

Back to Basics (The Priorities of God's People)

Fellowship = Partnership with God and His People (Church)

Guided Growth with Pastor Keith @ CBC Sunday, Aug. 22nd

"Fellowship" is found 15 times in N.T. It's Greek word koinonia: "*Partnership, participation*"

Koinonia is used 20 x and is translated: "Fellowship 12x; Communion 4x; Communication 2x, distribution 1x, contribution 1x. It comes from the root koinos which means to share!

Five of the Bible references to Fellowship are about our relationship with God. (1 Cor 1:9; Eph. 3:9; Phil. 3:10; 1 Jn 1:3, 6) **Seven** of them are about our relationship with Each other (Acts 2:42; 2 Cor. 8:4; Gal. 2:9; Phil. 1:5; 2:1; 1 Jn 1:3; 7) **and three** are about the reality that even believers can be in fellowship with the **Devil!** (1 Cor. 10:20; 2 Cor 6:4; Eph. 5:11) Just as Fellowship with God involves our Partnering with Him, so true Fellowship with each other also involves a Partnership. This "partnership" involves a Process.

1. This process of Fellowship involves:

A. **MEMBERSHIP. Choosing to belong.** (Acts 2:41,42)

B. **FRIENDSHIP involves Learning to:**

- 1) **Share!** Act 2:44,45 "*And all that believed were together, and had all things common*" (koinos: to share)
- 2) **Sharpen!** Pr 27:17 "*Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpens The countenance of his friend.*" (ra'a: to shepherd)

C. **PARTNERSHIP 1 Cor. 3:9**

- 1) Being Part of something bigger than myself! "*we are laborers together with God...*"
- 2) Working together toward a common goal! "*ye are god's husbandry, ye are God's building*"

2. The Purpose of Fellowship

A. It provides a **Safe** environment to grow. 1 Cor 3:9 "*Ye are God's husbandry*"

- 1) People (like Plants) need some shelter from harsh elements in order to develop.
"A friend is a person with whom I may think aloud." Ralph W. Emerson
"A friend is one who accepts you as you are; understands where you've been; appreciates who you've become and still, gently invites you to grow." William Shakespeare
- 2) People (like Plants) grow best when there is a healthy variety around. 1 Cor. 12:4-7
 1. Diversity allows me to draw from the strengths of others. 1 Cor 12:12-26
Satan seeks to use our differences to divide us! (Jn 10:10a) **God desires and designs our differences to Develop us, by deepening our dependence on Him and each other, producing Strength, not Strife.** (Ecc. 4:9-12)

B. It provides a **School-** room for obedience and development.

"The Christian Life would be easy if it weren't for all these people and problems."

1) It's in the context of committed relationships that we fulfil many of God's commands.

a) Here's a partial list of 54 "one another" commands that can't be fulfilled without each other.

Love one another. (Jn. 13:34); Serve one another (Gal. 5:13); Accept one another (Ro. 15:7); Forbear one another (Eph. 4:2); Forgive one another (Eph. 4:32); Restore one another (Gal. 6:1); Bear one another's burdens (Gal. 6:2); Honor one another (Ro. 12:10); Exhort one another. (Heb. 3:13); Consider one another (Heb. 10:23,24); Provoke one another (Heb. 10:24 Assemble with one another (Heb. 10:25); Teach one another (Eph. 5:19); Submit to one another (Eph. 5:21); Comfort one another (1 Thes. 5:11); Edify (Build up) one another (1 Thes. 5:11); Pray for one another. (Phil. 4:6; Eph. 6:18)

Gal 5:22-23 "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."

How many of these "fruits" (qualities) can truly develop in isolation?

3. The Priority of Fellowship

A. It's a **Test** of our Relationship with God. 1 Jn. 3:14-23

vs 14 "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death."

1 Jn. 4:20, 21 "If a man say, I love God, and hates his brother, for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, That he who loves God love his brother also."

2. It is a **Testimony** to a lost world. (John 13:34,35)

"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." See also Jn 17:20-23

Matthew 5:13-16 *"Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."*

Application: Understanding Biblical Fellowship!

3. It involves a process. Acts 2:41,42

- Membership (Belonging)
- Friendship (Sharing)
- Partnership (Ministering/Serving)

Where are you in this process?

4. It accomplishes God's Purposes by providing:

- A Safe Environment for Growth
- A School- room for obedience and development

In God's Classroom of spiritual growth, Are you absent or active?

5. It enables the pursuit of God's Priorities by:

- Testing the quality of our Relationships
How are your "test" scores?
- Providing A Testimony to a lost world

What do your priorities and practices say to those around you about your commitment to God? His People?

If biblical Christianity (including genuine fellowship) were illegal, would there be enough evidence to convict you?