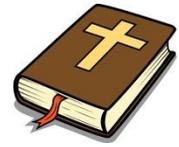


“PRESSING ON”
Gospel Meeting, Oct 20-22
with John Cannon

Fellowship?

What is Fellowship? People were described as having “fellowship” when they had a partnership, a very close friendship, a marriage, or were members of a community in which everyone shared their belongings with one another.



God is self-existent and eternal; He has no beginning and will have no end (Genesis 1:1; 21:33; Isaiah 40:28; Psalm 90:2).

Have you made an input to the “IDEA BOX”?

Often the word “fellowship” is used when describing the relationship Christians have with the Lord, “God is faithful, through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord” (1 **Corinthians 1:9**, NASB). The gospel brings us into such a close relationship with the Lord that our relationship with Him can beautifully and properly be called, “fellowship.”

Furthermore, all who have fellowship with the Lord, have fellowship with one another. The gospel brings us all into communion, into family, into partnership, into association with one another. John said he and the other apostles were preaching the gospel, “So that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ” (1 **John 1:3**).

So it’s not entirely accurate to say we *get together* with our church family “to fellowship.” We may need to stop thinking of fellowship as something we *do*, and start thinking of it as something we *have*.”

What are the Indicators of True Fellowship? That being said, the fellowship we have should be visible. People should be able to look at the relationship between Christians and say, “Do you see the fellowship they have? Isn’t that a beautiful thing!” That’s the way it was in the earliest days of the church (**Acts 2:42-47**): They spent time learning together. They worshiped together. They ate meals together. They sold their belongings when necessary to share with those in need. This is what “fellowship” looks like; it looks like togetherness!

But many Christians don’t experience true fellowship on a regular basis. They are *content* with theoretical “fellowship.” They show up for a worship assembly and then “slip out.” They don’t sit with their brethren discussing Scripture or its application in their lives. They don’t share in prayers. They don’t know the needs and thus don’t share their belongings to help with those needs.

Can people see the fellowship you have with your church family? Yes or no? Jesus said, “By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another” (**John 13:35**). If there are no indicators of the fellowship we have with our brothers and sisters in Christ, then how are people supposed to see our love?

How Do We Strengthen Our Fellowship? A bond exists between two Christians because they are both Christians. That bond – that “fellowship” – must intentionally be strengthened in order for it to become stronger. But this is where the discussion gets difficult, because it depends on our mindset, our heart, our spirituality (see **Colossians 3:1-4**).

While it’s certainly true that we must be together in order to strengthen our fellowship, merely being together does not strengthen our fellowship. When two Christians get together for an activity and simply talk about the weather – but never discuss spiritual things – they may have strengthened their friendship, but they have probably *not* strengthened the bond they have in Christ. Furthermore, a congregation could get together for a meal and *not* actually strengthen the *fellowship* they have in Christ!

We strengthen our fellowship by: Celebrating the fellowship we have in Christ. Confessing our sins to one another. Praying with one another. Singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with one another. Sharing in the Lord’s Supper. Laboring with one another to spread the gospel and help those in need. Getting to know each others’ spiritual strengths and weaknesses.

The leadership of a congregation can – and I believe “should” – facilitate and encourage the strengthening of fellowship, but it seems to me that only those of us who recognize the fellowship we have can be devoted to strengthening it. We must teach each other about the fellowship we *have* in Christ, how precious it is, and that it must be intentionally strengthened.

This is **WHY** we get together regularly for Bible studies, for worship, and even to simply sit around a meal table and visit about our lives in Christ. Fellowship will not be strengthened without ample *time* together. We must realize we are not getting together *to* fellowship, we are getting together *because we are IN* fellowship.

The words of the Hebrew writer may be particularly applicable: “And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near” (**Hebrews 10:24-25**).

By Wes McAdams, edited for space KSS

κοινωνία (koy-nohn-ee'-ah) A partnership, that is, (literally) participation, or (social) intercourse, or (pecuniary) benefaction: communion, fellowship.

To all our visitors: *Please feel free to participate!*
You should expect to hear singing with voices only, a few “family” announcements, prayers spoken, and see the Lord’s Supper offered, then free-willed giving, and Gospel preaching from the Bible.
Any response is up to you and will be kindly received.
We are glad you decided to worship God with us!

Bday/Anniv Lunch: MOVED to the 3rd Sunday (10/20) ... for October
Friday Bible Study: 7 to 8 PM; New Testament commands apply today...
NMCCH: SOUPS! Cream of Mushroom or Cream of Chicken. Check expiration date! The truck arrives Friday (10/18).
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