

Fellowship
Part II
March 24, 2019
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Good morning, Lighthouse, are you ready for the Word of God this morning?

1 John 1:1-4

1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life;

2 (For the life was manifested, and we have seen *it*, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;)

3 That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship *is* with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

4 And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.

I think we all understand the value of walking in fellowship with the Lord.

We who are genuine believers live our lives imprisoned, as it were, in these bodies of flesh; we do indeed groan as we daily face the battle of our righteous spirit living within our unrighteous flesh.

We understand that sin interrupts our fellowship with God. We understand also that we all do sin, even daily we battle against the yearnings of our flesh; some of those battles we win and some of them we lose.

This is why God gave us

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Joy in the Christian life is absolutely dependent upon our walking in fellowship with the Lord; every real believer ought to and I believe, does, at least much of the time, strive to walk and stay in fellowship with the Lord.

Fellowship with the Lord is incredibly important to every child of God; yet we often miss the equally important purpose penned in the very same verse of Scripture.

John said he was writing this plea that, first of all, we might have fellowship with “us”. He is talking about our fellowship, our “participation together” with each other; that is with other believers.

This should not be difficult for us to understand. We know that we love God by loving each other; does it not also make sense that we also fellowship with God as we participate together with each other in righteous activity?

The fact is that we NEED fellowship with each other.

And other believers NEED to fellowship with us.

Well, tomorrow night begins a whole new session here at Lighthouse of Home Teams / Small Groups.

What is the main focus of our Small Group ministry?

That main focus is **fellowship**.

“Young at Heart” is all about **fellowship**.

On Wednesday morning, we meet at Whataburger on FM 646 for a time of **fellowship**.

Tonight we “participate together” in softball either on the field or in the stands cheering our team on; again, **fellowship**.

On special Sundays we have special **fellowship** meals together.

One of the primary activities of the early Church that is passed down by example to us is their fellowship.

Acts 2:42

And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and **fellowship**, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

koinōnia

koy-nohn-ee'-ah

From [G2844](#); *partnership*, that is, (literally) *participation*, or (social) *intercourse*, or (pecuniary) *benefaction*: - (to) communicate (-ation), communion, (contri-), distribution, fellowship.

Fellowship is “participation together”.

They participated together in doctrine, the teaching of the Word.

They did all kinds of good things together; they broke bread together, they prayed together.

They went out and presented the gospel together.

They met from house to house, they rejoiced in the Lord together.

We are admonished to do all of that as well.

1 John 1:3-4

3 That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship *is* with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

4 And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.

As you read this call to fellowship, I think we all know that every Christian should walk in fellowship with the Lord; yes?

Far better than we do, God knows what we need...we need fellowship with God's people.

I. We are commanded to abandon our fellowship with the world.

A. Meaning, don't participate together in the unrighteous things they do.

1. **Ephesians 5:11** And have **no fellowship** with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove *them*.

2. We are social creatures, if we are not to be involved with what the world is doing, we are going to have to replace that with something.

3. That replacement plan is to now participate in righteous things with righteous people.

B. As Christians we are to separate ourselves from the world.

1. 2 Corinthians 6:14-18

14 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?
15 And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?

16 And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you,

18 And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

2. This principle comes from **Deuteronomy 22:10** Thou shalt not plow with an ox and an ass together.

3. The yoke is that part of the harness that lays over the necks of the animals that are joined together to pull a plow or a wagon or some other implement.

4. Animals that are not similar, like an ox and an ass for example, simply don't work well together and will result in a disaster when trying to force them to do so.

5. Marrying a lost person is a similar kind of unequal yoke.

6. But marriage is not the only way believers become unequally yoked.

C. The fact is that your life will become more and more like those with whom you place your fellowship.

1. The more your fellowship is in the world the more your life will be like the world.

2. And conversely, the more your fellowship is with God's people, the more your life will become like them.

3. The unequal yoke never results in a positive change; in other words, the ass will not become the faithful servant as the ox...

4. The unequal yoke, whether in marriage or in business or simply in one type of fellowship or another always winds up making an ass out of the otherwise faithful servant.

II. We are commanded to accelerate our fellowship with the Body.

A. When you obey God in baptism you become a part of the Body.

1. Church members are not to isolate themselves from the rest of the Body.

2. 1 Corinthians 12:14-26

14 For the body is not one member, but many.

15 If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?

16 And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?

17 If the whole body *were* an eye, where *were* the hearing? If the whole *were* hearing, where *were* the smelling?

18 But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.

19 And if they were all one member, where *were* the body?

20 But now *are they* many members, yet but one body.

21 And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.

22 Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary:

23 And those *members* of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely *parts* have more abundant comeliness.

24 For our comely *parts* have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that *part* which lacked:

25 That there should be no schism in the body; but *that* the members should have the same care one for another.

26 And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.

3. Fellowship is what allows the members of the Body to function together as one.

B. The Body needs that which each and every part can contribute.

1. The function of the Body of Christ is hindered when its parts are not present. (That's kind of obvious)!

2. We're not just talking Sunday mornings here.

3. We need to encourage and be encouraged by each and every one.

4. **Hebrews 10:24-25**

24 And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:

25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some *is*; but exhorting *one another*: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

5. Why do we have all these different opportunities for fellowship?

6. We have work days, game days, Holy days, special services, Bible Studies, Home Teams, Softball and more.

7. The more we fellowship with the Lord and with God's people, the more we become like Jesus.

III. There is incredible value in our fellowship with God's people.

A. Nearly everything good that happens within the Body comes as a result of fellowship.

1. **Ephesians 4:15-16**

15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, *even* Christ:

16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

2. That word "compacted" means to drive together, or to unite.

3. As we fellowship, or participate together in the various aspects of the work of the Lord, the whole Body is increased and made stronger by the relationships developed in our fellowship one with another.

4. Through the Body, which is our Church, we are able to establish a righteous fellowship from which we can reach out to the world and bring others in to us...

5. As opposed to being dragged along by the world doing their thing.

6. Every time we see someone saved and baptized it is because we have reached out into their lives and brought them into fellowship with us.... And since our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ, look how wonderful that is!

B. Through fellowship we are encouraged and challenged.

1. **Hebrews 10:24** And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:

2. **1 Thessalonians 5:11** Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.

3. I am greatly encouraged when I see and hear of what God is doing in the lives of my brothers and sisters in Christ.

4. Not to mention the fellowship we have in praying for each other as we seek the Lord on each other's behalf.

C. Every time someone gets saved, it is preceded by their being included in our fellowship together.

1. It doesn't just happen out of the blue.

2. We come into contact with new people.

3. We involve them in our fellowship.

4. Through us, they begin to learn about Jesus.

5. The more they learn, the more they want to know...and pretty soon, they are believers too.

Then there is:

IV. The Price of Fellowship.

A. Fellowship is of great value and joy, but like many other aspects of Christian life, it is a sacrifice as well.

1. Fellowship comes at a price.
2. There is real cost when we participate together.
3. Facilitating Home Teams, hosting, ministry preparations of all kinds, planning, and costs of various kinds...good fellowship opportunities require time, talent, money and commitment.

B. There are risks in fellowship.

1. Since getting saved doesn't automatically make you smart...
2. Sometimes saved people say and do some pretty dumb things; offensive things.
3. Not only that, not everyone who comes into our fellowship necessarily is even a believer; and that is on purpose.
4. You could get your feelings hurt.
5. You could get taken advantage of.
6. You could even get hit in the head with a softball!

Conclusion:

It is worth the effort? Is it worth the risk?

Do the benefits outweigh the cost?

Let me just remind you again; every time we see someone around here get saved, it is always preceded by including them in our fellowship.

I understand that no one can be involved in everything...but everyone can be involved in something.

As for me, I want all the fellowship I can get.

I know all about the sacrifice,

I know all about the risks,

I know all about our limitations...that said,

When I play and sing in the Praise Team, when I go to a Home Team, when I play or coach LBC softball and especially when we worship here together as one Body...

I get to hang out with the most wonderful people on the planet; in spite of our faults, God's people are the best there is!