

Connection Group Discussion Questions

For the week of May 29, 2016

Acts 4:32-35

These questions are to be used as a spring board for discussion.

Answers may or may not be found in the sermons.

New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

³² Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common. ³³ With great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. ³⁴ There was not a needy person among them, for as many as owned lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold. ³⁵ They laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need.

New Living Translation (NLT)

³² All the believers were united in heart and mind. And they felt that what they owned was not their own, so they shared everything they had. ³³ The apostles testified powerfully to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and God's great blessing was upon them all. ³⁴ There were no needy people among them, because those who owned land or houses would sell them ³⁵ and bring the money to the apostles to give to those in need.

Luke's ideals are based in Jubilee (Luke 25:10) and the "favorable year of the Lord" (Isaiah 61:2a and Luke 4:19). His gospel accounts of Jesus' ministry among the poor reflect his understanding of how the gospel should be expressed. For Luke, the redistribution of money from sold property reflects the social character of God's kingdom in which all share in God's good gifts equally.

Read Luke 4:23-37.

Connection Questions:

1. What demands of Christians does biblical stewardship make?
2. Do the demands of biblical stewardship conflict with our personal beliefs of private ownership?
3. To what extent may God lay claim on our personal possessions? How do we recognize when God is making such claims? (Must we hear the voice of God first? Should people, particularly people we know through Christian fellowship, rightly expect their local church to assist them when they are in need?)
4. From the text, how did the first-century believers regard their possessions in light of their understanding of the gospel?
5. The believers in Acts formed community and devoted themselves to four activities. What were those activities? What activities serve as the glue that holds our church together in community?

6. How might you raise our congregation's awareness of opportunities to assist the needy?

7. Are there ways to provide multiple levels of response from low to high commitment to get more people involved with helping others?