

Fellowship
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Good morning, Lighthouse, are you ready for the Word of God this morning?

Well, tomorrow we leave for Family Camp; four days up on the beautiful San Marcos River. Albeit two of those days will consist partially of travel, we look forward to a great time of **fellowship** together as we take our largest group yet with us to camp.

Going to camp is a lot of work, it is a lot of expense; it is very demanding on a lot of people.

Why do we do it?

So our kids can have some fun? So families can spend time together? So we can get away from the world for a while and spend some quality time with the Lord and each other? So perhaps we can win someone to Christ? For the food?

I suppose it is some of all of these and more; the primary focus, however, is **fellowship**.

What is so important about **fellowship**?

Yesterday we enjoyed “Young at Heart”, which was all about **fellowship**.

On Wednesday morning, some of those who are not at camp will meet at Whataburger on FM 646 for a time of **fellowship**.

Come the week of the 17th we will begin a new session of Home Team small groups which is, again, all about **fellowship**.

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

We will enjoy the company of our brothers and sisters in Christ and in their company, we will also enjoy the presence and company of our Lord.

One of the primary activities of the early Church that is passed down by example to us as well as by command is **fellowship**.

In Acts Chapter Two, there is the “has been” failure of a preacher who denied the Lord three times and then forsook Him.

In our context, this preacher, who thought his life was over, has just been recently restored by the Lord Jesus.

He is now preaching the Word with great power, like few men would ever preach.

The day of Pentecost has come, the Lord Jesus has empowered His Church, thousands of Jews and others from all over the world are in Jerusalem for the Passover.

Acts 2:5 And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.

Thousands are gathered together to hear this crazy preacher who preaches in his native Galilean dialect and all the hearers are miraculously able to hear him in their own tongue.

On this particular day, about three thousand souls came to Christ and were then baptized and thus added to the Jerusalem Church.

Acts 2:41-47

41 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added *unto them* about three thousand souls.

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

43 And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles.

44 And all that believed were together, and had all things common;

45 And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all *men*, as every man had need.

46 And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart,

47 Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

Most of these new believers were from areas far away. They were away from their lands and their occupations, having planned to return shortly after the Passover Feast.

In order for all these new Christians to be able to extend their stay in Jerusalem and stay under the teaching of the Apostles, the Church did something historically unique in that the members sold their possessions to meet the needs of all these extra people.

What we read about here is not a long-term example as to how Churches should function as some sort of commune, but rather a short-term solution to a huge problem of logistics.

Later the Apostle Paul had to deal with the other kinds of problems this type of situation naturally creates.

2 Thessalonians 3:6-12

6 Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.

7 For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you;
8 Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you:
9 Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us.
10 For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat.
11 For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies.
12 Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread.

The Churches did not continue in their members sharing all their resources in common other than when unique circumstances required it...but what they did continue in was **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, in the teaching of the Word.

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

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

We are admonished to continue that tradition.

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.

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

There is here in this passage something that most seem to overlook.

This is a call to fellowship with each other; "us", John says. He is stating that **our fellowship together** is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

Some of you don't seem to like being around the rest of us all that much.

You come to a few things, maybe Sunday School or Main worship.

You have decided that is about all the fellowship you can stand.

You claim it's not your personality to socialize very much.

I would probably be just like you in this if it was just about me and what I like or am comfortable with...but it is not!

I understand we all have our personal likes and dislikes; however, the day you got saved, it quit being all about you and began being all about Jesus.

So, my advice to you is just get over it.

The fact is that you need all the fellowship with God's people that you can get for a whole host of reasons.

Let me share some of those reasons:

I. The Plan of Fellowship. Lots of fellowship with God's people is part of God's plan for your life.

A. For one, because you are 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. The kind of care we all need doesn't happen if we are isolated.

B. For another, because the Body needs that which each and every part can contribute all the time.

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

2. 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.

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

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

5. **Romans 15:2** Let every one of us please *his* neighbour for *his* good to edification.

6. That joint or connection we read about is the relationship between the members as we participate together.

7. That word "compacted" means to drive together or to unite.

8. 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.

B. Through fellowship we are challenged to improvement.

1. **Hebrews 10:24** And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:
2. Together we are made to be more than the sum total of our individual parts.
3. We are commanded in **Psalm 66:2** to make His praise glorious.
4. Praise and worship cannot even happen without our participation together.

Next look at:

II. The Purpose of Fellowship.

A. One primary purpose of fellowship is to bring you closer to the Lord.

1. You may be asking, "How does fellowship with other believers bring me closer to God?"
2. Fellowship brings us closer to God by bringing us closer to each other.
3. We are commanded to love God.

Matthew 22:37-38

37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

38 This is the first and great commandment.

4. Since love is what we do, not just some feeling we may have; how do we love a God we cannot even see?
5. **1 John 4:20** If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?
6. Jesus taught us the answer to this in **Matthew 25:40** And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done *it* unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done *it* unto me.
6. We love God by loving each other; pretty simple.

B. Fellowship works the same way.

1. Go back to 1st John for a moment:
2. **1 John 1:5-7**

5 This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

6 If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:

7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

3. Our answer lies in verse 7.

4. "If we walk in the light as Jesus is in the light"... certainly no one can walk in the light, (meaning without sin) as Jesus does.

5. Only at times do we walk in the light as Jesus does; when are those times?

6. **1 John 1:7** But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, **we have fellowship one with another**, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

7. Those times we are walking in the light are when we are having fellowship one with another.

Conclusion:

I understand there are other ways to love God, but primarily, we love God by loving each other.

I understand as well that there are many ways to walk in fellowship with God, but we walk with God primarily when we are walking in fellowship with God's people.

You say you want to walk in fellowship with God but not so much with other believers?

You are going to have a hard time explaining that one to the Lord.

Especially when it was He that promised that where two or three of us are gathered together in His name, He would be there in our midst.

Right now, our Church is as strong as it has ever been in the 17 years I have been your Pastor.

I believe that is in large part because our unity and our level of fellowship is probably the best it has ever been...but we could be a lot stronger yet.

Fellowship is not just fun and games; it is relationships that give us strength and power.