

Understanding Christian Fellowship

Guided Growth with Pastor Keith @ CBC Sunday, Aug 9th

In Mt. 22:36-40 Jesus clearly taught that the “Great Commandment” involved loving God *“with all thine heart...soul...mind”* and loving *“thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”*

Christian “Fellowship” involves a process whereby God grows us in the fulfilment of this Great Commandment so that we can more effectively fulfil the “Great Commission” of Mt. 28:18-20. In Acts 2:41-47 God gives us a picture of this process revealing His design/desire for His church!

God’s Process of “Fellowship” (Partnership) involves:

1. Membership. I choose to belong (Identify with) Acts 2:41

“Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.”

A. God wants us to identify with Him and His People (His Church!)

Vs 42 *“and they continued steadfastly in the apostle’s doctrine (didachē: truth) and Fellowship...”*
(koinonia: Partnership and Participation!)

B. Notice some of the “pictures” God uses to describe His Church.

- 1) Members of a common Body. (1 Cor. 12; Ro. 12)
- 2) Married to a common Groom.(Eph.5; Rev. 19)
- 3) Materials in a common Building. (Eph. 2)
- 4) Plants in a common Garden (1 Cor 3:9; Is. 61)
- 5) People in a common Family. (Eph. 3:14-21)

Each of these involve Diversity and require Commitment!

The 2nd aspect in the Process of Christian Fellowship involves a commitment to:

2. Friendship: *Learning to Share!* Act 2:44,45

“And all that believed were together, and had all things common” (koinos)

A. Characteristics of genuine friendship:

1) *“Were together”* (“daily” vs 46) Heb. 10:25

- a) Many struggle in life & faith because they haven’t made the commitment to develop friends.
Gen 2:18 *“The LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone...”*

Pr. 18:24 *he “that hath friends must show himself friendly.”*

b) Genuine Friendship involves “sharpening” others!

Pr 27:17 *“Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpens The countenance of his friend.”* from rā’â (*shepherd*)

Heb. 10:24 *“Let us consider one another (Katanoē’ō: observe/understand fully) to provoke to love and to good (kalos: virtuous) works”*

Ecc. 4:9-12 *“woe to him that’s alone when he falls”*

2) *“had all things common.”* (Koinos’: the root of Koinonia) They learned to share:

a) Their Passions. (Gifts) 1 Cor 12:7

b) Their Perspectives. 1 Cor. 12:21

c) Their Pain 1 Cor. 12:26; 2 Cor 1:3,4

d) Their Pleasures 1 Cor. 12:26; Ro. 12:15

e) Their Problems. Gal. 6:2

f) Their Possessions. Acts 2:42, 44,4 *“they continued in doctrine and fellowship... they were together and had all things common; And sold their possessions..., and parted them to all men, as every man had need.”*

Not out of compulsion, but out of Compassion!

(See 1 John 3:17-18; James 1:22-27; 2:15-17; 1 Tim. 6:17-19)

B. The Bi-products (or results) of genuine friendship. Acts 2:46-47

1) Shared interests and ***intimacy!*** *“And they continuing daily with one accord (Homothymadon’: From Homo: the same and Thumos: Passion!) In the Temple (Corporate Worship) and ...from house to house, (Small group fellowship)*

2) Shared Life, Laughter, and Love together. *“were together”* vs 44

Vs 46 *“did eat their meat with gladness (Joy) and singleness (simplicity) of heart.*

Praising God and having favor (char’is: Grace!) with all the people.”

Who wouldn’t want to be part of such a loving, committed church family?

3) Health, Fruit, and Growth Vs 47 *“and the Lord added daily (Prostith’ēmi: placed beside) such as should be saved.”*

God brought people to them so they could share His love and Grace!

Conclusion:

1 Peter 3:15 *“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asks you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.”*

This implies that our lives are lived in such a manner

that others realize/recognize (and ***desire***) *“the hope that is in us”*.

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.”*

Application:

At what level are you experiencing fellowship?

- **Membership:** Have you chosen to belong;
Committing to becoming a part of God’s *“Body, Bride, Building, Garden, & Family?”*
- **Friendship:** Have you committed to learning to share your:
Passions, perspectives, pain, pleasures, problems and even (if and as God directs) your possessions, with God’s People?



The term “Pall Bearers” comes from the word “Pall” which was a cloth draped over the casket that represents the white baptism garments as well as the Resurrection of Christ at Easter. It implies those who have “walked with us” since our baptism and will be standing beside us through the end and at the resurrection day!

Who are you “walking beside?”