

TODAY’S ORDER OF WORSHIP

Welcome by: Bobby Rader /Opening Prayer by: Craig Girard

Morning Assembly Song Leader: Danny Balch

#869 We’re Marching to Zion

#709 How Sweet, How Heavenly

Scripture Reading by: Matthew Girard

#315 When I Survey the Wondrous Cross

Lord’s Supper and Contribution

#704 Bind Us Together

Sermon: “Church on Fire”

Acts 2:42-47

#909 There’s a Fountain Free

#738 Take the Name of Jesus with You

Closing Prayer by: Tommy Cary

Tonight is our 2nd Sunday evening
service project

Other Opportunities For Spiritual Growth

Sunday: 9:00am — Bible Study Classes, 10:00am — Worship, 5:00pm — Worship

Wednesday: 6:30pm — Bible Study Classes

January 9, 2022

“Stand Firm in...Liberty”

Galatians 5:1

That You May Have Fellowship

That which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, 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)

At the outset of his first letter, John says his purpose in writing is to ensure his readers have fellowship with God the Father, with Jesus Christ, and, as a result, with John himself. Fellowship is obviously a word we all know, but we typically use it in only a couple of limited contexts. The primary one is for meals that the church eats together. Those are fellowship meals. Where I grew up going to church, we ate them in the fellowship hall (because se that’s where you had fellowship, of course!). The other, less frequent usage, was for withdrawal of fellowship. That’s one of those things we talked about conceptually and never actually did.

But the concept of fellowship in the NT is so much richer, so much more meaningful, than just a meal (though it definitely includes that as an expression of fellowship). It’s a one word summary of what it means to live life together in community as God’s people. Just think about what the English word fellowship means: that’s the state or condition of being “fellows.”

The primary NT term is *koinonia*. That and its cognates mean, generally, to have in common. It comes from the same root as *koinē*—as in *koinē* Greek, the Greek of the NT—the common Greek spoken on the street in the first century. The word was applied in Greek thought to all types of activity—legal, social, civic, religious, you name it—in which there was a common element that was shared or affected all participants. Sometimes you will see other English words used to express that Greek term: joint participation, communion, mutuality. This word is all about community. We need to understand it to understand ourselves as the church.

Just consider some of the doctrinal foundations of fellowship that emerge from this single verse in 1 John:

- 1. **Christian fellowship is with the Father.** Our fellowship has a divine source in God’s desire for relationship. One of the most interesting things about this word is that there is no group of words in the OT to describe fellowship with God. As the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* points out,“The righteous in the OT depend on God and trust him, but do not regard themselves as his fellows.” That means that fellowship with God is peculiar to the NT—in other words, it is a blessing only to Christians. What a blessing that is! Think about some of the great people of faith we read about in the OT: Abraham, the “friend of God;” Moses, the great lawgiver; David, the “man after God’s own heart.” Yet all of us have the opportunity for a relationship with God on a level that simply did not exist for his people in prior generations. That is because...

Family News & Notes

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH YOUR CHURCH FAMILY

Our Sick

Sewilla Scott is in the hospital.

Joe Edd Stifflemire will be having a lung biopsy on Monday, Jan. 10th.

Jackie David, Walden David's mother is in the hospital.

Continued Prayers

(Need cards, phone calls & visits)

Gwen Pettit, Harold & Geri Cryer, Steve Ward, Frank & Tina Garcia, Winston Leifester, Caitlin Smith, Ka'Leisha Jones, Oscar Cantu, Joe Edd Stifflemire, Gary Nielsen, Jackie David, Virginia Cole

Shut Ins

(Need cards, phone calls & visits)

Jim Smith, Winona Angelle, Myrtle Sheffield, Catherine Parker, Peggy McIntosh

Our Missionaries

Aaron & Marisa Bailey in Montepuez, Mozambique, Rod Kyle in the South Pacific

Upcoming Activities

Elders, Minister, meeting Monday, Jan. 10th at 5:30 p.m.

Primetimers will be going to Saltgrass Steak House on Tuesday, Jan. 11th at 6:00 p.m. A driver is needed and a signup sheet is on the bulletin board.

We will have a meal on Wednesday, Jan. 19th at 5:30 p.m.

We will have a Houston Food Bank truck on Thursday, Jan. 20th at 8:00 a.m.

Sympathy

We extend our sympathy to Jamie Bazzoon and her family on the death of her father, Kenneth Morehead. The funeral was Saturday.

We extend our sympathy to Barbara & Oscar Cantu and their family on the death of their son, Gerald Cantu. He passed away last Monday.

We extend our sympathy to Rod Kyle and his family on the death of his wife, Gail. The funeral was Friday.

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2. Christian fellowship is with Christ. God desires a relationship with all of humanity. And sometimes we speak in terms of a universal brotherhood of man. That's a nice sentiment, but it's not really biblical. Our relationship with God is not based on him as Creator, us as creatures. God is our Father, and that is because we are in Christ. *God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord (1 Cor 1:9).* The basis of our fellowship is the relationship that we have with Christ. We have been adopted into the family with God as our Father and Jesus as our elder brother.

3. Christian fellowship comes through the gospel. That's how God's call to join his family is made known: what John saw and heard, he proclaimed. Fellowship with God is based on the message of the apostles of God reaching out to humanity in the incarnation of Christ. To paraphrase what John says in the surrounding verses of his letter, the eternal Word of life was made manifest in him; it was revealed to human witnesses; and they have gone on to declare it. Fellowship is established among those who believe that divine message. Which leads to, finally...

4. Christian fellowship is based on a common faith. This is the flipside to fellowship coming through the gospel: it is declared, but then it has to be received in faith. That's the whole reason John is bringing the message, remember? *So that you too may have fellowship.* That's the whole purpose of preaching in a nutshell: so that hearers can have fellowship with God in Christ too—and, by extension, have it with each other.

What does that mean for us practically? We can sum it up as sharing a common life. And the place we see that most clearly in practice, in my opinion, is in **Acts 2:42-47**. We will talk about that in our sermon this morning. But for now, I want to leave you with this challenge: fellowship is something that is given to us by God just as a matter of our status in his family. It's a lot like a physical family: there is no choice involved; we are simply born into it. We have to learn how to love each other over the years.

In the same way, fellowship is not something that we create. We are not part of God's family because we all liked each other and agreed to start getting together. No, it is given to us by God. Our job is to implement it. We have to learn to love each other just like in our physical families—and just like your weird uncle or your cousins with the unruly kids, some of us are harder to love than others! But our obligation is to live it out, to really and truly bring it to life. That is our goal in this new year and beyond.

Bryant Perkins

“Stand Firm in...Liberty”

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