

# The Life of Fellowship

## Studies on 1 John

### 1. Fellowship



### **Leader's notes with answers**

#### **Introduction**

'Fellowship'! It is a word we often use, but we don't always understand what true Biblical fellowship is. We will call this series, 'The life of fellowship', as John is writing to the church to show how each one of us can experience fellowship with God and with one another. The key words in this letter are LOVE, LIGHT and LIFE. Fellowship is only possible when we walk in the light and in love, and life will flow from that kind of fellowship. Let's begin by learning more about the author of this book.

#### **Author of 1 John**

- \* What was the occupation of John before Jesus called him to follow him? Mark 1:16  
*(He was a fisherman.)*
- \* When Jesus called John and his brother Andrew how did they respond? Mark 1:20  
*(They immediately followed Jesus.)*
- \* In what way did John describe his relationship with Jesus? John 19:26, 20:2, 1 John 1:3  
*(He called himself the disciple whom Jesus loved. They must have had a close relationship.)*

Why did John call himself 'the disciple whom Jesus loved'? Perhaps it was because John loved Jesus in a closer, more intimate way than some of the other disciples and they shared wonderful fellowship together. John used the word 'love' more than any other New Testament writer. The secret of fellowship is love. When John was an old man the story is told of how he was carried into church each Sunday and when asked to speak he would always repeat the phrase, 'little children love one another.'

#### **Purpose of 1 John**

- \* What are some of the reasons why John wrote this letter? 1 John 2:1, 5:13  
*(He is writing this so God's people would know that if they sinned they could still come back to the Lord and receive forgiveness. Secondly he wrote to assure them that they had received eternal life.)*
- \* However what was the main reason John gave at the beginning of his letter? 1 John 1:3  
*(The main reason John wrote was to share what he had seen and heard, so that they could have fellowship together, and they could have fellowship with the Father and Jesus, His Son.)*

John is wanting us to know what real fellowship is and how we can live together in fellowship. That kind of fellowship is characterized by love.

### 1. **WHAT IS CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP?**    1 John 1:1-3

- \* The word fellowship is widely used and it simply means 'something we share in common with another person.'

If we are going to have Christian fellowship, what will we share in common? 1 John 1:3, 1 Corinthians 1:9  
*(We must share a relationship with the Father and the Son.)*

- \* What does Christian fellowship do for us? Hebrews 10:24, 25  
*(It encourages us and stirs up our faith so we love the Lord more and want to live for him.)*



A group of Christians meet at a café. They discuss topics like sports, food and the latest news. As they leave one says, "That was wonderful Christian fellowship." Was that really Christian fellowship? Share your thoughts.

## **MAINTAINING CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP 1 John 1:5 – 2:2**

- \* What condition does John give for us to have true fellowship with one another? What does this really mean? 1 John 1:7  
*(The condition that John gives is that we walk in the light. This means we will be open and honest with one another, we will not hold grudges but will quickly forgive others and say sorry when we are wrong.)*
- \* What are the four consequences of not walking in the light? 1 John 1:6-9  
*(If we do not walk in the light we will:*
  - *Not be living by the truth*
  - *Not have fellowship with one another*
  - *Not receive forgiveness ourselves*
  - *Be deceiving ourselves)*



Some people won't join others for fellowship at a church as they say they can have a relationship with God in their homes. Discuss your thoughts. Also see 1 John 3:10, 4:20, 21, Hebrews 10:25

- \* The promises given in 1 John 1:7-8 and 2:1-2 are for believers. How can these verses help us accept God's forgiveness in our daily lives?  
*(These promises give us the assurance that we can come back to the Lord at any time and ask forgiveness. Although we may feel disappointed with ourselves for failing him, his promises are true, despite how we feel.)*

## **Conclusion**

When we come to Christ and receive His forgiveness, we come into fellowship with our Heavenly Father. Now we are part of God's family and can have fellowship with others who are believers. However John is showing that to continually experience that fellowship we need to walk in the light and be willing to forgive others. As the saying goes, "The fellowship of the forgiven, should be a forgiving fellowship."