



Of Widows and Meals: Communal Meals in the Book of Acts

Reta Halteman Finger

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Though "community" has become a common byword in the contemporary Western church, the practice of communal sharing has effectively fallen by the wayside. Unfortunately, it is often the poor who are left wanting because we no longer come together.

Reta Halteman Finger finds a solution to this modern problem by learning from the ancient Mediterranean Christian culture of community. In the earliest Jerusalem church, in holding the responsibility for preparing and serving communal meals, women were given a place of honor. With the table fellowship and goods sharing of the early church, Luke says, "there were no needy persons among them" (Acts 4: 34). Finger thoroughly examines this agape-meal tradition, challenging traditional interpretations of the "community of goods" in the Jerusalem church and proving that the communal sharing lasted for hundreds of years longer than previously assumed. "Of Widows and Meals" begins a discussion of need in community that can revolutionize the contemporary church's interaction with the world at large.

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