

We R2B a people of Fellowship

Acts 2:42-47

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Introduction

What do you think of when you hear the word “fellowship?” Be honest... FOOD? (Fellowship of the Ring)?? I grew up in a tradition where fellowship meant “potluck.”

When I was a child, we didn’t believe in luck, so we called it “pot faith.” Homemade rolls, casseroles, literally “all you can eat!” Revivals, food every night... “Eat more, hun, your too skinny!”

Fellowship is about so much more than food.

Highlight: The word “fellowship” (*koinonia*) speaks to a deep sense of community, sharing, and mutual support. The early believers intentionally spent time together, building relationships, and caring for one another’s needs. A healthy church fosters genuine connection and a sense of belonging, a sense of community and family.

Goal: Healthy Disciple in a Healthy Church.

Fellowship is a 10-letter word.

IBC, Madrid as a ship, battleship... a cruise ship...

Aircraft carrier. Think of all the aspects of a carrier... Fellow is disembarking... so we will deal only with the S-H-I-P.

1. S – Service

a. Worship (God-Focused) Service

What is your motivation for coming to church? Really?

There are lots of things we do... Worship, sing, pray, read the Word, hear the proclamation of the Word, share and fellowship... but what is the motivation behind all these actions? Is it inward focused (selfish) or outward focused (self-less). We need to be continually checking our motivation.

We are all human, and need to work on ourselves and partner with others as the Holy Spirit is working with us, and using others. To be a healthy disciple in a healthy church, we need the freedom to talk about these things... be transparent, share our feelings, even if they are not what we want... This is part of confessing our sins one to another. A safe place where we can course-correct our heart, attitudes and motivations.

In the Bible, **worship and service are intertwined**, with service as a form of worship. Romans 12:1 describes offering one's body as a living sacrifice, which is presented as a spiritual act of worship or a "reasonable service."

¹And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him. ²Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect. (Romans 12:1-2)

This highlights that serving God and serving others can be a way to worship Him. Jesus exemplified this by coming not to be served but to serve.

b. Other-Focused Service Mutual Care and Support: One Another

- Fellowship involves practical care for one another's needs, whether they are physical, emotional, or spiritual.
- Members are willing to help each other in times of crisis, offer assistance, and bear one another's burdens.

Dear brothers and sisters, if another believer is overcome by some sin, you who are godly should gently and humbly help that person back onto the right path. And be careful not to fall into the same temptation yourself. ²Share each other's burdens, and in this way obey the law of Christ. ³If you think you are too important to help someone, you are only fooling yourself. You are not that important. (Galatians 6:1-3)

- This demonstrates the love of Christ in tangible ways.

For you have been called to live in freedom, my brothers and sisters. But don't use your freedom to satisfy your sinful nature. Instead, use your freedom to serve one another in love. (Galatians 5:13)

God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another. (1 Peter 4:10)

c. Social Service (Social Ministry Team)

In the Book of Acts, the early church actively served its community through teaching, fellowship, sharing resources, and prayer. They devoted themselves to the apostles' teachings, gathered for meals and prayer, and shared their possessions to help those in need. This sense of community and mutual support led to a positive reputation and the growth of the church.

They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity— ⁴⁷all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved. (Acts 2:46-47)

It is the responsibility of the church to evangelize, disciple and nurture people in the Kingdom. Yet, from the command of Jesus, it is also the responsibility of the church to love their neighbor and their neighborhood. Churches should be seen as lovers of their community and neighborhoods.

Summary: Authentic and Vulnerable Sharing:

- Members feel safe to share their joys, struggles, weaknesses, and victories with one another.
- There's a culture of openness and honesty, where people can be their true selves without fear of judgment.

- This vulnerability fosters deeper connections and allows for mutual support and encouragement.
- This begins in the church, but extends out to our families, communities, city, country, and the world.

2. H - Heart (Help)

a. Encouragement and Edification

Believers actively encourage one another in their faith journey.

²⁴ Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. ²⁵ And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near. (Hebrews 10:24-25)

- Fellowship provides opportunities for sharing testimonies, insights from Scripture, and words of affirmation that build each other up.
- SMALL GROUPS - LIFE GROUPS...!!!!
- This contributes to the spiritual growth and maturity of the members.

b. Unity and Harmony

- Despite differences in backgrounds and perspectives, there's a commitment to unity in Christ.

Is there any encouragement from belonging to Christ? Any comfort from his love? Any fellowship together in the Spirit? Are your hearts tender and compassionate? ² Then make me truly happy by agreeing wholeheartedly with each other, loving one another, and working together with one mind and purpose. (Philippians 2:1-2)

- Healthy fellowship involves a willingness to forgive, reconcile, and work through conflicts in a Christ-like manner.
- This unity is a powerful witness to the world.

²¹ I pray that they will all be one, just as you and I are one—as you are in me, Father, and I am in you. And may they be in us so that the world will believe you sent me. ²² “I have given them the glory you gave me, so they may be one as we are one. ²³ I am in them and you are in me. May they experience such perfect unity that the world will know that you sent me and that you love them as much as you love me. (John 17:21-23)

c. Joy and Celebration

"How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity!" (Psalm 133:1)

- Fellowship includes moments of shared joy, celebration of milestones, and expressions of gratitude.
- This creates a positive and uplifting atmosphere within the church.

d. Grief and Mourning

"Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn." (Romans 12:15)

- Fellowship includes the changes and transitions in life. Heart-care is sitting in silence and just being with people in loss, tragedy and struggle.
- This must be fostered and practiced in order to be an authentic healthy community of believers who share one another's burdens.

3. I - Intentionality (Integrity)

a. Hospitality and Inclusion

¹²Rejoice in our confident hope. Be patient in trouble, and keep on praying. ¹³ When God's people are in need, be ready to help them. Always be eager to practice hospitality. ¹⁴ Bless those who persecute you. Don't curse them; pray that God will bless them. (Romans 12:12-14)

- The church extends genuine hospitality to visitors and new members, making them feel welcomed and valued.
- There's a conscious effort to include people from diverse backgrounds and stages of life.
*** I know "inclusion" is a touchy word.... A healthy community does not shy away from difficult subjects. We honor the Word and stand by our beliefs and practices, BUT we do so in love. Personally, if I must err, I would pray I err on the side of love and with Jesus, who touched the untouchable, loved the unlovable, accepted people as they are, while showing them a better way and offering them entry into the Kingdom where hurts are healed and fresh starts are the norm. If Jesus did this to the least of these, then we R2B a people who do the same!!!
- This reflects God's inclusive love and expands the reach of the church's fellowship.

b. Shared Activities and Experiences

- Fellowship is often expressed through shared activities such as meals, social gatherings, ministry projects, and study groups.
- These shared experiences create bonds and strengthen relationships outside of formal church services.
- Doing life together fosters a deeper sense of community.

c. Prioritization of Relationships

- In a healthy church, relationships among members are valued and prioritized.
- Leaders actively foster opportunities for fellowship and model healthy relationships within the community.

4. P – Passion

Fellowship (Community & Belonging)

"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer." (Acts 2:42)

a. Passion for Authentic Community and Fellowship

- Believers genuinely love, support, and care for one another. There's a sense of belonging, mutual encouragement, and practical help within the church body.

b. Passion for Spiritual Growth Together

- Fellowship is not just social but is centered on growing in faith and understanding of God's Word (Acts 2:42).
- Bible studies, prayer groups, and discipleship relationships within the fellowship contribute to this shared spiritual journey.
- Members hold each other accountable and encourage one another to live out their faith.

c. Passion for Service and Mission Together

- A healthy fellowship often extends beyond the church walls into the community through shared acts of service and mission (Acts 2:44-45).
- Working together for a common purpose strengthens bonds and demonstrates the church's love for the wider world.

Conclusion

In summary, healthy fellowship in the Church is characterized by authenticity, mutual care, encouragement, unity, hospitality, shared experiences, a focus on spiritual growth, collaborative service, joy, and a prioritization of meaningful relationships. These aspects work together to create a strong, supportive, and vibrant community that reflects the love of Christ.