

## Study Notes and Questions for Acts 4:32-37 and Acts 5:1-11

- Why did the believers sell their goods to support others who were in need?
- In your judgment, should modern Christians all sell their property and give the proceeds to the church? Why or why not? Should some of us do this? If so, how can we know?
- How was this generosity related to 4:33?
- **Note:** The phrase: **at the apostles' feet** (4:35, 37; 5:2) suggests some kind of legal transfer expressed in formal language, "a trust for the community rather than a personal gift to the apostles. Why is it important to understand that these donations weren't actually intended for the apostles themselves?"
- These early believers expressed their oneness—their fellowship—by taking responsibility for each other's needs. To what extent do you believe this is a model we should follow? Explain why your view is consistent with Scripture and sensible.
- Examine 5:1–4 carefully. Exactly what was Ananias's sin? (For instance, was it wrong in itself not to sell all his property and give it to the church?)
- From 4:32, 34–37 and 5:4, does it seem that believers were required to give their possessions to the church and that private property was not acknowledged? Or did believers continue to own goods privately while selling and sharing for others' needs? What evidence supports your conclusion?
- What does this passage reveal about the Holy Spirit?
- What did God teach the early believers by striking Ananias and Sapphira dead?
- **Note:** In 5:11 Luke uses the word "**church**" for the first time in Acts. It is the Greek word **ekklesia**. Gentiles used *ekklesia* to denote any assembly for political and other purposes. Since the word **synagogue** was already being used for Jewish places of worship, the early Christians chose **ekklesia** to refer both to the local fellowship as well as the universal church. Do you think most people think of "church" as a building or the gathering of God's people?