

Fundamentals Of The Church

Fellowship With The Saints

(I Jn 1:7)

INTRODUCTION

1. Good Morning,
 - a. Greeting...
2. Series of lessons on the "Fundamentals Of The Church."
 - a. Today we will be looking at "Fellowship With The Saints."
3. Fellowship
 - a. This is a word like many now-a-days in the Bible that has been changed to fit today's philosophies and doctrines, of modern theology.
 - b. It is a word that has been transformed today like so many to mean acceptance without conditions.
 - i. In other words we can have fellowship with everyone, who calls themselves Christians, because they use that word even though we teach, and do different things contrary to each other.
 - ii. Example: Most denominations will say they are in fellowship with each other even though some baptize by immersion, some by sprinkling, some pouring, some babies, some adults, some by the Holy Spirit only...
4. With all this being said let us examine the biblical term fellowship and examine what it means according to God, because it is expected from each of us (I Jn 1:7).
 - a. In other words let's let God define His own Word.

I. Biblically Defining Fellowship

A. The Greek word

1. "κοινωνία" or "koin-o-nia"

- i. "an association involving close mutual relations and involvement— 'close association, fellowship.'" (Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament : Based on semantic domains (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (445). New York: United Bible societies.)
- ii. "the share which one has in anything, participation; w. gen. of the thing in which he shares... intercourse, fellowship, intimacy... a benefaction jointly contributed, a collection, a contribution, as exhibiting an embodiment and proof of fellowship" (Thayer, J. H. (1889). A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Being Grimm's Wilke's Clavis Novi Testamenti (352). New York: Harper & Brothers.)
- iii. "is used in two senses, (a) 'to have a share in,' Rom. 15:27; 1 Tim. 5:22; Heb. 2:14; 1 Pet. 4:13; 2 John 11; (b) 'to give a share to, go shares with,' Rom. 12:13, RV, 'communicating,' for KJV, 'distributing'; Gal. 6:6, 'communicate'; Phil. 4:15, KJV, 'did communicate,' RV, 'had fellowship with.' See DISTRIBUTE, FELLOWSHIP, PARTAKE." (Vine, W. E., Unger, M. F., & White, W. (1996). Vol. 2: Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words (114). Nashville, TN: T. Nelson.)

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2. "κοινωνία" or "koin-o-nia"
 - i. It is found 19 times in the N.T.
 - a. It is defined in the ESV...
 1. 9 times as "fellowship"
 2. 3 times as "participation"
 3. 3 times as "share"
 4. 2 times as "contribution"
 5. 1 time as "part"
 6. 1 time as "partnership"
 - b. It is defined in the KJV...
 1. 12 times as "fellowship"
 2. 4 times as "communion"
 3. 2 times as "communicate"
 4. 1 time as "contribution"
 5. 1 times as "distribution"
 3. I think Louw & Nida have it best broken down in their three distinctions of the word.
 - i. First fellowship
 - ii. Second share
 - iii. Third willing contribution
 4. When you take all three there we see that fellowship biblically speaking embodies all three.

II. What Fellowship Does Not Mean

- A. It does not mean association by general recognition
 1. "Association based upon the sharing of **something** in common. Believers have fellowship with one another on the basis of their common fellowship with God, their participation in the blessings of the gospel and their common task of mission. True fellowship is demonstrated in concern for, and practical commitment to, one another." (Manser, M. H. (1999). Zondervan Dictionary of Bible Themes. The Accessible and Comprehensive Tool for Topical Studies. Grand Rapids, MI: ZondervanPublishingHouse.) (emphasis mine)
 2. Most denominational bodies hold to the idea that if one says they are a Christian then that is "something in common" and thus they are in fellowship with one another.
 - i. This idea is foreign in scripture as Paul explains to the Corinthian brethren. Fellowship is based on having everything in common.
 - a. **I Co 1:10** "Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."¹
 - ii. Fellowship is based on all things being perfectly joined so that there is no division at all. It is not that we over look the doctrines that divide or ignore those doctrines that divide.

¹ All Scriptures are taken from the NKJV unless otherwise noted.

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- B. It does not mean association based on humanity and God's love
1. "At some point everyone will be saved. No body will remain in hell for ever. God has sympathy for all, nomatter what is done. If everyone had a chance to see the truth of god then everyone would see the hand that they are looking for. Some will say that there are only a special few, but in the end we are all the same. We all have a light, just some can't find, but one day everyone will see. The creator of all will give everyone a chance even after they pass away, and of course once you are dead and shown, nobody will turn away."
(<http://goo.gl/hsSoe>)
 2. This is the trend that is coming. Billy Graham on May 31st, 1997 said this while being interviewed by Robert Shuller and asked this question "Tell me, what do you think of the future of Christianity... I think everybody who knows Christ, whether they're conscious of it or not, they're members of the Body of Christ...God's purpose is to call out a people for His name, whether they come from the Muslim world, Buddhist world, the Christian world, or the non-believing world, they are members of the Body of Christ, because they've been called by God. They may not even know the name of Jesus...and I think they are saved, and that they are going to be in heaven with us."
(<http://goo.gl/XK5iS>)
 - i. This idea is foreign to the Bible and the reality of fellowship.
 - a. **Mt 25:31-32** "When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. 32 All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats."
 - b. **I Jn 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 Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin." (emphasis mine)
 - ii. Heaven is the reward of those that are in fellowship with God and that comes only by walking according to God's Word/light.

III. What Fellowship Does Mean

- A. Fellowship is two fold
1. It is with God
 2. It is with Christians
 - i. **I Jn 1:7**
- B. Fellowship with God
1. This fellowship is based on our "walking in the light."
 - i. **Pr 16:9** "A man's heart plans his way, But the LORD directs his steps."
 - ii. **Ps 143:10** "Teach me to do Your will, For You are my God; Your Spirit is good. Lead me in the land of uprightness."
 - iii. **Mt 7:21** "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven."
 - iv. **I Jn 2:17** "And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever."

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C. Fellowship with Christians

1. This fellowship is based on our "walking in the light."
 - i. **Ph 1:27** "Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with **one mind** striving together for the faith of the gospel"
 - ii. **I Pt 3:8** "Finally, all of you be of **one mind**, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous"
 - iii. **I Co 1:10** "Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the **same mind** and in the same judgment."
 - a. **Ph 2:5** "Let this **mind be in you** which was also in Christ Jesus"

CONCLUSION

1. When we thus say we are in fellowship with someone or some congregation what we mean is that we have the same mind as that person or that group.
 - a. This does not mean we have to agree on every topic as some topics are simply opinions.
 - i. Whether or not to support orphan homes.
 - ii. Whether or not to eat in a multipurpose room attached or not to the church building.
 - iii. Whether the Holy Spirit literally or figuratively indwells...
 - b. Opinions are not doctrinal matters whoever all things that if disobeyed will constitute sin and thus keep us from heaven we must be of the same mind on which is Christ's mind.
2. Let us always remember also that if we are not to be out of fellowship with any Christian or congregation without knowledge of their disfellowship from God.
 - a. We cannot get caught up with gossip but rather if something is told or discovered follow the proper biblical pattern for disfellowship (**Mt 18:15-20**).
3. Invitation
 - a. God's Plan of Salvation
 - i. Hear/Study **Rom 10:17; II Tim 2:15**
 - ii. Believe Jesus Is The Christ **Jn 3:16; 8:24**
 - iii. Repent/Turn To God **Ac 17:30; Lk 24:47**
 - iv. Confess Jesus As Lord **Mt 10:32; Rom 10:9**
 - v. Immersed For The Forgiveness of Sins **Ac 2:38; 22:16; I Pt 3:21**
 - vi. Live A Faithful Life **I Jn 1:7; Eph 5:8**