

**Ac 4:32 And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common.**

By communal living I mean that the members of a church should come into one place to live, give up all rights to personal property, and pool together all of their resources, energy and income so that it can be redistributed evenly to everyone belonging to that *community*. There is nothing in Scripture to suggest to the Christian that they should adopt a communal lifestyle. As a matter of fact, quite the opposite is true. Scripture maintains both the rule of private property ownership for the members of a church and corporate ownership of property by a church. This was so for the first church in Jerusalem, and it should be for every church since then. First, consider corporate ownership of property by a church.

... *neither said any of them* refers to the congregation of the first church in Jerusalem. Those things which we have as a congregation is not *mine*, not *yours*, but *ours* to be used, dispensed, or disposed of as we are agreed. This property of the church is called '*things common*.'

'... *and had all things common*' – arrange this in usual English syntax: 'and had all common things.' *Common* being the adjective modifying the noun *things*. This church had *all things*. Now we need to describe what those '*all things*' are. They are *common*. That means the things which the church possessed are *public*, church property. Once something is donated to the church it becomes church property. That which we devote to the Lord is the Lord's.

*Lev.27.28 Notwithstanding no devoted thing, that a man shall devote unto the LORD of all that he hath, both of man and beast, and of the field of his possession, shall be sold or redeemed: every devoted thing is most holy unto the LORD.*

No member, pastor, deacon, no one, has the right to take any *common property* of the church to themselves. Doing this would be a misappropriation of church property and is as much an act of theft as going down to the local merchant, taking something that they have, and walking out without paying for it.

Last of all, consider private property ownership by each member. Having private property is a fact of life. Peter's rebuke to Ananias in Acts 5.4 tells us this much: *Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold was it not in thine own power?* Peter told Ananias that this was his property to do with as he pleased. Peter also told him that the revenue he had generated from the sale of the property was his to do with as he pleased. Ananias' sin was that he lied to the Holy Spirit. Because he misrepresented himself to the brethren of the church he misrepresented himself to the Holy Spirit which was abiding with them. ... *thou hast not lied to men, but unto God*. So, until private property is donated to the church the church has no property. So, the Philadelphia Confession of Faith (1742), being an amended copy of The London Confession of Faith (1644), says concerning private property:

'[T]heir communion one with another as saints, doth not take away, or infringe the title or property which each man hath in his good and possessions.'

## *Communal Living*

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But once we voluntarily give of our means it becomes the Lord's, the church's to use or distribute only as the whole church determines.

Since the Bible demonstrates both corporate ownership of property by a church and individual property ownership by her members it necessarily excludes the notion of a communal lifestyle. The truth is, the Bible does not support communal living at all.