

God's Church

Purpose: To study the biblical principles of fellowship and their implications on our lives as a community of believers.

What is Fellowship?

1. How would you define fellowship? What does it look like now in your life?

2. The Greek word for fellowship is *koinonia*, which means 'sharing in common'. How does this play into our understanding of what fellowship is? What are some areas of life we are called to share with our brothers and sisters in Christ?

The Church and The Family of God

3. Read Ephesians 2:19. What does it mean to be "members of the household of God?" Explain how the Gospel ties into this reality (Galatians 4:4-7).

When a person becomes a Christian, he doesn't just join a local church because it's a good habit for growing in spiritual maturity. He joins a local church because it's the expression of what Christ had made him- a member of the body of Christ. Being united to Christ means being united to every Christian. But that universal union must be given a living, breathing existence in a local church—Mark Dever.

4. Based on the quote above, what would you say is the role of the church in a Christian's life?

5. Read Romans 12:4-8. How do the Scriptures describe the church in this passage? What is the importance of it being described in such a way?

6. Have you ever seen or experienced the church working as a body? If so, what types of benefits came from it working in such a way?

Read 1 Corinthians 12:14-27 and answer the following questions:

7. What does it mean that the body consists of many members?

8. Examine the illustration of the different body parts. How does co-dependency play into such a community?

9. What role does humility play in such a community? Do you think this is something you would/do struggle with? If so, how can you overcome that struggle?

10. What does it mean that “God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose?” What encouragement does this truth give us in regards to our talents and gifts?

11. Read Ephesians 4:1-7. What unites all the different members of the body? How does the gospel play into this?

Read Ephesians 5:25-27 and answer the following questions:

12. What does this passage relate the Church and Christ’s relationship to? Explain how the Gospel is displayed through the illustration found in this passage.

13. What does this passage reveal about Christ’s attitude towards the church? What encouragement can we take away from this?

14. Read Colossians 1:18-20. How does this image of our relationship with Christ tie into the illustration of the body? Why is this important to understand?

<i>Verse(s)</i>	<i>How We Should Relate to Others</i>
Romans 12:9-10	
1 Thessalonians 5:14-15	
Galatians 6:1-2	
Galatians 6:6	
James 5:16	

Read Hebrews 10:24-25 and 3:13, and answer the following questions:

20. What does it mean to “stir up one another?” What does that practically look like in our day-to-day lives?

21. Why is it necessary to consistently meet together as brothers and sisters in Christ? What benefits are derived from habitually meeting together? How do accountability partners/groups help achieve this?

Sin in Fellowship

The Bible states that there will be moments that man’s sinfulness will infiltrate and influence the fellowship between believers. But God perfectly provides instructions through the Scriptures on how we are to confront our brothers and sisters in Christ when they have sinned against us and when we knowingly sin against them.

Read Matthew 5:22-24, 18:15, 35 and answer the following questions:

22. How are we called to deal with conflict between our brothers and sisters in Christ? What specific steps are we called to take?

23. Why is it important that we deal with conflict in this way? How does dealing with conflict in this way reveal our understanding of the Gospel?

24. Do you see yourself dealing with conflict in this way? How can you improve in this area?

The Purpose of Fellowship

25. There are many great blessings we receive from participating in fellowship, and as we continue in fellowship, our faith is strengthened. Read the following verses and fill in the chart with the appropriate response:

<i>Verse(s)</i>	<i>Blessings of Fellowship</i>
Proverbs 27:17	
Ecclesiastes 4:9-10	
Hebrews 10:24-25; 3:13	

26. What are some other types of benefits you can think of that come from participating in fellowship?

27. Read Acts 1:8, Matthew 5:14-16, and Ephesians 3:10-11. What is the ultimate purpose of the Church in this world? How does fellowship play into this calling?

While fellowship is designed in a lot of ways to grow us individually and congregationally as followers of Christ, there is a greater purpose beyond internal improvement. The Church has been given the call to live like Christ so as to externally display the love of Christ to the world.

28. From verses we've discussed above, what are some ways that fellowship is a depiction of the Gospel to the world? Reference specific scriptures.

Yet the energy of nuclear fusion is insignificant compared to the power welling up within a local church. When members of the local church pour out the love of Christ into each other, a dramatic series of "explosions" takes place, reaction upon reaction, enough energy not just to electrify cities of neon lights and microwave ovens, but, more importantly, to bring spiritual light to a world dying in darkness. To the eyes of bedraggled citizens of the world, mired in discord and division, the love of the local church could scarcely be a more revitalizing image. It will cause many to raise a voice of praise in honor of the Source of this love (Matt. 5:16)—Timothy Savage.

The Importance of Generations

Read Titus 2:1-8 and answer the following questions:

29. List the different groups of people Paul is addressing in this passage. Name the place all these groups are found.

30. Based on this passage, why are multigenerational relationships so important? What value is there in mixed generations?

31. How do you see the different groups of people interacting with one another?
32. As the younger generation, what are specific ways we can seek the wisdom of those who are older than us? How does humility play into seeking wisdom from the older generation?

33. How do multigenerational relationships illuminate the idea of the body of Christ?

34. Do you now have older people in your life that you can turn to for guidance and wisdom? Who?

35. Do you utilize them often, understanding the significant role they play in the maturity of your walk? How?

36. How can you build or continue to strengthen your relationships with the older generation?

CCF is a parachurch ministry, which means that it is an organization that is not completely under the authority of a local church. Mark Driscoll, Pastor of Mars Hill Church in Seattle, defines parachurch ministries as such:

Gospel + Culture – Church = Parachurch

The point he is laying out here is that in the design of parachurch ministries there is an emphasis on the Gospel and reaching a specific culture (whether defined by location, age, or social status), but lacks in having a direct connection to the life and resources of the local church. It acts as an entity within itself, being an extension of the body of Christ in a specific context, but overall is an organization that functions on separate terms that may differ from an established local church body. Parachurch ministries can take many different shapes and sizes, but the key is that they are not **fully** under the authority and guidance of the church.

Mark Driscoll lays out the pluses and minuses of parachurch ministries clearly in his book *Radical Reformation*:

The success of these [parachurch] ministries is due in large part to their involvement in culture and in loving people, whereas the church often functions as an irrelevant subculture. But the failure of such ministries is that they are often disconnected from the local church, connecting unchurched people to Jesus without connecting them to the rest of Jesus' people ... Also, since parachurch ministries are often age-specific, they lack the benefits of a church culture in which all generations are integrated to help people navigate the transitions of life.

37. What are some benefits and draw backs of being a part of a parachurch ministry like CCF? What can you find here that you can't necessarily find in a local church? What can you find in a local church that you don't find here at CCF?

38. How can being a part of both a parachurch and a church benefit you personally? How can it be beneficial for your ministry?

39. Is it hard for you to find a balance between your involvement here at CCF and your involvement at your church? What would a healthy balance between church and parachurch look like now in your schedule (be specific)

Conclusion

40. How would you now define fellowship? What is fellowships ultimate purpose in our walks with the Lord?

41. What are practical ways you can be intentional in developing a consistent, healthy community here at CCF and at your church. Be specific.

42. Read John 13:35. How does fellowship ultimately help us live out the Gospel?

Memory Verse

Hebrews 10:24-25 - ²⁴And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, ²⁵not 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.

Recommended Reading

- *What is a Healthy Church?* By Mark Dever
- *Radical Reformation* by Mark Driscoll
- *Stop Dating the Church: Fall in Love with the Family of God* by Joshua Harris
- *DFD 2, Chapter 4* by NavPress
- *The Church: God's New People* by Timothy Savage