

Introduction to the topic of Fellowship among Christians: Our congregation knows how to have fellowship with meals, get togethers, etc.

The Koinonia fellowship the Bible talks about is a participation, partnership, sharing, and of course fellowship with each other.

There are two related meanings:

- To share together in the sense of joint participation or partnership
- To share with in the sense of giving what we have to others

What comes to your mind when you hear the word fellowship? What picture do you have in your mind, fellowship hall, and meal together, and place to talk. Probably most of us think of a meal together in our fellowship hall or a fun activity together.

Fellowship is more than enjoying food together or having fun in a Christian atmosphere or talking about events of the past week.

This doesn't mean there is no place for this type of activity; it's just that they are not true fellowship. They are a way to gather everyone together.

True fellowship is sharing a common life with other believers, a life that we together share with God the Father, God the Son. It's a relationship rather than an activity. So if I say I am not going for fellowship today, I am actually saying I am not making time for others. It is more than attending an activity, its building relationships.

The Christians in Acts fellowshiped everyday in their homes, it's a joy to be together!

Acts 2:42-47 The Fellowship of the Believers

⁴² They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. ⁴³ Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. ⁴⁴ All the believers were together and had everything in common. ⁴⁵ They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. ⁴⁶ Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and

ate together with glad and sincere hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

They were together and helped members in need. Their unity and fellowship was expressed in being together to do the work of the church, especially worship, praising God, taking of the Lord's Supper, prayer and study of the Word.

But I know it's hard to get together daily with our brothers and sisters in Christ. Maybe with all our communication gadgets, *which the early church didn't have*, we can send messages of encouragement or call on a phone, we have cell phones attached to us, there is time in our day to send or call a word of encouragement to a fellow Christian. We need to stay in fellowship with one another as much as we can, not just occasionally. We are human and have weak moments, we all need the encouragement of other Christians. We need to be involved with each other's spiritual lives.

(Ephesians 4:16) From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

All should work together to build up the body.

Members should desire to serve one another.

Gal 6:2 Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.

The law of Christ teaches us to bear one another's burdens. We should be committed to help members who have works or hardships.

1Peter 4:10 Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.

We all have gifts or blessings from God. God gave them to us to use in His work. We should learn to use them to serve one another.

Eph 4:12 to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up

The church was organized for the purpose of equipping members to accomplish works of service together for the purpose of edifying and building up of the church. We should want to accomplish the work of service, we are expected to be part of the church and involve ourselves in its works. Not only on Sunday or Wednesday, any day the need arises. We need to give members an opportunity to work for the Lord.

Matt 25:34-46 ³⁴ “Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. ³⁵ For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, ³⁶ I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’

³⁷ “Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? ³⁸ When did we see you a stranger and invite you in or needing clothes and clothe you?

³⁹ When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’

⁴⁰ “The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’

⁴¹ “Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. ⁴² For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, ⁴³ I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.’

⁴⁴ “They also will answer, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?’

⁴⁵ “He will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.’

⁴⁶ “Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.”

Why do we have announcements, they provide information about opportunities to serve. They tell us what is happening in the lives of other members so we can pray for one another and serve one another. Specifically we learn the needs of other members, sickness, hospitalizations, troubled, need of prayer, need of financial help etc. We learn of work opportunities that the church is arranging, like workdays, gospel meetings, visitations. They should be a call to action in our minds.

Let’s take a look at greeting one another; it’s a basic foundation of the church.

3 John 1:14 ¹⁴ I hope to see you soon, and we will talk face to face. Peace to you. The friends here send their greetings. Greet the friends there by name.

Titus 3:15 15 Everyone with me sends you greetings. Greet those who love us in the faith. Grace be with you all.

Greeting is an acknowledgement of the brethren and a gesture of appreciation. The Bible actually commands us to greet each other 5 times in the New Testament. The New Testament church is instructed to greet each other with a holy kiss. Of course in our culture we express greeting with a handshake, in the Middle East a kiss on each cheek is the custom of greeting. But the point is, as the church, it is our responsibility to make all our fellow believers feel welcome. When we take the time to greet one another before worship in a friendly welcoming greeting it's an important first step in communion with the saints.

Fellowship is a byproduct of a faithful walk with Christ.

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

There has to be a common interest and for the Christian our faith provides that commonality that creates true fellowship

We can also learn more of what is going on when we stay and converse with each other after services; it's a time we can share with each other.

It is because we share together a common life in Christ that we are called on to share with one another whatever we have, both spiritual and material resources.

Galatians 5:13 says through love serve one another.

So true fellowship is sharing a common life with other believers, a life that we together share with God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.