

Understanding Christian Fellowship

Guided Growth with Pastor Keith @ CBC Sunday, Aug 16th

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 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.”*

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

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

“Friend” comes from the Hebrew word “Raa” which means “Shepherd”. In this sense, we should all be like “pastors” to help our friends grow toward God. (See Heb. 3:13; 10:23-25)

The early church learned to share Their: Passions (Heart) 1 Cor 12:7; Perspectives. 1 Cor. 12:21;

Pain 1 Cor. 12:26; 2 Cor 1:3,4; Pleasures 1 Cor. 12:26; Ro. 12:15; Problems Gal. 6:2; and even their Possessions. Acts 2:45,46 **Not out of compulsion, but out of Compassion!**

2. **Partnership: Working toward a common Goal!** (We’re part of God’s Plan!)

A. **This is the actual meaning of Fellowship!** 1 Cor 3:9 *“We are laborers together with God”*

1) You can’t have real “Fellowship” without some “Partnership”! 1 John 1:5-7

Amos 3:3 *“(How) Can two walk together, except they be agreed?”* (yā’ad: engaged, together, fixed upon)

2) In order to walk with God we need to determine

a) Where’s God “going?” (His Direction)

b) What’s God “doing”? (His Goals?)

c) Am I willing to go/work with Him? (Ro. 12:1,2; Pr. 3:5,6)

B. **Partnership implies that we’re a “Part” of something bigger than ourselves!**

1 Cor. 12:27 *“Ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular”* (See also Eph. 2:21-22)

1) This is Jesus’ desire & design. Jn 17:20,21 *“Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.”*

2) This is God’s command. Eph. 4:1-3

What: *“I therefore... beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, “*

How: *“With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;”*

Why: *“Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”* (Eirēnē: to join)

3) This is a practical necessity Eph 4:16 *“the whole body fitly joined together (Synarmologe’ō: to render close, united) and compacted (symbibaz’ō: knit together) by that which every joint supplies, according to the effectual working (Ener’geia: energy) ... of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.”*

C. This Partnership produced:

- 1) Salvation. 41,47 *"they that gladly received the word... The Lord added ...such as should be saved."*
- 2) Identification: 41,44 *"were baptized... were added unto them... all that believed were together"*
- 3) Discipleship: 42 *"continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine"*
- 4) Ministry: Vs 42,44 *"breaking of bread ... prayers...sold possessions...parted them, as every man had need..."*
- 5) Genuine Unity Vs 46 *"With one accord"*
Ps 133:1,3 *"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! ... for there the LORD commanded the blessing, even life for evermore."*

6) Powerful Worship: 47 *"praising God and having favor with all the people."*

This type of "fellowship" was (and is) infectious and effective!

"And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."

Conclusion:

How does our definition of "Faith and Fellowship" compare to God's?

Build the church and make it grow, Cushioned pews in classic row; Made for comfort we love so.

Come in, relax, enjoy the show! *But where's the faith?*

Blow the trump and ring the bell; Dress it up and make it sell; Fill it with the rich and well;

And count the heads. We're doing well! *But where's the faith?*

Read the creed and get it right; Hold it fast with all your might; Close the door and bolt it tight;

We've no need for further light! *But where's the faith?*

In the sickroom on the bed –Invalid, helpless, but not dead; Hear her praying through the pain,

"May my suffering be your gain." There's the faith!

Here a loving mother gives, With all the reason that she lives, To strive against unnumbered odds

And bring her children to know God. There's the faith!

Surprising, isn't it, where the faith is found; Not where reigns the world renown,

But in the din of work and strife, *Where the Cross meets daily life.*

There's the faith!

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?*
- **Partnership:** *Are you Working together with God and His people
to accomplish God's goals?*

If Not, Why Not? If not now, then When?

Mt 11:28-30 "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

"Easy" Chrēstos': Kind, good, gracious, useful.

From Chra'omai: furnish what's needed