim is to develop talents, the OT relates teaching to the totality of the person.<sup>162</sup>

3. In later Judaism teaching signifies instruction in the law for the right ordering of the relation to God and neighbor. The secular use may still be found (e.g., teaching a trade), but to give teaching in the law, or even to give a scholarly exegetical opinion, is the predominant sense.

## B. didáskō in the NT.

Of some 95 instances, almost two thirds are in the Gospels and Acts (and only ten in Paul). The unambiguous meaning is “to teach.”

### 1. The didáskein of Jesus according to the Synoptists.

a. didáskein is one of the main functions of Jesus (Matt. 4:23; 9:35; 11:1). He teaches in the synagogues (Matt. 9:35) and the temple (Mark 12:35) as well as outside.

b. The form of his teaching is that of a typical teacher of the age. At Nazareth he reads Scripture, seats himself, and expounds the passage (Luke 4:16ff.). He also sits to teach in Matt. 5:1ff.; Mark 9:35; Luke 5:3.

c. The material of Jesus is also traditional. He starts from Scripture in Luke 4:16ff.; Matt. 5:21ff. Yet he does not stop at the law and opposes casuistic exposition. He aims to order all life in relation to God and neighbor (Matt. 22:37ff.), appeals to the will, and calls for decision for or against God. Like the rabbis, he finds a revelation of God's will in Scripture (cf. Matt. 5:17-18). The main difference lies in his own self-awareness as the Son. It is in virtue of his person that his teaching causes astonishment (Mark 1:22; Matt. 7:28-29). Thus, while he will not absolutize the law, he follows its true line of teaching by claiming the whole person with a view to education and reformation. In this sense he is the end of the law (Rom. 10:4), and the Gospels can refer to teaching in the absolute when they speak of the teaching ministry of Jesus. While this is the common rabbinic use, it would sound odd to Greek ears. Yet even Luke has it, for the connection with Jesus himself gives his teaching an absolute sense.

### 3. The didáskein of Early Christianity.

a. Even during the life of Jesus, the disciples, too, begin to teach (Mark 6:30). It becomes part of their commission in Matt. 28:20 as a presupposition of either baptízein or mathēteúein and with Jesus' own didaché as its content. In Acts 4 the apostles teach in the name of Jesus (v. 18), proclaiming resurrection (v. 2). If this involves OT interpretation, it culminates in a call to repentance. In outward form, they, too, follow Jewish practice (cf. Acts 5:25). Exegesis and exhortation form the main body of teaching, even at times to the point of instruction in the law (Rom.

2:21; Acts 15:1). In this respect a new beginning has to be made in view of the fulfilment of the law in Jesus (Heb. 5:12).

b. Christian teaching, then, aims primarily to show from Scripture that Jesus is the promised Messiah. In this sense it is “teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 8:31). The combination with *kēryssein* here gives a comprehensive picture of the apostles’ work. They impart facts, but in such a way that one must either accept them or reject Scripture. Opponents, of course, saw here a teaching contrary to Moses and the law (Acts 21:21, 28). The word of God that Paul taught in Acts 18:11 probably has the same sense, not of the general message of salvation, but of the message of salvation on the basis and in the light of OT Scripture.

## WORD STUDY - FELLOWSHIP

- Complete Word Study Dictionary, The - New Testament.

**κοινωνία** [See Stg: <G2842>]

*koinōnía*; gen. *koinōnías*, fem. noun from *koinōnéō* <G2841>, to share in. Fellowship with, participation.

(I) Participation, communion, fellowship (Acts 2:42; 1 Cor. 1:9; 10:16; 2 Cor. 6:14; 8:4; 13:14; Gal. 2:9, "right hands of fellowship," the pledge of communion; Eph. 3:9 [TR]; Phil. 1:5, "your fellowship in the gospel," accession to it; 2:1; 3:10; Phile. 1:6; 1 John 1:3, 6, 7).

(II) Communication, distribution, a metonym for contribution, collection of money in behalf of poorer churches (Rom. 15:26; 2 Cor. 9:13; Heb. 13:16).

Syn.: *eleēmosúnē* <G1654>, compassion, beneficence, alms; *metoché* <G3352>, partnership.

- Theological Dictionary of the New Testament

### A. In Secular Greek.

1. This word means "common" a. in the sense of common ownership, property, ideas, etc., b. in the sense of what concerns all, e.g., societies, monies, resolves, and c. in the sense of what is of little value.

2. A second line of use is for "fellows," "participants."

### B. In the OT and Judaism.

1. The general sense of common is found only a few times in Proverbs (e.g., 1:14; 15:23; 21:9; 25:24).

2. Another sense (Heb. *ḥōl*) has reference to what is in general or ordinary use as distinct from what is consecrated (though the LXX uses *bébēlos* in such cases). Thus the rabbis use *ḥōl* for working days, or for ordinary ground, money, or food, or for animals slaughtered for common use. Only in apocryphal works (e.g., 1 Macc. 1:47) and Josephus do we find *koinós* as an equivalent for this.

### C. The Individual and Society, Theories and Forms of Society.

1. The Greeks value individuals and individual rights, yet with a strong sense of the duty to society and of integration into it, since order is the principle of all reality. Common ownership of the land underlies society, but except where military needs demand a degree of communal economy (as in Sparta), private property soon develops with the resultant distinction between rich and poor. Theories of society seek to redress the balance. Thus Pythagoras establishes a communal society for his followers. Plato in his portrayal of the ideal state suggests that rulers and soldiers

should be put on a public basis, and in his modified proposals he advocates nationalization of the land and strict economic supervision. Aristotle preserves private ownership but with the proviso that one portion of the land be held in common, and that the nearest possible equality of ownership be achieved. Poets like Hesiod depict an ideal state in either past or present. The Cynics believe that common possession of all things is the true order of nature. The Stoics seek the best possible realization of a better age by fostering the spirit of brotherhood. The Neo-Pythagoreans renew the ideal of a common life and a community of goods (for the earth is a common mother) in which one may possess nothing and yet be the owner of all things.<sup>448</sup>

2. Apart from the Pythagoreans, the Greeks only theorize about common ownership, but Jewish groups like the Essenes practice it, sharing both meals and property. The Therapeutae also live communally and in ascetic isolation for the intenser study of Scripture.

#### D. *koinós* in the NT.

1. Tit. 1:4 speaks of the “common” faith and Jude 3 of the “common” salvation. In Acts 2:44; 4:32 the disciples live a “common” life, following the example of Jesus (Luke 8:1ff.) and anticipating the last days (Dt. 15:4). This life in community is not based on economic theory, legal socialization, or philosophical imitation of nature, but expresses the loving fellowship which renounces ownership (cf. Luke 12:33) in order to help others (Acts 2:45). The phrase in Acts (“having all things or everything in common”) is a Hellenistic one.

2. The sense “profane” occurs in Rev. 21:27; Heb. 10:29 (“profaning the blood of the covenant”); Mark 7:2 (“cultically unclean hands”). The NT denies that anything that God created is ritually profane (cf. Acts 10:28; Rom. 14:14). Weaker brethren may still think in these terms, and allowance must be made for them, but they are objectively mistaken (Rom. 14:14).

#### E. The Meaning and Construction of the Terms.

1. *koinōnós* means “fellow,” “participant.” *koinōnéō* means 1. “to share in” and more rarely 2. “to impart.” It is used in the absolute, or with genitive of object, dative of person, or both. *koinōnía* means “participation,” “impartation,” or “fellowship.” It is used with the objective genitive (what is shared), the subjective genitive (the person or thing sharing), the recipient being in the dative of with a preposition and the objective genitive (the person in whom there is sharing).

## WORD STUDY - BREAKING

- Complete Word Study Dictionary, The - New Testament.

κλάσις [See Stg: <G2800>]

klásis; gen. kláseōs, fem. noun from kláō <G2806>, to break. The act of breaking, particularly with reference to the bread in the Lord's Supper (Luke 24:35; Acts 2:42).

Ant.: súndesmos <G4886>, a tie that joins, uniting bond.

- Theological Dictionary of the New Testament

### A. General Usage.

1. kláō means “to break,” “to break off” (cf. Rom. 11:19-20 [variant reading]), “to shatter,” klásis means “breaking off” (of shoots of the vine), and klásma means “fragment” or a “bite” or “piece” of bread.

2. The word group is used in the NT for the common custom of breaking bread at meals which initiates the sharing of the main course. Jesus follows the practice at the feeding of the multitude (Mark 6:41), the Last Supper (Mark 14:22), and the Emmaus meeting (Luke 24:30). For Paul cf. Acts 20:11; 27:35. The common church meal is called the klásis of bread in Acts 2:42 and cf. 20:7. The fragments that remain in Matt. 6:42 and Jn. 6:12-13 are klásmata; according to custom Jesus orders that they be gathered up after the meal.

### B. Breaking of Bread as a Term for the Lord's Supper.

Breaking of bread is not as such a cultic act, even at the Last Supper; it is part of the initiatory process. Thus the breaking of bread in Acts 2:42 (cf. 20:7) is simply a term for ordinary meals in which the believers find table fellowship in recollection of Jesus' own table fellowship with the disciples. Yet within the ordinary meal we also find a special, cultic breaking of bread (1 Cor. 11:20). Thus, as we learn from Ignatius Ephesians 20.2 and Did. 14.1, breaking of bread becomes perhaps the first title for the new liturgical meal, the Lord's Supper. This usage continues, but the title is later replaced by eucharistía, and the breaking of bread becomes a special part of the celebration, symbolizing Christ's violent death.

## WORD STUDY - BREAD

Complete Word Study Dictionary, The - New Testament.

ἄρτος [See Stg: <G740>]

ártos; gen. ártou, masc. noun. Bread.

(I) Bread, a loaf, pl. ártoi, loaves (Matt. 4:3, 4; 7:9; 14:17, 19; 15:34, 36; Mark 6:41; John 21:9, 13; Sept.: Gen. 14:18). Spoken of the shewbread (Matt. 12:4; Heb. 9:2; Sept.: Lev. 24:7; 1 Sam. 21:4, 6); of the bread in the Last Supper (Matt. 26:26; Mark 14:22; Luke 22:19; 1 Cor. 10:16, 17; 11:23, 26-28); metaphorically meaning the bread from heaven, i.e., that divine spiritual nourishment presented as the life and soul of Christians in the person of the Son of God (John 6:31-58, particularly vv. 51-56; hence compared with manna in vv. 49, 58; see Ps. 78:24, 25; Prov. 9:5).

(II) Anything for the sustenance of the body of which bread is a principal part (Matt. 6:11; Mark 6:8, 36; Luke 11:3; 2 Cor. 9:10; Sept.: Ex. 16:4, 15, 29; Isa. 58:7). In Matt. 15:26 and Mark 7:27, "the bread of the children" (a.t.) means food destined for the children. In Matt. 15:2; Mark 3:20; 7:5, 27; Luke 14:1, 15, to "eat bread" means to take food, eat a meal (cf. Sept.: Gen. 37:25; 39:6; 1 Sam. 20:34; 1 Kings 13:8-23). In John 13:18, "who eats bread with me" (a.t.) means who is my familiar friend, quoted from Ps. 41:9. In 2 Thess. 3:8, to eat the bread of someone means to be supported by someone (cf. 2 Sam. 9:7, 10). In 2 Thess. 3:12, to eat one's own bread means to support oneself. Other references: Matt. 16:5, 7-10; Mark 2:26; 6:37, 38, 44, 52; 7:2; 8:4-6, 14, 16, 17, 19; Luke 4:3, 4; 6:4; 7:33; 9:3, 13, 16; 11:5, 11; 15:17; 24:30, 35; John 6:5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 23, 26; Acts 2:42, 46; 20:7, 11; 27:35.

- **Theological Dictionary of the New Testament**

1. This word signifies literal bread in passages like Luke 24:30; Acts 27:35; Jn. 6:11 (at the Last Supper, Mark 14:22; the showbread, Mark 2:26).<sup>81</sup>

2. It then stands for nourishment in general (Luke 7:33; Jn. 13:18; 2 Th. 3:12).

3. The idea of participation in eternal bliss underlies Luke 14:15 and Christ as the true bread or bread of life in Jn. 6:31ff. of the bread in the Last Supper (Matt. 26:26; Mark 14:22; Luke 22:19; 1 Cor. 10:16, 17; 11:23, 26-28); metaphorically meaning the bread from heaven, i.e., that divine spiritual nourishment presented as the life and soul of Christians in the person of the Son of God (John 6:31-58, particularly vv. 51-56; hence compared with manna in vv. 49, 58; see Ps. 78:24, 25; Prov. 9:5).

## COMMENTARIES ON ACTS 2:42

- **Adam Clarke's Commentary**

**They continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine**—They received it, retained it, and acted on its principles.

**And fellowship**—Κοινωνία, community; meaning association for religious and spiritual purposes, The community of goods cannot be meant; for this is mentioned Acts 2:44, 45, where it is said, they had all things common.

**And in breaking of bread**—Whether this means the holy eucharist, or their common meals, it is difficult to say. The Syriac understands it of the former. Breaking of bread was that act which preceded a feast or meal, and which was performed by the master of the house, when he pronounced the blessing—what we would call grace before meat.

**And in prayers**—In supplications to God for an increase of grace and life in their own souls; for establishment in the truth which they had received, and for the extension of the kingdom of Christ in the salvation of men. Behold the employment of the primitive and apostolic Church.

- **Barnes' Notes on the New Testament**

**Verse 42.** And they continued stedfastly. They persevered in, or they adhered to. This is the inspired record of the result. That any of these apostatized is nowhere recorded, and is not to be presumed. Though they had been suddenly converted, though suddenly admitted to the church, though exposed to much persecution and contempt, and many trials, yet the record is that they adhered to the doctrines and duties of the Christian religion. The word rendered continued stedfastly, προσκαρτερουντες, means attending one, remaining by his side, not leaving or forsaking him.

**The apostles' doctrine.** This does not mean that they held or believed the doctrines of the apostles, though that was true; but it means that they adhered to, or attended on, their teaching or instruction. The word doctrine has now a technical sense, and means a collection and arrangement of abstract views supposed to be contained in the Bible. In the Scriptures the word means simply teaching; and the expression here denotes that they continued to attend on their instructions. One evidence of conversion is a desire to be instructed in the doctrines and duties of religion, and a willingness to attend on the preaching of the gospel.

**And fellowship.** The word rendered fellowship, κοινωνία is often rendered communion. It properly denotes having things in common, or participation, society, friendship. It may apply to anything which may be possessed in common, or in which all may partake. Thus all Christians have the same hope of heaven; the same joys; the same hatred of sin; the same enemies to contend with. Thus they have the same subjects of conversation, of feeling, and of prayer; or they have communion in these things. And thus the early Christians had their property in common. The word here may apply to either or to all—to their conversation, their prayers, their dangers, or their property; and means that they were united to the apostles, and participated with them in whatever befell them. It may

be added, that the effect of a revival of religion is to unite Christians more and more, and to bring those who were before separated to union and love. Christians feel that they are a band of brethren, and that however much they were separated before they became Christians, now they have great and important interests in common; united in feelings, in interest, in dangers, in conflicts, in opinions, and in the hopes of a blessed immortality.

**Breaking of bread.** The Syriac renders this "the Eucharist," or the Lord's Supper. It cannot, however, be determined whether this refers to their partaking of their ordinary food together, or to feasts of charity, or to the Lord's Supper. The bread of the Hebrews was made commonly into cakes, thin, hard, and brittle, so that it was broken instead of being cut. Hence, to denote intimacy or friendship, the phrase to break bread together would be very expressive, in the same way as the Greeks denoted it by drinking together, συμποσιον. From the expression used in Acts 2:44, comp. with Acts 2:46, that they had all things common, it would rather seem to be implied that this referred to the participation of their ordinary meals. The action of breaking bread was commonly performed by the master or head of a family, immediately after asking a blessing.-(Lightfoot.)

**In prayers.** This was one effect of the influence of the, Spirit, and an evidence of their change. A genuine revival will be always followed by a love of prayer.

(\*) "continued stedfastly" 1 Corinthians 11:2, Hebrews 10:25

- **JFB - A Commentary: Critical, Experimental, and Practical on the Old and New Testaments.**

**Verse 42.** continued steadfastly in—"attended constantly upon."

**the apostles' doctrine**—"teaching"; giving themselves up to the instructions which, in their raw state, would be indispensable to the consolidation of the immense multitude suddenly admitted to visible discipleship.

**fellowship**—in its largest sense.

**breaking of bread**—not certainly in the Lord's Supper alone, but rather in frugal repasts taken together, with which the Lord's Supper was probably conjoined until abuses and persecution led to the discontinuance of the common meal.

**prayers**—probably, stated seasons of it.

- **The Expositor's Bible Commentary**

Luke begins to describe the early church by telling us that the believers in it were distinguished by their devotion to the “apostles’ teaching,” to “fellowship” with one another, to “breaking of bread,” and to “prayer.” The verb translated “devoted” is a common one that connotes a steadfast and singleminded fidelity to a certain course of action.

“The apostles’ teaching” refers to a body of material considered authoritative because it was the message about Jesus of Nazareth proclaimed by accredited apostles. Undoubtedly the early congregation at Jerusalem, amid differences of perspective and along with a lively eschatological expectation, add a general “sense of center” provided by the historical and doctrinal teaching of the apostles.

The definite article in the fellowship implies that there was something distinctive in the gatherings of the early believers. With the influx of three thousand on the day of Pentecost and with daily increases to their numbers after that they must have had some externally recognizable identity.

Just what is meant by the breaking of bread in verse 42 has been vigorously debated. Was it a type of Jewish fellowship meal which showed the believers mutual love and recalled their earlier association with Jesus but was devoid of any paschal (Passover) significance as Paul later illegitimately saw in it? Or was it in these early years a paschal commemoration of Christ’s death, in line with Paul’s later elaboration? Or was it at first an agape feast that emphasized the joy of communion with the risen Lord and the fellowship with one another, which Paul later quite legitimately saw to have also paschal import, in line with the intention of Jesus? The matter is somewhat difficult to determine, for while 2:42 and 20:7 may very well relate to the full Pauline understanding and Luke earlier referred to “the breaking of bread” in that way in his passion narrative (Luke 22:19), elsewhere he uses it for an ordinary meal and seems to mean just that even in 2:46. Yet it is difficult to believe that Luke had in mind here only an ordinary meal, placing the expression, as he does, between two such religiously loaded terms as “the fellowship” and “prayer.”

The NT employs two terms for teaching, *didaché* <G1322>, and *didaskalía*. Generally speaking, *didaché* means the substance of teaching and *didaskalía* the act of teaching. Luke uses the word *didaché* <G1322> in Acts 2:42, emphasizing that the early church believers were devoted to the substance of the teaching by the disciples!

Dr. Hort (Brooke Foss Westcott), a 19th century theologian, said of this verse that the teaching refers to a “definite system, so that the disciples might well be called scribes to the kingdom, bringing out of their treasures things new and old, the facts of the life of Jesus and the glory which followed, facts interpreted in the light of the Law and the Prophets.” The apostles were the new “scribes”.

Concerning the word, “fellowship,” Dr. Hort says that this word “expresses something more external and concrete than a spirit of communion; it refers to the help given to the destitute of the community, not apparently in money, but in public meals, such as from another point of view are called ‘the daily ministrations’ (cf. Acts 6:2).”

### **The Acts of the Apostles by R.C.H. Lenski**

The fundamental activity of the first congregation is this firm, continued adherence to the “teaching of the apostles” this work went on continuously, and all these people not only attended the meetings faithfully but also earnestly adhered to what was taught.

They adhered “to fellowship,” and Luke adds no genitive, nor is “of the apostles” to be understood; this is the fellowship of all the members with each other as well as with the apostles.

They adhered “to breaking the bread.” There is no necessity for stressing the article in the sense of “their bread,” that eaten at a joint meal. Even then the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper would be involved, since at this early time it was always celebrated at the end of a meal. Luke is speaking of the greatest things done in this first congregation and characterizes the celebration of the Lord’s Supper by use of the expression that was common to that time: “breaking the bread.”