

LIFE WITHIN THE FELLOWSHIP



2. More on Fellowship

In our previous study we learnt about life within the fellowship. When we ask Jesus into our lives we become sons and daughters of God, and members of his family. This means we are brothers and sisters through the Lord Jesus Christ. A human family cares for one another and spend time together. In the same way, as the family of God, we are to love one another and spend time in fellowship. We discovered that it is good to have fellowship often, and it is important to set aside a day each week to honour the Lord. Where should we meet for fellowship, and what do we do when we meet together?

A. The Place to Fellowship

There is a wonderful promise in Matthew 18:19-20. Jesus says that whenever there are two or three believers meeting in his name, he is there with us. So whether we meet in a coffee shop, a home, or in a park, Jesus will be there. The early Christians had fellowship in many different places – in the temple courts, by the riverside, in a prison and in their homes. Really we can have fellowship anywhere!

1. In our homes

Although we can meet anywhere for fellowship, one of the best places is in our homes. The early Christians often did this, sharing a meal and worshipping the Lord. Acts 2:46. Not only that, they often had their Sunday services in each other's homes too. Acts 5:42, 16:40, Philemon 1-2

2. Special meeting places

Today people often think of a building where Christians meet as the church. However the church described in the Bible is not a building, but God's people. We are the church, whether we meet in a home, a park or a special building. Ephesians 2:19-22

It is certainly not wrong to have a place set apart to worship! In the Old Testament God's people had a Temple, which was beautifully made and dedicated to the glory of God. He had put it into the hearts of David and Solomon to build this Temple, and God's presence filled the place. We are now called the temple of the Holy Spirit, as he lives in us! This is why we can meet anywhere to worship, but it is a blessing to have a place set apart for this purpose, so more people can gather to worship God.

B. The Purpose of Fellowship

What do we do when we meet together for fellowship? It is important we understand what to do and why we do it. Let's look back at the early Church and see what we can learn from them. Read Acts 2:41-47.

1. To praise God v47

The early Christians worshipped the Lord when they met, and this is an important part of our time together.

2. To pray v42

Secondly, they prayed together. Jesus said that when two or three agree about anything in prayer, it will be done by his Father in Heaven. There are many accounts in the book of Acts of the believers praying together. See Acts 4:24, 31, Acts 12:12

3. To listen to God's Word v42

Another important part of our time together is to listen to God's Word. The Word of God is the foundation of our faith and the source of truth. These early Christians were so hungry for God's Word that they spent as much time as they could listening to the apostles teach.

4. To break bread together v42, 46

It was during the Passover meal that Jesus broke bread and took the cup, and gave it to his disciples, explaining to them that these represented his body and blood. Jesus had told them to do this to remember him. We call it communion or the Lord's Supper. As we can see in Acts 2 these believers did that often, as they shared a meal together.

5. To care for one another v44-45

These early believers shared what they had with one another, so that everyone had what they needed. When we meet together we are to care for one another too. At times it may be to meet a physical need, or to pray and encourage one another.

6. To allow the Holy Spirit to move v43, 47

God wants to minister to us by the power of his Spirit and so we need to be sensitive to what he is wanting to do when we meet together. There may be a prophetic word or a word of knowledge that he gives someone to share. Perhaps there are sick people among us who need prayer for healing. When we allow the Holy Spirit to move, people will be encouraged and built up. 1 Corinthians 14:26

C. The Reason for Fellowship

There are many reasons why fellowship is important, but one of the main ones is found in Hebrews 3:13 and 10:24-25. It is so we can encourage one another!

The Apostle Paul tells us that we need to continue meeting for fellowship, even more so as we see the return of Jesus drawing closer. We are living in those days! And Jesus warned that in those days many will fall away, so let's be diligent to meet often and encourage one another. We belong together as one family, the family of God.