

# ICON: ANTHONY OF EGYPT

## RESOURCE 3.7



### **Egg tempera on carved wood, Athens, Greece, 2002**

Anthony of Egypt is a saint of the 4th century who went off into the desert in order to be alone with God. Many consider him a founder of what we now call Christian monasticism. The word monasticism comes from “monos” or “alone” and implies that we are indeed alone with God when we enter into our “cell” to pray or think. And of course, the prison system borrowed the word “cell” from monasticism as a place to be alone and think about one’s life regardless if the prisoner considered God to be present in that or not. The icon of St. Anthony is a valuable image for the work we must do in spiritual self-care. If we are not attending to our spiritual life, then when we face the hard work and resistance inherent in financial development and evangelism, we will at least lose heart, and at worst, face grave danger. Anthony of Egypt is a reminder that we all have a Monk or Nun within us – that person who desires to be alone with God.

### **Acts 2: 42-47**

<sup>42</sup> They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. <sup>43</sup> Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. <sup>44</sup> All who believed were together and had all things in common; <sup>45</sup> they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. <sup>46</sup> Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, <sup>47</sup> praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.”

### **Prayer**

Remain with us, Lord Christ, as we follow the example of all the saints, past, present, and yet to come who sacrifice time, money, prestige, possessions, and power in order to follow you with a devoted heart which matches a devoted life. Give us grace to make the time daily and weekly which fuels our spiritual life through prayer and conversation with you. Help us to get to know ourselves so that as we lead the valuable work of stewardship and evangelism in a church we do so encouraged by the Holy Spirit and yet aware of our own demons. Bring us too, a great awareness so that the work we do is done gently, kindly, and with great power. *Amen.*

