

The Early Church: Open-Handed Generosity Acts 2:42-47

Open-handed generosity in the early church wasn't a strategy—it was the natural overflow of lives transformed by the Spirit. In Acts, we see that as the gospel takes root, people begin to hold their time, possessions, and even their lives with open hands. This kind of generosity begins with God himself—Father, Son, and Spirit—whose giving nature reshapes our hearts as we receive his grace. It shows up both spontaneously and intentionally, spreads within authentic community, and touches every part of life—not just finances. Ultimately, open-handed generosity is not driven by obligation but developed through trust, as we practice releasing what we have and receiving from others, becoming people who reflect the generosity we've experienced in Christ.

Thinking it Through

“Greed, for lack of a better word, is good.” - Gordon Gekko in *Wall Street*

“We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.” - Winston Churchill

“No one has ever become poor by giving.” - Anne Frank

“I do not believe one can settle how much we ought to give. I am afraid the only safe rule is to give more than we can spare.” - C. S. Lewis

“I have found that among its other benefits, giving liberates the soul of the giver.” - Maya Angelou

Working it Out

1. Why do you think receiving generosity (from God or others) is essential to becoming a generous person? Where is that difficult for you?
2. Do you tend to be more “organic” (spontaneous) or “systematic” (planned) in your generosity? What might it look like to grow in the other area?
3. The sermon suggested that our struggle with generosity is often rooted more in fear than greed. Do you agree? What fears might keep your “hands closed”?

4. Can you share a time when you saw generosity become “contagious” in a community? What made it spread?

5. What is one practical step you could take this week to practice open-handed generosity?

6. How does the generosity of God in the gospel motivate or reshape the way you think about your own resources?

Prayer Prompts

“Father, you are the giver of every good gift. Help us to trust your provision more deeply. Where fear causes us to hold tightly, teach us to rest in your care and open our hands in faith.”

“Jesus, you gave yourself fully for us. Form your heart in us. Show us what it looks like to live open-handed lives—willing to give, serve, and sacrifice for others as you have for us.”

“Holy Spirit, produce in us the kind of generosity we see in the early church. Prompt us in the moment, shape our habits, and give us courage to both give freely and receive humbly.”
