

# The Habit of Fellowship

August 13, 2017

Acts 2:40-47

Just how important is fellowship?

For an infant, in this case fellowship being physical touch, it's often a matter of life and death. "For instance in the 1980's by ages six to twelve, levels of the stress hormone cortisol were still much higher in children who had lived in orphanages for more than eight months than in those who were adopted at or before the age of four months, according to a study from Development and Psychopathology. Other work has shown that children who experienced early deprivation also had different levels of oxytocin and vasopressin (hormones that have been linked to emotion and social bonding)."<sup>1</sup>

"Touch can ease pain, lift depression and even possibly increase the odds that a team will win. But touch is even more vital than this; babies who are not held and nuzzled and hugged enough will literally stop growing and-if the situation lasts long enough, even if they are receiving proper nutrition-die. Researchers discovered this when trying to figure out why some orphanages had infant mortality rates around 30-40%. We now know that orphanages are not a place for infants-babies aged zero to five, is they simply do not receive enough stimulation in group residential care to develop to the fullest of their capacities."<sup>2</sup>

Therefore, fellowship in this case is of the utmost importance. It's important here, important in our families, our job and God's Church.

*And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation." Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. 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, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved*

**Acts 2:40-47**

The closest word that we have to describe what is going on in Acts 2 is "fellowship", but even that comes short.

*Koinonia* is a Greek word that occurs 20 times in the Bible. *Koinonia's* primary meaning is "fellowship, sharing in common, communion." The first occurrence of *koinonia* is Acts 2:42, "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer." Christian fellowship is a key aspect of the Christian life. Believers in Christ are to come together in love, faith, and encouragement. That is the essence of *koinonia*.<sup>3</sup>

Look at how the word "fellowship" is used in 1 John. "This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and 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 Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin". **1 John 1:5-7**

The word fellowship here before it was translated into English, you guessed it, *Koinonia*. This helps us see that "fellowship" can include a casual talk and/or get together, but in fact, it talks about an ongoing, growing relationship.

*Koinonia* therefore is fellowship between us and God and then is used to describe that which should take place between believers. The nature of *Koinonia* is, "an interactive relationship between God and believers who are

<sup>1</sup> <https://scientificamerican.com/article/infant-touch>

<sup>2</sup> <https://psychologytoday.com/blog/born-love/201003/touching-empathy>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gotquestions.org/koinonia.html>

sharing new life through Christ. The Greek word captures the entirety of this relationship. It involves **active participation** in Christian community sharing in spiritual blessings and giving material blessings. Gentile believers in Macedonia had nothing in common with the Jewish believers in Jerusalem except Christ"<sup>4</sup>

As Believers and followers of Christ, He is our common bond.

Acts 2 is the first New Testament occurrence of the word "fellowship" (Koinonia); we see what this all entails in the few verses.

Meet...Eat...Pray...Study...Serve...On mission.

The above words describe what the New Testament Church does/is to do.

What about me, how am I "fellowshipping" in this manner?

*Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labor. For if they fall, one will lift up his companion. But woe to him who is alone when he falls, for he has no one to help him up. Again, if two lie down together, they will keep warm; but how can one be warm alone? Though one may be overpowered by another, two can withstand him. And a threefold cord is not quickly broken.* **Ecclesiastes 4: 9-12**

"The Christian who is not \_\_\_\_\_ to a group of other believers for praying, sharing, and serving, so that he is known, as he knows others, is not an obedient Christian. He is not in the will of God. However vocal he may be in his theology, he is not obeying the Lord. What about you? Are you committed to God and His people? We need others and others need us, no matter how spiritually mature we think we may be." ~ **Ray Orland**

It comes down to a commitment to \_\_\_\_\_ and His \_\_\_\_\_ (His Church),

Fellowship with God and His Church are both a \_\_\_\_\_ and a \_\_\_\_\_.

Let us hold fast the confession of *our* hope without wavering, for He who promised *is* faithful. And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as *is* the manner of some, but exhorting *one another*, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

**Hebrews 10:23-25**

I must be a \_\_\_\_\_ Believer.

When I don't show up or give of myself, I miss out and so do others.

As iron sharpens iron, so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend.

**Proverbs 27:17**

Sparks will happen, but overtime we will be sharpened. As a part of this, true Believers offer encouragement and love. Love comes often as appreciation, encouragement and a lending ear and at times, as Godly accountability.

Sometimes we don't want to fellowship with other Believers because we are not truly walking with God. If I am walking with God, I will want to be with other Believers and at other times, when we don't desire, we are to choose to.

**Prayer Focus:**

**-Do I know God? Do I have fellowship with Him?**

**-What is my commitment to God and more specifically His Church? Is my approach lackadaisical, ho hum or committed?**

**-Will I commit to God and His Church, to have ongoing fellowship in the good, bad and ugly?**

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<sup>4</sup> <http://biblestudytools.com>