

# “The Fellowship of the Spirit”

## Summary

What does it truly mean to have fellowship with the Holy Spirit? Not the kind of fellowship we think of as a brief after-service conversation over coffee, but the kind that permeates every moment of our lives. This message opens up the profound truth buried inside a familiar benediction from 2 Corinthians 13:14, where Paul blesses believers with the grace of Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. We often rush past that third element, yet it may be the most transformative of the three. The grace and love of the Father and Son establish our position and reconciliation with God, but the fellowship of the Holy Spirit is what equips us to actually walk in that reality every single day. He is not a Sunday presence or a meeting-dependent experience. He is the indwelling life of God in us, as present in our kitchens and our commutes as he is in our worship gatherings. When we begin to grasp this, everything changes. We stop chasing an experience we already possess and start living in the good of what has already been given.

## Small Group Study Guide – The Fellowship of the Spirit

Based on the sermon by Andy Elmes

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### Overview

In this message, Andy Elmes unpacks the often-overlooked phrase from 2 Corinthians 13:14 -- "the fellowship of the Holy Spirit." Rather than treating the Holy Spirit as a presence we encounter only in church services, Andy challenges believers to acknowledge, include, and depend on the Holy Spirit in every area of daily life. This guide is designed to help your group move from theology to lived experience.

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### Key Takeaways

- The fellowship of the Holy Spirit is not a Sunday experience -- it is a shared, continuous life with God in every moment and every area of who we are.
- The word "fellowship" in 2 Corinthians 13:14 carries the meaning of communion and shared life, not a brief social interaction.

- God did not give us a new life without also giving us a new driver. The Holy Spirit is meant to be at the wheel, not waiting in the passenger seat.
  - The Holy Spirit's presence is not dependent on the right song, the right atmosphere, or the right moment. He indwells believers fully and constantly.
  - Three practical keys to living in the fellowship of the Spirit are to acknowledge him, include him, and depend on him -- summarized as A.I.D.
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## Opening Question

Take a few minutes to check in as a group before diving into the discussion.

- On a scale of one to ten, how aware of the Holy Spirit's presence were you this past week outside of any church gathering? What influenced that number?
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## Discussion Questions

### Section 1: Understanding the Fellowship of the Spirit

1. Andy pointed out that 2 Corinthians 13:14 is often used as a closing blessing at services or funerals, but rarely unpacked for its full meaning. Before hearing this message, how did you think about the phrase "the fellowship of the Holy Spirit"? Has your understanding shifted at all?
  2. Andy described how his Filipino church members reshaped his understanding of fellowship -- from a brief, time-limited interaction to a continuous sharing of life. How does that expanded definition change the way you think about your relationship with the Holy Spirit?
  3. Andy said that the grace of Jesus and the love of God give us our position and standing before God, while the fellowship of the Holy Spirit gives us everything we need to walk in that standing. In your own words, why does that distinction matter for everyday life?
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### Section 2: The Indwelling vs. the Made-Known Presence

4. Andy made a distinction between the "made-known" presence of God -- what we often experience in corporate worship -- and the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit that is constant and personal. Has your faith life been more meeting-dependent than you realized? What would it look like to change that?
5. Andy referenced Brother Lawrence and the idea of practicing the presence of God in ordinary moments -- the kitchen, the shower, the lawnmower. What are some ordinary, everyday spaces in your life where you have not yet thought to include the Holy Spirit?

6. Andy said, "If a church becomes illegal, we live on because we are not meeting dependent." How does a strong understanding of the indwelling Spirit prepare believers for hardship, isolation, or seasons when corporate gathering is not possible?
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### Section 3: Acknowledge, Include, Depend

7. Andy offered three practical keys -- acknowledge, include, and depend. Which of the three is the greatest challenge for you personally, and why?
  8. Andy described feelings as unreliable guides when truth is speaking, saying that many believers have given their feelings too much authority for too long. Can you think of an area in your life where your feelings have contradicted what God has said is true? How did you navigate that tension?
  9. Andy described the Holy Spirit helping him remember to secure visas for Cambodia on the exact deadline day, and also stopping him from saying something that would have discouraged someone. Have you had experiences where you now recognize the Holy Spirit was guiding you in a practical or relational moment? What did that look like?
  10. Andy talked about praying in the Spirit as a way of praying perfectly for situations that exceed our own understanding. How does your group currently approach prayer for situations that feel beyond your ability to articulate or resolve? Is there room to lean more into Spirit-led prayer together?
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### Section 4: Dependence vs. Independence

11. Andy connected human independence back to the Garden of Eden, describing it as something we were born into through Adam and something we renounce through the new birth. How does pride or self-sufficiency quietly show up in your spiritual life, even as a committed believer?
  12. Andy used the image of a pizza with many slices to describe how a person can be functioning well in some areas of life while struggling badly in others at the exact same time. Which "slices" of your life are you most tempted to keep the Holy Spirit out of? Why do you think that is?
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### Practical Applications

Choose one or more of the following to practice individually or as a group before your next meeting.

**The Good Morning Practice** Begin each morning this week by verbally acknowledging the Holy Spirit before reaching for your phone, speaking to anyone else, or starting your routine. Keep it simple. Just say good morning and invite his involvement in the day ahead. At your next meeting, share what you noticed.

**The Invitation Habit** Identify one area of your life -- a relationship, a decision, a work challenge, a health concern -- where you have been operating independently. This week, intentionally invite the Holy Spirit into that specific area and ask for his help. Journal what happens.

**The Slice Audit** Draw a circle and divide it into slices representing different areas of your life -- marriage or relationships, parenting, finances, health, work, friendships, personal habits. Prayerfully ask the Holy Spirit which slices you have been managing on your own. Share one observation with a trusted person in your group.

**Praying Beyond Your Words** If your group prays in the Spirit together, set aside time this week -- individually or as a group -- to pray specifically in the Spirit over situations that feel beyond your own words or understanding. Resist the urge to fill the silence with familiar phrases.

**The Presence Reminder** Place a simple reminder -- a sticky note, a phone alarm, a word on a mirror -- somewhere you will see it daily. Let it prompt you to acknowledge the Holy Spirit's presence in that ordinary moment rather than waiting for a church service to do so.

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## Closing Reflection

Andy closed with this statement, drawn from Philemon 1:6, which speaks of faith becoming effective through the acknowledging of every good thing that is in us in Christ Jesus.

Take a few quiet moments as a group. Ask each person to complete this sentence aloud:

"One good thing that is already in me because of Jesus that I want to begin acknowledging and living from this week is..."

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## Closing Prayer

Close your time by praying together as a group. Invite the Holy Spirit specifically into your gathering, your individual weeks, and the areas of life each person identified. Allow space for Spirit-led prayer beyond prepared words.

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## Memory Verse for the Week

2 Corinthians 13:14 -- The verse speaks of the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit being present with all believers together. Meditate on what it means that all three of these are yours -- not on Sunday alone, but in every moment of every day.

# Main Points – The Fellowship of the Spirit

Title: The Fellowship of the Holy Spirit: Acknowledge, Include, Depend

## Sermon Summary:

Drawing from 2 Corinthians 13:14, Andy unpacks the often-overlooked third element of Paul's apostolic blessing -- the fellowship, or communion, of the Holy Spirit. While the grace of Jesus and the love of God rightly receive much attention, the fellowship of the Holy Spirit is presented as the practical, daily empowerment that enables believers to walk out what the Father and Son have secured for them. The sermon challenges a meeting-centric, feelings-driven understanding of the Holy Spirit and calls believers to recognize that the same Spirit present in corporate worship indwells them every moment of every day. Using the framework of three actions -- acknowledge, include, and depend -- Andy urges the congregation to move from a correct Pentecostal theology into an active, lived experience of communion with the Holy Spirit in every area of life.

## Key Points:

- The threefold blessing of 2 Corinthians 13:14 reflects the nature of a triune God, and each element -- grace, love, and fellowship -- is a complete blessing in itself, yet all three are always simultaneously present
- The fellowship of the Holy Spirit is not a meeting-room experience but a shared, continuous life with God, available every moment and in every circumstance
- The Holy Spirit was sent not merely to visit corporate gatherings but to indwell individual believers permanently, serving as the new driver for the new creation life
- Many believers have a correct theology of the Holy Spirit but fail to live in the practical reality of that theology, treating what they already possess as something still to be obtained
- Acknowledging the Holy Spirit is the first step -- his presence is not contingent on worship reaching a certain emotional peak; he is already fully present
- Including the Holy Spirit in everyday decisions, conversations, relationships, finances, and practical matters is an expression of genuine fellowship, not just spiritual moments
- Depending on the Holy Spirit is a renunciation of the independence inherited from Adam and a return to the God-designed state of reliance on divine strength
- Praying in the Holy Spirit is especially valuable when human understanding runs out, because the Spirit intercedes with perfect prayer for situations beyond our comprehension
- The power referenced in Acts 1:8 can be understood not only as explosive dynamite power but as the ability to live the new creation life through the indwelling Spirit
- Boredom in the Christian life is a symptom of failing to include the Holy Spirit, not a reflection of God's absence or inadequacy

## Scripture Reference:

- 2 Corinthians 13:14 -- Paul's closing blessing naming the grace of Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit as a triune gift to believers
- Luke 11:13 -- the Father's eagerness to give the Holy Spirit to those who ask, compared to the giving of good gifts by earthly fathers

- Psalm 143:10 -- David's prayer asking God to teach him to do his will and to let the good Spirit lead him on level ground
- John 14 -- Jesus's promise that the Helper, the Holy Spirit sent by the Father, would teach believers all things and bring his words to remembrance
- John 16 -- the Spirit of truth coming to guide believers into all truth
- 1 Corinthians 2 -- the Spirit enabling believers to understand the things freely given by God and to interpret spiritual truths
- Zechariah 4:6 -- the word to Zerubbabel that the work would be accomplished not by might nor by power but by the Spirit of the Lord
- Acts 1:8 -- the promise of power when the Holy Spirit comes upon believers
- Romans 8:26 -- the Spirit helping believers in their weaknesses and interceding when they do not know how to pray
- Philippians 4:13 -- the declaration that one can do all things through Christ who gives strength

## Discussion Questions – The Fellowship of the Spirit *(Andy Elmes)*

Andy describes the fellowship of the Holy Spirit as a sharing of life rather than a brief encounter — in what practical ways might your daily routine look different if you genuinely treated the Holy Spirit as a constant companion rather than a Sunday presence?

Andy argues that God intentionally left you out of your own salvation because you would have ruined it, and that too many believers stay in the driving seat of their new creation life — what areas of your life are you most resistant to surrendering control of, and why?

The sermon draws a contrast between a Western understanding of fellowship as a brief social event and an Asian or African understanding of fellowship as a full sharing of life — how has your cultural background shaped the way you relate to God, and what might need to change?

Andy challenges the idea that God becomes more present when worship reaches a certain emotional peak, insisting that the Holy Spirit is as present in your bathroom as in a church service — how does this truth either comfort or unsettle you, and what does your honest reaction reveal about your theology?

Andy describes independence from God as something inherited from Adam that we must consciously renounce — in what specific ways do you still live as though you are spiritually self-sufficient, and what would genuine dependence on the Holy Spirit look like in those areas?

Praying in the Spirit is especially valuable when our own understanding runs out, particularly in situations involving deep uncertainty or suffering — how do you currently respond when you exhaust your own words in prayer, and how might leaning into the Spirit change that?

Andy uses the image of a pizza with many slices to illustrate how a person can be thriving in some areas of life while struggling badly in others — which slices of your life have you been most reluctant to invite the Holy Spirit into, and what is holding you back?

Andy warns that a bored Christian is not a reflection of a boring God but of a person who has stopped including the Holy Spirit in their daily life — do you agree with this assessment, and what has your own experience taught you about the connection between spiritual vitality and active dependence on the Spirit?

The sermon presents acknowledging, including, and depending on the Holy Spirit as three distinct but connected practices — which of these three do you find most natural, which do

you find most difficult, and what does that imbalance reveal about your relationship with God?

Andy reflects on handing over everything he had built over 28 years in obedience to a new call from God, comparing it to Abraham leaving his homeland — what would it look like for you to hold your current securities, roles, and plans with open hands before God, and what fear does that prospect surface in you?

## Scriptures – The Fellowship of the Spirit

### Explicitly Cited

**Psalms 23:4** — The valley of the shadow of death; God’s presence and prepared table amid enemies (referenced in the opening prayer)

**Psalms 127:4** — Children described as arrows in the hand of a mighty man

**2 Corinthians 13:14** — The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit

**Luke 11:13** — The Father giving the Holy Spirit to those who ask, compared to how earthly fathers give good gifts

**Psalms 143:10** — David’s prayer asking God to teach him to do His will and for the good Spirit to lead him on level ground

**John 14:26** — The Helper, the Holy Spirit, sent by the Father to teach all things and bring remembrance of Christ’s words

**John 16:13** — The Spirit of truth guiding believers into all truth

**Zerubbabel 4:6** — Not by might, nor by power, but by the Spirit of the Lord (attributed to Zerubbabel)

**Acts 1:8** — Receiving power when the Holy Spirit comes upon believers

**Romans 6** — Co-crucifixion with Christ; death, burial, and resurrection (referenced thematically)

**Romans 8:26** — The Spirit helping believers in weakness, interceding when they do not know how to pray

**Philippians 4:13** — “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me”

**1 Corinthians 2:12-13** — Receiving not the spirit of the world but the Spirit of God, to understand what is freely given, imparting spiritual truths in Spirit-taught words

**John 14:16-17** — The promise that the Holy Spirit would be with believers and in believers

**Hebrews 13:5** — God’s promise never to leave or forsake His people

**Matthew 28:20** — “Lo, I am with you always, until the end of the age”

**Philemon 1:6** — The communication of faith becoming effectual by acknowledging every good thing in us in Christ Jesus (referenced in closing prayer)

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### Alluded to Thematically Without Direct Citation

**Genesis 3** — The fall of Adam, independence from God chosen over dependence, the origin of the human condition of self-reliance

**Genesis 12:1** — God calling Abraham to leave everything known for a new adventure (used as personal analogy)

**1 Judges 6:11** — Gideon hiding in the winepress; God using unlikely people (referenced briefly)

**1 Samuel 17** — David the shepherd boy; God using the unlikely (referenced briefly)

**Daniel 3:25** — God appearing in the fire with the three men (referenced as an example of God sharing life with people in crisis)

**John 3:3-8** — Being born again of the Spirit (referenced thematically throughout)

**2 Corinthians 5:17** — The new creation; old has gone, new has come (referenced directly in language)

**Acts 2:1-4** — The upper room, the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost

**Romans 8:11** — The Spirit of God dwelling in believers and quickening their mortal bodies (referenced in closing prayer)

# Devotional – The Fellowship of the Spirit

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## Day 1: You Are Never Alone

**Reading:** John 14:15-18, 26 — In these verses, Jesus promises that the Father will send the Holy Spirit as a Helper who will dwell with believers and be in them, teaching them and bringing to remembrance everything Jesus has said.

**Devotional:** The Holy Spirit was never meant to be a Sunday experience. He was sent to share life with you — every moment, every room, every ordinary hour of your day. Andy Elmes said it plainly: "He's as present at three in the morning in your bedroom as He is here." The Helper cannot help someone who does not believe they need help or who never asks. Today, resist the temptation to treat God's presence as something you must manufacture through the right song or the right setting. He is already here. He is already in you. Begin where you are. Acknowledge him.

**Personal Reflection:** In what areas of your daily life have you been leaving the Holy Spirit out? What would it look like to acknowledge his presence before you get out of bed tomorrow morning?

**Practical Application:** Place a simple reminder — on your mirror, your phone, or your coffee maker — with the words: "Good morning, Holy Spirit." Let it prompt you to begin each day by acknowledging the one who never left.

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## Day 2: Grace, Love, and Fellowship — A Triune Blessing

**Reading:** 2 Corinthians 13:14 — This verse offers a benediction from the Apostle Paul, pronouncing the grace of Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit upon all believers together.

**Devotional:** Paul's closing blessing is not a formality. It is a declaration of everything God has made available to his people through his triune nature. Grace positions you rightly before God. Love secures you in the heart of the Father. But the fellowship of the Holy Spirit is what equips you to actually walk in what grace and love have secured. You have been given a new life and a new driver. The problem, as Andy observed, is that too many believers stay in the driving seat and wonder why they keep crashing. Today, surrender the wheel. The Spirit was given not for meetings, but for living.

**Personal Reflection:** Which of the three — grace, love, or fellowship with the Spirit — do you find easiest to receive? Which do you tend to neglect or forget in your daily walk?

**Practical Application:** Take five minutes today to sit quietly and speak each part of Paul's blessing over yourself. Receive grace. Receive love. Then invite the fellowship of the Holy Spirit into one specific area of your life where you have been trying to manage on your own.

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## Day 3: Dependence Over Independence

**Reading:** Zechariah 4:6; John 15:4-5 — Zechariah records God's word that it is not by human might or power but by the Spirit of the Lord that his purposes are accomplished. Jesus, in John, declares that apart from him we can do nothing, but those who remain in him bear much fruit.

**Devotional:** Independence from God was the first sin and it has been the root of every struggle since. We were born into it through Adam, and we carry its instincts into our new creation life if we are not deliberate. Andy stated it directly: "We were born in a state of independence. But we should come to a place where we say, God, I turn from my independence and I come back into a state of dependence." Depending on the Holy Spirit is not weakness. It is the most courageous and honest thing a believer can do. It is the acknowledgment that his ability is greater than your limitation, and that his strength was always meant to be your life.

**Personal Reflection:** Where in your life are you still living in your own Independence Day? What would genuine dependence on the Holy Spirit look like in that specific area?

**Practical Application:** Write down one situation you have been trying to resolve through your own strength. Pray over it today, not with a list of instructions to God, but with a simple declaration: "I am depending on you. I am no longer doing this alone."

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## Day 4: Include Him in Everything

**Reading:** Psalm 143:10; Romans 8:26-27 — David asks God to teach him to do His will and prays that God's good Spirit would lead him on level ground. Paul writes that the Spirit helps us in our weaknesses, interceding for us with prayers beyond what we are able to form ourselves.

**Devotional:** Fellowship with the Holy Spirit is not reserved for the spiritual sections of your life. He wants to be included in all of it — your relationships, your finances, your health, your decisions, and yes, even your lawnmower. When you do not know how to pray, the Spirit intercedes on your behalf with perfect understanding of what you need. Andy asked a sharp question: "Why would you pray about unknown things with known prayers?" There are seasons when your own words simply are not enough. In those moments, praying in the Spirit is not a retreat — it is a promotion. You are inviting the one who knows all things to speak the perfect prayer through you.

**Personal Reflection:** Are there situations in your life right now where you have run out of words? Have you allowed the Holy Spirit to intercede through you, or have you been relying solely on your own understanding?

**Practical Application:** Identify one area of your life — a relationship, a decision, a burden — where you genuinely do not know how to pray. Set aside ten minutes today to pray in the Spirit over that situation, trusting that the one who dwells in you is praying the perfect prayer.

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## Day 5: Acknowledge, Include, Depend — A New Way of Living

**Reading:** Philippians 4:13; Acts 1:8; 1 Corinthians 2:12 — Paul declares that he can do all things through Christ who strengthens him. Jesus promises his followers that they will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon them. Paul writes that believers have received not the spirit of the world but the Spirit of God, so that they may understand what God has freely given them.

**Devotional:** Everything God has given you is already yours. The fellowship of the Holy Spirit is not something you must earn, whip up, or wait for the right worship moment to access. He is present. He is in you. He is fully available. The question is whether you will acknowledge him, include him, and depend on him. Andy summarized it simply: A, I, D — Acknowledge, Include, Depend. These three words are not a program. They are a posture. They represent a daily decision to stop treating the Holy Spirit as a guest and start living as though he is exactly what he is — the permanent, indwelling, empowering life of God within you. You are not who you used to be. It is time to live like it.

**Personal Reflection:** As you reflect on this five-day journey, which of the three — acknowledging, including, or depending on the Holy Spirit — represents your greatest area of growth? What one change will you make beginning today?

**Practical Application:** Write out the letters A, I, and D somewhere you will see them daily. Let them serve as a standing reminder of the posture God is calling you into. Share what you have been learning with one person this week, because the fellowship of the Spirit is not only personal — it overflows into every relationship around you.