

## Weekly Bible Study for Highcliffe and Bransgore Methodist Churches

Acts 2: 42-47 Norman Bonnett w/c 26<sup>th</sup> April 2020

My dear friends,

The passage before us is a favourite of mine because it paints a picture of an ideal church community and is therefore a challenge to us all. Please read the passage and try to make a list of as many characteristics of the church as you can find. I found 10 (some more explicit than others) but how many can you find? Perhaps it would be helpful to list them:

I would like you to ask yourself how many of these characteristics you have noted above can be found in our church or churches that you have belonged to. I have personally belonged to several excellent churches in my travels of life but there were always weaknesses in one direction or another – but then, was I always a perfect member? Did I fit the picture described in these verses? What about you?

We are living in times when we are being instructed or encouraged into a way of life that most of us are finding difficult, but we have somehow found the self-discipline to fall in line for the sake of us all. It has called forth a unity which is so obvious as we go shopping or walking. When I was a teacher, I think I had an ability to get large numbers of children to move in organised and disciplined ways for sports days, concerts and assemblies. Now even Sainsbury's are doing it because we are discovering the importance of unity to a community. Unity shines through this passage from beginning to end. The church worshipped, learnt, shared, and loved giving rise to a sense of oneness in the name of Jesus.

Please re-read the passage and notice how it indicates a church which shared its purpose, giving rise to an effective evangelism that I'm sure we all long for, as my own personal bible study reminded me this very morning, "how wonderful it is to see believers united, not so much within their denomination but in Christ".

I invite you to take time this week to pray around the characteristics found in this passage, asking that the Lord, through His Holy Spirit, will guide us to find unity as each one of us embraces our responsibilities to make a contribution to that unity. Let us also pray for our country, for our wonderful health service and all those who carry responsibilities at this time.

May God richly bless us.