



VIII. THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE CHURCH

A. Fellowship Defined

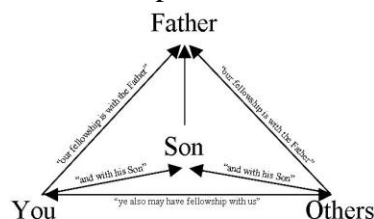
1. In parts
 - a. The word *fellowship* is made up of two parts.
 - b. Defining each part of the word helps define the overall word.
 - c. The word *fellow* is found in various forms in the word of God.
 - (1) It is found in its singular form twenty-eight times (see Exodus 2:13; Judges 7:13-14, 22; 1 Kings 22:27; Jonah 1:7; Matthew 26:61, 71; Luke 22:59; Luke 23:2; Acts 18:13; Acts 22:22).
 - (2) It is found in its plural form thirteen times (see Judges 18:25; Psalm 45:7; Isaiah 44:11; Daniel 2:13, 18; Daniel 7:20; Zechariah 3:8; Matthew 11:16; Acts 17:5; Hebrews 1:9).
 - (3) It is found as part of a compound word forty-four times.
 - d. The word *ship* appears in various forms throughout scripture. The *Online Etymology Dictionary* defines it as the state/condition of being.
2. As a whole
 - a. More than breaking of bread (Acts 2:42)
 - b. Involves being yoked together (2 Corinthians 6:14)
 - c. Has a connection to work (2 Corinthians 8:4; Galatians 2:9)
 - d. Is founded in doctrine (Philippians 1:5)
 - e. Has to do with being in agreement (1 John 1:7; 2 Corinthians 6:16)
 - f. “The ‘fellowship of believers’ is a busy-ness in which believers work together as partners ‘in the gospel,’ doing so for (and with) their Saviour.”—from *Fellowship with Him* by Daryl Coats

B. Foundations for Fellowship

1. Fellowship in doctrine (Philippians 1:5)
2. Fellowship in service (2 Corinthians 8:4; Galatians 2:9)

C. Basics of Fellowship

1. Fellowship is internal (1 John 1:3)
 - a. Believer to believer (Romans 15:5-6; Galatians 2:9)
 - b. Believer to Christ
 - c. Pyramid of fellowship



Fellowship Pyramid

1 John 1:3



2. Attacks are internal—If fellowship is internal, it makes sense that fellowship can only be destroyed internally (consider Acts 20:28-30).
3. Formula of fellowship—Fellowship begins with the new birth, continues by doctrine, and works by unity in heart and service.

D. Fellowship in Doctrine

1. Fellowship requires a foundation (Amos 3:3).
2. The foundation must be common. For scriptural fellowship, the foundation ought to be the Lord and His word.

E. Fellowship in Service

1. Should involve a common purpose; The common biblical purpose for all we do is to bring glory to God.
 - a. God cares for His glory (Isaiah 42:8; Galatians 1:5; Ephesians 3:21; Philippians 4:20; 1 Timothy 1:17; 2 Timothy 4:18; 1 Peter 5:11; 2 Peter 3:18; Jude 1:25; Revelation 1:6).
 - b. All things are for Him (Colossians 1:16; Revelation 4:11).
 - c. His glory is our purpose (Matthew 5:16; John 11:4; John 21:19; 1 Corinthians 6:20; 1 Corinthians 10:31).
2. Should involve common methods (see Acts 15:36-41)

F. Fellowship Broken and Restored

1. Types of offense
 - a. Private
 - (1) The offense
 - a) A matter of sin that has not been made known to the body.
 - b) A personal issue involving one person or a small group.
 - (2) The correction (Matthew 18:15-17)
 - a) Go and tell the person the fault alone (Matthew 18:15).
 - b) Deal with the guilty with one or two others (Matthew 18:16).
 - c) Bring it before the church (Matthew 18:17).
 - d) Break fellowship (Matthew 18:18).
 - b. Public
 - (1) The offense
 - a) A matter of sin that has been made known publicly.
 - b) A matter of sin that was committed publicly.
 - c) A matter of sin that affects the body.
 - (2) The correction
 - a) Attempt to correct the problem with the individual or group, taking appropriate steps of resolution.
 - b) Removal—If the individual or group will not correct the wrong, they must be removed.
2. Calls for discipline (Romans 16:17; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; Galatians 1:6-9; 1 Thessalonians 5:14; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15; 1 Timothy 6:1-5; Titus 3:9-11)



3. Means of discipline
 - a. Correction (1 Timothy 5:20; Titus 1:13)
 - b. Removal (1 Corinthians 5:4-7, 13; Titus 3:10-11)
4. Purpose of discipline
 - a. Instruction—The root of the word *discipline* is disciple which means to teach. Discipline instructs not only the offender but the witnesses.
 - b. Restoration (Galatians 6:1)
5. Preventative maintenance
 - a. Screenings should take place before someone unites with a body.
 - b. Careful promotions from within
 - c. Continuous Bible preaching

IX. THE FINANCES OF THE CHURCH

A. Giving in the Church Age

1. In the early church
 - a. None lacked (Acts 4:34). Contrast this thought with the message of 2 Thessalonians 3:10-12 and 1 Timothy 5:8.
 - b. Many sold houses and lands (Acts 4:34).
 - c. The price was laid at the apostles' feet (Acts 4:34-35).
 - d. Distribution was made to those in need (Acts 4:35).
 - e. Examples (Acts 4:36-37; Acts 5:1-11)
2. In the maturity of the church
 - a. With simplicity (Romans 12:8)
 - b. Upon the first day of the week (1 Corinthians 16:2)
 - c. As God prospered (1 Corinthians 16:2)
 - d. As purposed in the heart (2 Corinthians 9:7)
 - e. Cheerfully (2 Corinthians 9:7)
 - f. According to ability (Acts 11:29)
 - g. Proportionally (2 Corinthians 8:12)
 - h. Note: All things considered, it is obvious God desires for us to give a percentage of our increase. The *tithe* is a good starting place, but should not be the end. In fact, the Pauline epistles show it is crucial not that we just give, but that we do so with the right heart!

B. Support for the Work of God

1. Old Testament seed
 - a. Abraham refused Sodom's gift (Genesis 14:17-24).
 - b. Elisha refused gifts from Naaman (2 Kings 5:9-19).
2. New Testament principle (3 John 1:7)
3. Practical thoughts
 - a. The work of the Lord is to be supported by the giving of God's people.
 - b. If this is the case, much of the money supporting churches today is unscriptural (i.e., fundraisers, government grants, bank loans).



X. THE FUTURE OF THE CHURCH

A. Its Success in Calling Out a People

1. A change in dealings
 - a. The nation of Israel
 - (1) Began in Abraham (Genesis 12:1-2)
 - (2) Continued through Stephen (Acts 7)
 - b. A people out of the Gentiles
 - (1) Began in Cornelius (Acts 15:6-14)
 - (2) Continues through the church age (Revelation 3:20)
 - c. The change
 - (1) A nation out of a people—Israel out of Abraham
 - (2) A people out of nations
2. A change in association
 - a. People of God by birth—Israel was God’s people by natural birth.
 - b. People of God by new birth
 - (1) By nature, we are the children of wrath (Ephesians 2:1-3).
 - (2) We are the people of God by a new birth (John 1:12; John 3:1-7).
3. Calling out a people
 - a. Without any bias (Ephesians 2:11-22)
 - b. With no difference (Acts 15:9; Romans 3:22; Romans 10:12-13)
 - c. With one message (Acts 15:11; 1 Corinthians 15:1-4; Ephesians 2:8-9)
4. A marvellous success
 - a. As witnessed in the early church (Acts 6:1, 7; Acts 9:31)
 - b. As witnessed in Paul’s epistles (Colossians 1:6, 23)
 - c. As witnessed in heaven (Revelation 5:9)

B. Its Glory in Heavenly Places

1. Its presentation—We will be presented to Christ (2 Corinthians 4:14; 2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:27; Colossians 1:22, 28; Jude 1:24).
2. Its position
 - a. A joint-heir (Romans 8:17)
 - b. Glory (Romans 8:18; 2 Corinthians 4:17; 1 Peter 5:1)
 - c. Glorified bodies
 - (1) Like Christ (1 John 3:1-2; Psalm 17:15; Philippians 3:21)
 - (2) Bearing the image of the heavenly (1 Corinthians 15:45-55)
 - (3) Putting off our tabernacle (2 Peter 1:13-15)
 - (4) Being clothed upon (2 Corinthians 5:1-4)
3. Its plans
 - a. The rapture (1 Thessalonians 4:15-17)
 - b. The judgment seat of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:10-11; 1 Corinthians 3:11-15)
 - c. The second coming
 - d. The kingdom (2 Timothy 2:12; Luke 19:11-27)
 - e. Eternity (1 Thessalonians 4:17; Revelation 21-22)