

We Come To Worship

A STUDY OF CORPORATE WORSHIP FROM THE SCRIPTURES.

LESSON 7: Fellowship

What does *fellowship* mean?

- › Acts 2:42 - And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the **fellowship**, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.
- › κοινωνία (koinōnia). n. fem. fellowship, communion, sharing, participation. A term that conveys a sense of commonality, solidarity, and shared responsibility among households or individuals.¹ The NT also teaches that believers enjoy “fellowship” (koinōnia) with Jesus (e.g., 1 Cor 1:9; 1 John 1:3, 6).

In what sense do we fellowship?

Participation

- › The most general sense of this term refers to a shared conviction that manifests itself as **mutual responsibility and status**.
- › 1 Corinthians 10:16 ¹⁶The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a **participation** in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a **participation** in the body of Christ?
- › AS a Christian, you participate in the body by being mutually responsible for each other. When one member suffers, you suffer with them. When one member rejoices, you do as well. When one member is struggling in the faith, you enter into the conversation with the word of God.

Sharing

- › Most often, *koinōnia* refers to the **sharing of resources**, monetary or otherwise (e.g., Acts 2:42; Romans 15:26; 2 Cor. 8:4; 9:13; Phlm. 1:6; Heb. 13:16).
- › Hebrews 13:15–16 - ¹⁵Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name. ¹⁶Do not neglect to do good and **to share** what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.

¹ Derek Leigh Davis, “Assembly, Religious,” in Lexham Theological Wordbook, ed. Douglas Mangum et al., Lexham Bible Reference Series (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2014).

- › There is a real sense of sharing of all resources, having everything in common, where nothing is withheld.

Contribution

- › The phrase can also have the sense of a **contribution towards one another**, where it is not mutual but sacrificial. Where the measure of giving is not reciprocal, like sharing, but one-way for the benefit of the other.
- › Rom 15:26 - For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make some **contribution** for the poor among the saints at Jerusalem.
- › This church is marked by the generosity of their contributions, marking the selflessness and humility that go into a type of fellowship that's marked by contribution. We can think of this financially. We can also think of this in time, effort, connections, and resources.

Partnership

- › Those who choose to willingly engage in mutual responsibility are described as having “partnership” (*koinōnia*) with the body of Christ (1 Cor 10:16), the gospel (Phil 1:5), the Spirit (Phil 2:1), the sufferings of the Messiah (Phil 3:10), or, negatively, unbelievers (2 Cor 6:14).
- › 2 Corinthians 6:14 (ESV) **Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness?**
- › Also, the use of the word "fellowship" indicates a type of **purposeful union/partnership together**. Yet not just a commonality, but a spiritual union founded on the same truth. It is an intentional action to foster a fellowship between the members of that fellowship.

Christ

- › 1 John 1:5-7 - This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say we have **fellowship** with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have **fellowship** with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.
- › It is our fellowship in Christ that is the cause and sustainment of our fellowship with one another. Without Christ in our individual lives, there is no true fellowship with one another, or the blessed promises of fellowship do not manifest themselves.

How does fellowship live in our corporate worship?

1. Fellowship is the fount of attendance.

- › Hebrews 10:25 ²⁵not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.
- › Notice the admonition not to neglect meeting together is so they can encourage one another. Not to hear the sermon specifically, impress each other with their attendance records, or be encouraged by others - but to encourage one another.
 - They come to gathering, ready and seeking to encourage each other in the time of gathering.
- › Preaching, singing, prayer- these all flow out of the fellowship we share together. The fellowship is what should bring you to our gathering. Stick around for the sermon, but come for the fellowship!
- › **We must each make it a priority to attend for this very reason. That each one of us is an encouragement to the others.**

2. Fellowship reflects the unity we have in our Worship of Christ

- › Ephesians 4:1-6 - ¹I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, ²with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, ³eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. ⁴There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— ⁵one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.
- › When we gather to worship, we demonstrate the unity that brings us together in the fellowship. Our worship of the one God, the one hope, the one body, the one spirit.
- › **We must be radically aggressive in preserving unity. This means ample and lavish forgiveness, and it means loving confrontation at times. But this partnership, the fellowship, must not have a barrier, or our worship together will suffer.**

3. Fellowship is a witness to the watching world.

- › Acts 2:43-47 - ⁴³And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. ⁴⁴And all who believed were together and had all things in common. ⁴⁵And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. ⁴⁶And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, ⁴⁷praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

- › Christ built His church to show the glory of His Gospel of reconciliation to a world in desperate need of reconciliation.
- › A supernatural community in Christ. This is the gospel purpose of a church. Build one another up with the word. See lives transformed by the gospel. To reach our communities as a beacon of hope. True fellowship in Christ reveals the gospel to a watching world.
- › **We must keep Christ and the gospel as the center of our fellowship. If our conversation in the body becomes distracted by events, news, sports, we risk losing the unity that comes in the trust of fellowship in Christ. Where else will people hear and experience the fellowship of Christ expected in the church? Where else do you expect the conversation to be about what the Lord is doing in our lives? Fight the temptation to small talk. Fight for true gospel fellowship by keeping Christ at the center.**

4. Fellowship is the true spirit of all ministry

- › When we serve in a service team, such as a greeter, musician, or nursery worker, we're doing this in the spirit of fellowship with one another.
- › The danger is that many times positions become self-fulfilling. They become about status, and this defeats the nature of fellowship.
- › Also, when fellowship is the focus of our service, you're happy to step out of a ministry and let someone else serve. To allow them to serve or minister to the body. In other words, territories are antithetical to Christian fellowship.
- › **We must remember that the fellowship we share is the reason we serve. To come under one another, to serve. It creates a willingness to serve that comes from a heart of personal ministry to each other.**

5. Fellowship erases boundaries in worship.

Eph 4:5 - ⁵one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

- › The true fellowship of the church is in Christ Jesus. It's not based on ethnicity, social class, education, age, or even spiritual maturity.
- › The true fellowship in Christ should reflect the demographics of the community in which it is in. Because any other division is a hindrance to gospel fellowship.
- › How else will someone experience supernatural reconciliation that is the Gospel, unless the fellowship they experience is based solely upon Christ and His resurrection?
- › **We pray that our body demonstrates the reconciling power of the gospel to all the nations, that our fellowship is founded in Christ.** We must not be a church that is demographically homogeneous. In other words, we must be a diverse body of different ages, ethnicities, and social classes. And for some of us, that's going to make us uncomfortable.