

Church Part 5 - "Fellowship" (10-24-21)

Introduction: Devoted to Doctrine (last week), in the context of **Fellowship** (this week) - Practicing Doctrine

1) The very definition of Church is fellowship!

- The Church is a **FELLOWSHIP**

Acts 2:42 (ESV)

And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

Note: Fellowship (Greek is **Koinonia**: association, community, communion, joint participation, intercourse, intimacy). **Notice** – breaking bread & prayer (gathering at the table).

- The Church is a **FAMILY**

Romans 12:10 (ESV)

Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor.

1 Peter 3:8 (LB)

You should be like one big happy family, full of sympathy toward each other, loving one another with tender hearts and humble minds.

Note: We operate on the basis of relationship. Affection, honor, sympathy, tender hearts, humble minds!

- The Church is a **BODY**

Romans 12:4-5 (ESV)

(4) For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, (5) so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.

1 Corinthians 12:26-27 (ESV)

(26) If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together. (27) Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.

Note: We are a body – not a business, not a club or team, not a social gathering, not a political party. We are an organism – not an organization!

In Fact: The very word **Church** means **Assembly!**

Greek word - **Ekklesia**: A called out assembly or congregation. A gathering of citizens called out from their homes into some public place, an assembly

Acts 2:42-47 (NKJV)

(42) And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and **fellowship**, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. (43) Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. (44) Now all who believed were **together**, and had all things in **common**, (45) and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. (46) So continuing daily with **one accord** in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, (47) praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the **church** daily those who were being saved.

2) Fellowship - Practicing Doctrine Together (Embodying the life & teaching of Jesus)

Ephesians 4:11-12 (ESV)

(11) And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, (12) to **equip** the saints for **the work of ministry**, for **building up the body of Christ**,

Note: Some needed reflection . . . Consider & Answer honestly:

- Who does the work of the ministry? (Saints equipped by leaders)
- What is the work? (Building up the body of Christ)
- How am I contributing to the building up of Jesus' body - real, practical tangible?

Here is what that work should produce . . .

Ephesians 4:13 (ESV)

(13) **until** we all attain to the **unity of the faith** and of the **knowledge of the Son of God**, to **mature manhood**, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,

Note: Living in **Unity** / Growing in **Knowledge** / Becoming **Mature** Spiritual Mothers & Fathers

This protects us from the inevitable storms of life . . .

Ephesians 4:14 (ESV)

(14) so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.

Note: "Tossed to and fro by the waves" - A surge of the sea, tossed by billows.

Example - the surf at the beach during stormy weather (my kids couldn't handle it)

Paul is explaining the importance of gathering & growing together: The world (and some masquerading as the church) will continually offer false solutions to the turmoil of this life, but they emerge from the very tumultuous sea they claim to help calm!

Instead - we are anchored in Christ by our intentional fellowship . . .

Ephesians 4:15-16 (ESV)

(15) Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, (16) from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it **builds itself up in love**.

Note: The End Goal - to be built up in **LOVE** together!

Conclusion: Church is the gathering & fellowship of believers. It's essential for our personal & corporate health & growth. It is the path to impacting the world around us (see: Acts 2:47).

For Reflection - Participating in Fellowship

- Am I in fellowship? If not, why? What are the obstacles?
- How am I contributing to the building up of Jesus body?
- Am I living in unity with the body? Are there relationships I need to build, re-engage, or repair?
- Am I growing in knowledge? Acquire more info? Gain better understand? Apply what I'm learning?
- Am I becoming a mature Spiritual Father or Mother? If so who am I parenting spiritual? If not, who are my spiritual parents? What can I learn & apply from them?