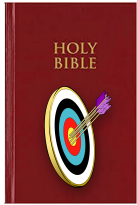


Spot On

Restoring the Hebraic foundational emphasis on the processes of how you live your life:



- the responsive actions our Lord commands all of His followers,*
- and their responsibility to deferentially obey by grace the One they love*

Spot 9. Continuing Steadfastly Together With One Mind

Often today Christians gather together for weekly services or congregation-sponsored activities because it suits their purposes. They enjoy the worship, or want to be taught something more about the Bible, or enjoy spending time doing entertaining things with people they've seen on Sundays.

In contrast, there was nothing convenient or superficial or casual about the time the earliest followers of the resurrected Lord Jesus spent together. They couldn't keep away from *together* drinking in the teaching and testimonies of the apostles (Acts 2:42). They were side by side with other brothers and sisters who were equally passionate in their zeal to walk in Jesus' steps. And what they learned and discussed was meant to be applied to their lives and introduced to any who asked why and what they now believed.

But you'd never guess from the NIV that these fervent Jesus followers were consumed by intense thirst to keep on drinking in whatever truth they could, wherever they could come together, and whenever they possibly could gather with others who were of the same deep conviction.

Let's look at what a difference a translation can make in revealing the collective depth of heart motives and purpose among those who love and serve Jesus together.

•**NIV** — “Every day they **continued to meet together** in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and **ate together** with glad and sincere hearts” (Acts 2:46).

•**Literal from Greek** — “And from day to day **continuing steadfastly with one mind** in the temple and breaking bread **from house to house**, they **shared food** in gladness and simplicity of heart” (Acts 2:46).

•**Complete Jewish Bible (CJB)** — “**Continuing faithfully and with singleness of purpose** to meet in the Temple courts daily, and breaking bread in their several homes, they **shared their food** in joy and simplicity of heart” (Acts 2:46).

The Greek word translated as “**continuing steadfastly**” contains the sense of **purposeful** and **firm action**, even to the point of “bearing a burden”. It's not just going along with the crowd or casually seeking information. Rather, these earnest early followers were together in the temple each day because nothing could keep them away from being with one another in their newfound Messiah and learning how to live as He would have them live.

The CJB does a far more accurate job than the NIV in reflecting the literal account of *unity of mind and purpose* in these communal gatherings. From the NIV perspective, though, they could have been getting together for a “service” and then eating together afterward!

But as Jews who shared a communal awareness of belonging to the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, sharing their food with one another in their homes was the customary means of continuing discussions with spiritual family members. And there’s no indication in the text that only the wealthy invited others to their houses. Everyone shared whatever they had. Their *simplicity of heart* reflected a mutual sense of kinship which made sure none of the “family” went hungry.

The same Greek word for “continuing steadfastly” is found in Romans 12:12:

•**Literal from Greek** — “*Rejoicing in hope, **showing endurance** in affliction, **steadfastly continuing in prayer.**”*

In fact, each of these ongoing commands of rejoicing, showing endurance, and steadfastly praying are full of intentional decision to take a specific action. Yet that heart-felt response is lacking in the NIV, and even the KJV loses some of the intensity in its word choice.

•**NIV** — “*Be joyful in hope, **patient** in affliction, **faithful in prayer**” (Romans 12:12).*

•**KJV** — “*Rejoicing in hope; **patient** in tribulation; **continuing instant** in prayer” (Romans 12:12).*

A final example of *intentional keen earnestness and unity of heart* is found in Acts 1:14 — at least, that’s what the original translation presents.

•**Literal Greek translation** — “*These all were **continuing steadfastly with one mind** in prayer...*”

•**NIV** — “*They all **joined together constantly** in prayer...*”

•**KJV** — “*These all **continued with one accord** in prayer and supplication...*”

People today can get together for a “prayer meeting” for all kinds of reasons, even on a regular basis. But knowing that each person there has a heart relationship with Jesus as Lord and depends on Father hearing and answering those prayers is far different from casting a broad net of general prayer requests and specific needs, and then hoping that maybe they’ll be answered.

What To Take Away From This Discussion:

It’s all too easy to *intend* to pray, to *intend* to meet with others to build one another up in the Spirit, to *intend* to send an encouraging letter. But the ongoing nature of **obedient trust** is seen in steadfastly continuing in whatever the Spirit directs you to do, especially when that steadfast and firm resolve is carried out with others of like spirit and heart. That resolute determination will set you apart for your Lord’s use both individually and collectively as you represent Him to an ever-resistant and oppositional world.