

Thoughts on Fellowship

I am not sure if we have ever covered this topic more than an overview but for some reason, here we are. We have always called our small group a “fellowship” or “flock.” In taking a closer look at the Free Dictionary On-Line definition, we might find it has somewhat a different interpretation than what the Biblical definition will show.

The Free On-Line Dictionary defines fellowship as:

- a.** The companionship of individuals in a congenial atmosphere and on equal terms
: a voracious reader who found fellowship in a book club.
- b.** Friendship; comradeship: *A strong fellowship developed among them.*
- c.** A close association of friends or equals sharing similar interests: *a fellowship of photographers.*

This definition certainly seems fitting as we have a congenial atmosphere, comradeship, equal terms and we definitely display a close association sharing similar interests. Hold these thoughts as we will come back to them in a moment.

Having come from a tactical background, clear communication is paramount to conveying thoughts and ideas. Poor communications has plagued mankind since the Tower of Babel. Any breakdown between communicating parties can be disastrous (at least from a tactical standpoint) as someone may not have heard correctly what you said or realize what they heard is not exactly what you said. Confused yet?

Mispronunciations of words can be a root cause of gaps in communications. I used to get a kick out of some of the phrases used by the Amish folks like. “throw Papa down the stairs his hat” or “throw the cow over the fence some hay.” What I just said is certainly not what each phrase means.

Knowing what words are and their correct pronunciation is even more critical when we are reading and sharing God’s Word. Keep this in mind when we are reading and sharing any of God’s Word or His truths. Dropping or mispronouncing words will substitute or deviate from the true meaning. Remember, we discussed being off an inch on going to the Moon we can miss the destination by over 4000 miles. Besides that, keep in mind just Whose words we are reading. God’s. If we are not sure of the pronunciation of a word, look it up on line (if you have the time). If you truly love God, wouldn’t you want to make sure you read His Perfect Word perfectly? Just food for thought.

After the centuries of having been written, God's Word has been stepped on, watered down and misinterpreted to fit agendas and doctrines to fill the pews on Sundays and the offering trays with cash. Never mind the truth of what His Word actually says, discarding His Sabbaths and Holy Days opens the door for even greater "editing" by whomever chooses to do so.

We have seen the changing of definitions to fit new narratives and agendas for quite some time but even more so in the past few years with the "plan-demic", "climate change", and all of the "woke" and "alphabet perverts" re-writing history and dictionaries at will. Webster changed the definition of "vaccine" at the on-set of Covid to fit their account of what a vaccine actually is. Thankfully, we have God's Word, which when written in our hearts by His Holy Spirit, defines it without deception.

Now, getting back to "fellowship." Churches nowadays have a huge focus on "the fellowship." They have pot-luck dinners, fellowship picnics and outings, fellowship halls, and even retreats but in reality, do they really have "fellowship?" Now I am in no way trying to diminish the importance of fellowship but would like to clarify its meaning and just how important it really is.

I actually looked it up on line and found that the root word for fellowship comes from the Greek, “koinonia.” This Greek word is derived from the root word, “koinos.” Without going into a dissertation, the root word of “fellowship” means “to hold something in common.” We know we all share something in common, the desire to study, learn and grow in God’s Word that we may fulfill His creation purpose in each one of us as individuals and as a member in the Body of Christ.

1 Corinthians 1:9- “God *is* faithful, by Whom you were called into *the* fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.” We have been called into an inner relationship with Jesus Christ and into spiritual unity with Him and God the Father.

Philippians 2:1-3- “Now then, if *there be* any encouragement in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of *the* Spirit, if any *deep* inner affections and compassions, Fulfill my joy, that you be of the same mind, having the same love, being joined together in soul, minding the one thing. *Let* nothing *be* done through contention or vainglory, but in humility, each esteeming the others above himself.”

Philemon 1:6- “So that the fellowship of your faith may become effective in *the* acknowledgment of every good *thing* that is in you toward Christ Jesus.”

We must keep in focus the inner relationship we have with Jesus Christ and God the Father.

We have an established relationship of being “in Jesus Christ.” **Colossians 1:27-**
“To whom God did will to make known what *are* the riches of the glory of this
mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory;”

Galatians 2:20- “I have been crucified with Christ, yet I live. *Indeed*, it is no
longer I; but Christ lives in me. For *the life* that I am now living in *the* flesh, I live
by faith—that *very faith* of the Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself for
me.”

Galatians 3:27- “For as many *of you* as were baptized into Christ did put on
Christ.”

Romans 8:9-11- “However, you are not in *the* flesh, but in *the* Spirit, if *the* Spirit
of God is indeed dwelling within you. But if anyone does not have *the* Spirit of
Christ, he does not belong to Him. But if Christ *be* within you, the body *is* indeed
dead because of sin; however, the Spirit *is* life because of righteousness. Now if
the Spirit of Him Who raised Jesus from *the* dead is dwelling within you, He Who
raised Christ from *the* dead will also quicken your mortal bodies because of His
Spirit that dwells within you.”

We also have a relationship with being a part of the Body of Christ. **Romans 12:4-6-** “For even as we have many members in one body, but all members do not have the same function; Likewise, we, being many, are one body in Christ, and each one members of one another. But each one has different gifts according to the grace that is given to us—whether prophecy, *let us prophesy* according to the measure of faith;”

A better understanding of being “in” and “part” of Christ is to fulfill God’s Will for us. We have a relationship of being “in Christ.” We also have a relationship of being “a part of Christ’s body.” Fellowship is neither. It is not “being in” or “being part” but it is “*doing with*” Christ. It is our partnership with Christ in fulfilling God’s will. Fellowship focusses on spiritual unity. It not only emphasizes simply being together as a group but being together as one in Jesus Christ and God the Father. If we were truly to tear into the meaning of the Greek word in the new testament and its usages we would see that other translations attached to the root word include “sharing”, “contribution”, and “participation.” This is quite fitting for a definition of our small fellowship. It requires action. So many so-called churches, outside of their “pot lucks” and so on miss the mark of what the true fellowship requires.

We are required to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and develop our One-on-one relationship with Him and God the Father. In doing this, we will develop and strengthen our unity as a Family of God, the secondary blessing of the primary focus of the strong relationship with Him *FIRST*. Our unity and strength within the fellowship will only be as solid as our individual relationship with Him. We used to call it “vertical alignment” in a program Andrea and I used to attend at a former church. They were off their mark on God’s truth but the concept was a sound principal. If we are in alignment with the will of God, obeying His Word to the letter and in the Spirit of His Word, He will guide and make straight the paths. Remember, the most dangerous place on Earth is to be outside the will of God.

Proverbs 3:5-6- “Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not to your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.”

When our fellowship with Jesus Christ and God the Father becomes the focus, our mission within the Body of Christ will continue to grow in fulfilling the will of God. We are not just coming together for “story time” or to share a good meal (although this is one of the many blessings we share!) We are being groomed for our future positions within God’s Kingdom and to further His will here on Earth.

The things we may have thought “fellowship” meant are but a tip of the iceberg on the overall arrangement of things.

Acts 2:1- “And when the day of Pentecost, the fiftieth day, was being fulfilled, they were all with one accord in the same place.” The First Century Church was underway. The Apostles knew what their role was. Their unity was further solidified by their being baptized in God’s Holy Spirit.

“Then those who joyfully received his message were baptized; and about three thousand souls were added that day. And they steadfastly continued in the teachings of the apostles and in fellowship, and in the breaking of bread and in prayers.”- **Acts 2:41-42.** The early church was unified through Christ and the receiving of the Holy Spirit. The fellowship continued that they might grow in word and in knowledge.

Acts 2:44-47- “Now all those who believed were together and had all things in common; And they sold their possessions and goods, and divided them to all, according as anyone had need. And every day, steadfastly continuing with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread in their houses, they partook of the food with gladness and sincerity of heart, Praising God and having favor with all the people; and the Lord added to the church day by day those who were being saved.”

Being a member in God's Church and a part of the Body of Christ, we need to remember our goal and focus is His Will. The unity and fellowship we share is how God will accomplish His will through us. We have already seen the importance of educating our littlest lambs and our youth. We must continue to grow and train our replacements. If you have not noticed, we are not getting any younger. Maybe I sound like a cracked record (for those who know what that is) but strength, unity and the fellowship will depend on just how much each one knows and grows in their relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ. With this relationship and bond increasing, the more He will pour out His Spirit in us, With the more of His Spirit in us, the more understanding of His Word we will have, the better the servant we will become. Greater responsibilities may come our way if indeed He has us selected for such. But He will not waste His time or His precious Spirit on anyone who desires to play church.

If you are not sure of what your spiritual gifts are, pray, ask and seek Him, He will let you know. But do not do things out of the flesh thinking you are doing God's Work. You may be in for a rude awakening. If you have natural abilities, use them. Your spiritual gifts may just surface too.

1 Corinthians 12:4-7- “Now there are differences of gifts, but the same Spirit; And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are differences of operations, but it is the same God Who is working all things in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for *the benefit of all.*”

It is God’s desire to use each of His called and chosen to further His plan. He wants us to want to serve Him and those in our fellowship.

1 Corinthians 12:11-14- “But the one and the same Spirit is operating in all these things, dividing separately to each one as *God* Himself desires. For even as the body is one and has many members, yet all the members of the one body, though many, are one body; so also *is* Christ. For indeed, by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether bondmen or free—and we were all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body *of Christ* is not one member, but many.”

Because we are many parts of the same body, no one part is more important than another. To leave the fellowship because someone does not like their assignment, not getting your ego stroked or an itch scratched is clearly a loss of focus on doing the will of God. Face it folks, it is His way or the highway, but He loves us so

much He will not remove our free will. Our purpose is to show God's glory to the world in all the many ways He has instructed us in the Bible.

Matthew 5:16- “In the same way also, you are to let your light shine before men, so that they may see your good works, and may glorify your Father Who *is* in heaven.”

God's truth has been revealed to us. We are His family, His Church. We are heirs to His Kingdom. We are not alone, we are one in Him.

Ephesians 3:8-11- “To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, was this grace given, that I might preach the gospel among the Gentiles— *even* the unsearchable riches of Christ; And that I might enlighten all *as to* what *is* the fellowship of the mystery that has been hidden from the ages in God, Who created all things by Jesus Christ; So that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the principalities and the powers in the heavenly *places*, According to *His* eternal purpose, which He has wrought in Christ Jesus our Lord,”

When we stand for opening and closing prayer, we are cojoined to each other, linked hand in hand. When we are baptized and receive His Holy Spirit, we are conjoined to Jesus Christ, beyond the molecular level to the spiritual. Not one of us

alone could accomplish God's plan. Knowing the importance of fellowship and with Whom is principal to our growth in fulfilling God's will and creation purpose for each member in the Body of Christ. This is the mission of fellowship and the responsibility of His Church. We will glorify God now and forever. Amen.

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