

Truth

Magazine

*Taking His hand,
helping each other home.*



®

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FELLOWSHIP IN THE GOSPEL

**“They were continually
devoting themselves to the
apostles’ teaching and to
fellowship, to the breaking
of bread and to prayer”**

(Acts 2:42).



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The Joys of Fellowship

by Mark Mayberry

This issue of *Truth Magazine* focuses on fellowship. Although the concept is often misapplied and misunderstood, the blessings of biblical fellowship are rich and rewarding.

Introduction

In the theme section of this issue, we focus on fellowship. In the NT, this concept is communicated by the Greek word *koinōnia*, which refers to joint participation in a common bond. Please note that the nature of the bond is significant. Husbands and wives share in the joys and responsibilities of the marital relationship (Gen. 2:18-24; 1 Pet. 3:7). Friends share in their mutual affection and combined interests (Prov. 18:24; 1 Sam. 18:1-6) while criminals share in their evil exploitations (Prov. 1:8-19).

The fellowship that we share with God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit is a blessing beyond compare. While the Lord's church has been repeatedly troubled over various issues that have strained or severed fellowship (such as the schism that occurred in the 1850s over instrumental music and the missionary society, the division that occurred in the 1950s over institutionalism, the sponsoring church arrangement and the social gospel, or the controversy over marriage, divorce and remarriage that erupted in the 80s and 90s), yet the fellowship that we share with brethren is a joyful interaction that helps us go to heaven.

The Blessings of Fellowship

The Psalmist penned a beautiful tribute to the joys of human fellowship:

Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious oil upon the head, coming down upon the beard,

even Aaron's beard, coming down upon the edge of his robes. It is like the dew of Hermon coming down upon the mountains of Zion; for there the LORD commanded the blessing—life forever (Ps. 133:1-3).

Contemplate the lyrics of “Blest Be the Tie That Binds,” the beloved hymn published by John Fawcett in 1782:

Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love; the fellowship of kindred minds is like to that above. Before our Father's throne, we pour our ardent prayers; our fears, our hopes, our aims are one, our comforts, and our cares. We share our mutual woes, our mutual burdens bear; and often for each other flows the sympathizing tear. When we asunder part, it gives us inward pain; but we shall still be joined in heart, and hope to meet again.

Still, the blessings of divine fellowship are even greater. Paul's greatest aim was to know Christ and be found in Him adorned with a righteousness that permits continued fellowship (Phil. 3:7-10). We enjoy both forms of fellowship (human and divine) through the mediatorial work of Jesus Christ (Gal. 3:19-22; 1 Tim. 2:3-6) and our shared commitment to the inspired apostolic message:

What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life—and the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us—what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with

us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. These things we write, so that our joy may be made complete (1 John 1:1-4).

The Word of Life (i.e., Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Son of God) was manifested: “The Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14). The truths that Jesus personified and preached must be courageously and clearly proclaimed (Heb. 2:12). May we, therefore, fulfill Paul's mandate, “Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things, for as you do this you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you” (1 Tim. 4:16). We should also heed John's warning: “Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God; the one who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son” (2 John 9).

Faithful Christians preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace by manifesting a proper spirit toward one another (Eph. 4:1-3), and evidencing a profound respect for the revealed pattern (Eph. 4:4-6). Therefore, let us love one another (1 John 4:7), speaking the truth in love (Eph. 4:15), and being obedient to that form of teaching to which we are committed (Rom. 6:17-18).

Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the

Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all (Eph. 4:1-6).

The Conditionality of Fellowship

At the dedication of the temple, Solomon recognized the blessing and burden of divine fellowship. Worshipers must be mindful of the Lord's grandeur. Wickedness culminates in condemnation while righteousness results in reward (2 Chron. 6:18-23).

What requisite attitudes and actions does the Lord require of those with whom He shares fellowship? We must be contrite and humble (Isa. 57:15). As David stated, we must walk with integrity, work righteousness, and speak the truth in our hearts (Ps. 15:1-5). As John affirmed, we must walk in the light of God's revealed word (1 John 1:5-7).

For thus says the high and exalted One who lives forever, whose name is Holy, "I dwell on a high and holy place, and also with *the contrite and lowly of spirit* in order to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite" (Isa. 57:15).

O LORD, who may abide in Your tent? Who may dwell on Your holy hill? He who walks with integrity, and works righteousness, and speaks truth in his heart. He does not slander with his tongue, nor does evil to his neighbor, nor takes up a reproach against his friend; in whose eyes a reprobate is despised, but who honors those who fear the LORD; he swears to his own hurt and does not change; he does not put out his money at interest, nor does he take a bribe against the innocent. He who does these things will never be shaken (Ps. 15:1-5).

This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is

in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin (1 John 1:5-7).

The darkest time of history occurred when Jesus was betrayed, arrested, and illegally tried—subjected to mockery, scourging and crucifixion (Luke 22:52-53; 23:44-49). Sadly, when we choose the path of neglect and willful rebellion, this tragedy is repeated on a personal level (Heb. 6:1-8; 10:19-31).

Fellowship with God is conditioned upon our walking in the light. However, He will abandon us if we are filled with foreign influences, false religious concepts, and covetous longings (Isa. 2:5-8; 1 John 1:5-7). Since Jesus Christ brings light to this shadowland of sin (Isa. 9:1-3; John 8:12), let us lay aside the deeds of darkness, put on the armor of light, and walk as children of light (Rom. 13:11-14; Eph. 5:6-14).

Conclusion

Faithful disciples walk in the light of God's countenance—honoring and upholding righteousness, justice, lovingkindness and truth (Ps. 89:14-16). However, the wicked walk in darkness, having no understanding, lacking all foundation (Ps. 82:5; Isa. 59:1-10). While darkness may seem to prevail in the present, it cannot endure. In the Old Testament era, God employed powerful nations to punish His wayward people, and subsequently judged those nations for their own evils. The Most High still rules over the realm of mankind—raising up and casting down (Jer. 4:11-13; Hab. 1:6). Even in such distressing times, the righteous enjoy stability, experiencing the wealth of salvation, sharing in the treasure of God's knowledge and wisdom (Isa. 33:1-16). **T**



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The Earthquake When Jesus Died

by Kyle Pope

Evidence of God is seen in the created world and in His special revelation (Ps. 19; Rom. 1:18-20). While skeptics revile Christianity as unscientific, the testimony of Sacred Scripture is supported by science, history, and archaeology.

Introduction

In recent years, geological research on sediments from the Dead Sea appears to show evidence of the earthquake recorded in Matthew. While the validity of Scripture is not dependent upon scientific confirmation, such evidence shows, yet again, that biblical accounts are historically accurate.

The Bible records many dramatic events that took place in connection with the death and resurrection of Jesus. While on the cross, “from the sixth hour until the ninth hour there was darkness over all the land” (Matt. 27:45; cf. Mark 15:33; Luke 23:44). Upon His death, “the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split” (Matt. 27:51; cf. Mark 15:38; Luke 23:45, NKJV). When this happened, Matthew tells us that tombs were opened and some of the dead were resurrected back to life and appeared within the city (Matt. 27:52-53). Upon the resurrection of Jesus, “there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it” (Matt. 28:2). Are these accounts merely examples of literary hyperbole, or did these things really happen?

Those who believe in the atoning death and resurrection of Jesus and the divine inspiration of the Bible have no problem answering this question. Yes, they really happened! When God in the flesh laid down His life as a sacrifice for sin and then overcame death, nature itself was moved in response to that event. Nevertheless, for those who have not yet

come to recognize these tenets of faith, in recent years, researchers have made some intriguing discoveries which appear to show that nature bears further witness to the reality of these events.

Dead Sea Sediments

In December 2011, geologist Jefferson B. Williams (in association with other researchers) published an article in *International Geology Review* entitled “An Early First-Century Earthquake in the Dead Sea.” Williams analyzed layers of sediment deposits from the Dead Sea that are now exposed due to the continuing drop in the water level of the lake occurring over the last centuries. The surface elevation of the Dead Sea is now 427 meters (or about 1370 ft) below sea level. In the past, it was 250 meters (or about 800 ft) higher. This drop has left visible layers of striation all around the rim of the lake, similar to formations called “Spanish Skirts” in canyons in the American Southwest. Most often these layers of sediment deposits form smooth straight lines, but an earthquake leaves a jagged layer that can be seen and analyzed for material within the deposit.

Williams worked in Ein Gedi, on the western side of the Dead Sea. His study built upon earlier work by German geologist Claudia Migowski, who had successfully correlated evidence of twenty-eight historically documented earthquakes to layers in the sediment deposits. These ranged from 140 BC to AD 1458. She utilized (as do most geologists) what are known as earthquake catalogs that compile dates

from historical sources documenting when various earthquakes occurred. Often these catalogs draw upon previous catalogs, but do not always reveal the sources used. In 2004, Migowski had first identified a sediment layer showing evidence of an earthquake in AD 33 but had not addressed the historical source for the entry in the catalogs. Williams further studied the sediment deposits, and also sought to determine the historical source for the catalog entry. To his surprise, the only historical source he could find was Matthew 27:51.

It is unclear what his actual religious beliefs are, but Williams was not pushing a religious agenda. He is a geologist. In his study, Williams cited a 1983 work by Colin Humphreys and W. G. Waddington that estimated the likely date of the crucifixion on April 3, AD 33, based on astronomical calculations of the lunar cycles. However, Williams did not assign an exact date to the time of the earthquake. He estimated it could have been between AD 26-36 (based on Roman sources regarding the rule of Pontius Pilate). The layers themselves, as revealed in the study, seemed to narrow this closer to AD 33, but he was probably being cautious in realizing how that could be seen within the scientific world.

A few months after his article was published, popular media reported on his study drawing from an article in *Discovery News* with titles such as, “Quake Reveals Day of Jesus’ Crucifixion, Researchers Believe” (NBC), “Jesus’ Crucifixion Date Possibly Friday April 3, 33 AD, According to Earthquake Study” (*Huffington Post*), or “Day of

Jesus' Crucifixion Believed Determined" (NBC). Sadly, such specific claims about his study damaged his reputation among secularists in his field. He became ostracized and violently attacked.

His study had merely explored the evidence. He had treated the text of Matthew as a historical source, not as an inspired text. Even so, the very fact that his evidence might correlate with the biblical record led some to view him as an outcast. He felt compelled to clarify his position. *Bible History Daily*, an online posting of the Biblical Archaeology Society, ran an article entitled, "Is Jesus' Crucifixion Reflected in Soil Deposition?" Williams was allowed to add a postscript to it clarifying his position and charging *Discovery News* with having "grossly misrepresented our work." Ultimately, he explained himself in an almost New Age type feature-length documentary entitled *Crucifixion Quake*, but the reaction to his work revealed just how aggressive opponents of faith can be toward anything that serves to reinforce the claims of Scripture.

Conclusion

If the sediment layers Williams and Migowski identified at Ein Gedi do, in fact, show evidence of the earthquake and its aftershock as described in Matthew, it doesn't prove that Jesus was resurrected from the dead. Each of us must confront the inspired text of Scripture, evaluate its claims, consider the evidence, and choose to believe in things we were not present to witness. "Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). What studies of geology or archaeology show is that the accounts of Scripture are not framed in some make-believe fantasy world that comes from the imagination; rather, they are set in a real historical context with real people and actual places. This should encourage the believer and challenge the skeptic not to reject faith so quickly. **T**

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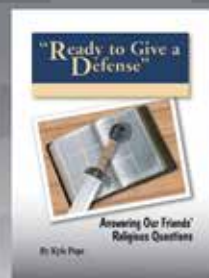
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Kyle Pope

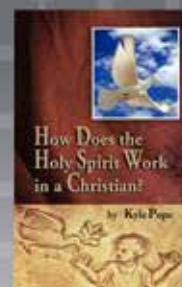
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Homeschooling Is...

by Diana Dow

In her third submission in this series, Diana examines the pros and cons of homeschooling. Those who pursue this path are making a major commitment of energy, time, and resources. Yet, the benefits outweigh the costs.

Hard work. Very difficult. Scary. A strange concept. Not for the faint of heart. Freedom. Rewarding. A privilege. An adventure. A challenge.

These are comments that were left on my social media page when I asked my friends to finish this sentence: “Homeschooling is. . .” Respondents based their opinions on their own experiences and observations. I agree with them all. Homeschooling isn’t for everyone.

I made a list of the pros and cons of homeschooling. Unsurprisingly, since I have homeschooled all my boys, my “pros” list was much longer than my “cons” list. What some people think of as a negative, I think can be turned into a positive, so it is a little difficult for me to be completely objective.

In my pros list, the word “flexibility” kept popping up. Flexibility to work around the family’s schedule, individualize each child’s instruction, delve into subjects of interest to the child, and teach my children what I think is important for them to know. Flexibility is the main reason I have continued to homeschool through high school. A teenager who is not tied to a rigid schedule and a myriad of activities can create, explore, and meditate on various subjects, hobbies, passions, and interests as they arise. He is free to pursue these as deeply as he desires. Flexibility in the younger years is important as well—allowing a child to mature physically, mentally and academically at his own pace. This freedom instills confidence and encourages natural growth without feeling the need to adhere to one-size-fits-all developmental checkpoints.

Another frequently used word in my pros list was “time”. Everyone has the same amount of time in a day. The homeschool family has control over every minute of their time. Time with family to learn about God and His world, to learn how to communicate and get along with others, to build strong bonds that will last a lifetime, and to work together serving others. Homeschool families can adjust their schedules when the new baby arrives, Grandma gets sick, Dad works the night shift, or the teenager gets his first job. The family is able to function in harmony together as their needs change.

Being flexible and having control of your family’s time sounds wonderful, but there are some cons in homeschooling. Top on my list is “money.” Parents are responsible for purchasing all the curricula, supplies, and tuition for any classes or tutoring needed.

This can get very expensive. Homeschool families recognize sacrifices will need to be made as they add these expenses to their family budget. Prayerfully considering the value and necessity of a purchase will aid in over-committing the family funds (cf. Phil. 4:6-7).

“Isolation” can be found on some cons list and is where the question, “What about socialization?” comes from. Homeschoolers do not live in isolation: many spend much of their day outside the home among the public and with fellow homeschoolers in classes, service projects, field trips, etc. The term homeschool has contributed to this misunderstanding, implying home is where learning happens. It would be more accurate to describe

what we do as *Family Education*. Learning happens with the family in a variety of locations and with a variety of people.

“Lack of opportunity” is also considered a con. While local schools have built-in opportunities allowing students to explore a wide variety of interests, committed homeschool parents seek opportunities or create them themselves. Sports teams, music classes, and robotics are examples of what parents have organized. Networking and becoming aware of the resources available in the area are essential to providing a rich banquet of opportunities. Like money, activities need to be prayerfully considered before committing to them. They can quickly consume the day and send the family down the road of rigid schedules (cf. Matt. 6:33-34).

As in any worthwhile endeavor, homeschooling can be challenging. Recognizing these challenges is the first step to success. Create your own lists and compare them side by side. Think outside the box and don’t let the negatives scare you away. To those brethren who would like to be supportive and encouraging, being aware of the struggles homeschoolers face will go a long way towards accomplishing your goal. ■



Diana Dow

Diana homeschooled her six boys for twenty-nine years. She has lived in Sinton, TX for six years with her husband, Danny, evangelist of the Borden Street church of Christ. She maintains a website about teaching Bible classes at biblesongsandmore.com and one on homeschooling and other endeavors at dandidow.com. She can be reached at dianaidow@gmail.com.

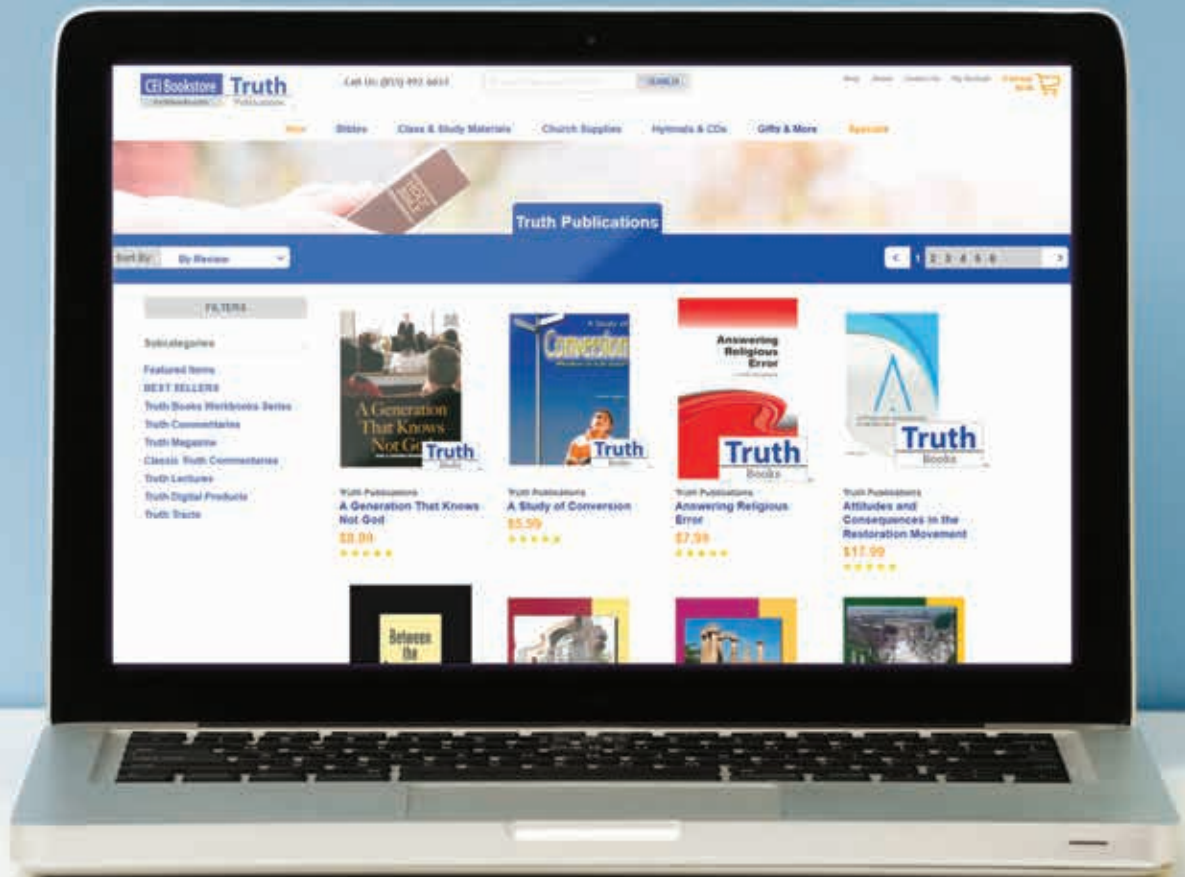
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Preaching as a Mature Man

by John Humphries

Men who dedicate their lives to preaching the gospel face challenges at each stage of development. With increasing maturity comes increased responsibility, and also additional opportunities to promote the truth and help others.

Some experienced preachers will make few moves in their preaching efforts. They will remain with a congregation for many years before they move to another work. Some may remain with a congregation until old age. Others may move every four or five years. One preacher (now departed) made the comment that a preacher may remain with a congregation until he “gives satisfaction”—and this may mean different things under different circumstances! If the preacher stays long enough to learn of various issues that need addressing, and deals with these in his lessons, his days may be numbered unless the brethren are spiritual enough to accept the truth and make the needful corrections. There may be problems with divorce and remarriage, worldliness, unscriptural ideas being sneaked in among the brethren, etc. Dealing with these can unsettle some brethren that reject the truth (Gal. 4:16).

Of course, some preachers just like to move to different places and work with a different group of brethren. Yet, the main thing is that the mature preacher is always seeking to please the Lord and help the brethren in their spiritual growth. There is also the hope and prayer that wherever he is laboring, the church will grow numerically as well as spiritually.

There may be some that have sermons for about four or five years, and will allow that to be a motivating factor to some extent in moving. The following conversation allegedly took place between two preachers some years ago. The one was telling the other (they had known each other for years) that he had

twenty years of experience in preaching. The other said to him, “No, you only have four years of experience five times because you move every four years when you run through your sermons!” They both had a laugh, so perhaps this was all in good humor. However, then there is the old tale that over a dozen preachers in the Ohio Valley, several years ago, withdrew their announcement that they were going to move when Leroy Brownlow published a new sermon outline book. These may all be apocryphal tidbits. Yet, it may also hit a nerve with some that do not study as they should and prepare their own lessons, and also improve the old outlines. They preach a lot of what used to be called “canned sermons.” Of course, preachers today would never be guilty in this area!

This suggests that even though one has a load of sermon outlines, after preaching for twenty or thirty years, there is the need to continue diligent personal study of the Scriptures and thus gaining more and deeper insight into the Word of God. This means revising, where needful, the old outlines where they may lack in depth. Preachers ought to be serious Bible students *all* of their lives.

Just as with younger preachers, mature preachers need to meet regularly with the elders (should the church have them). This helps the gospel preacher to keep abreast of any spiritual needs that should be addressed in sermons, Bible class lessons, or personal visits. There is always the need to preach what is needed, to whom it is needed, and when it is needed. The elders can help in this important

consideration in preaching timely gospel lessons.

Most preaching today is topical. Verses that relate to a particular subject are assembled and presented in an orderly and edifying fashion. Topical preaching is certainly needed to keep the brethren informed concerning the challenges of life and also growing in the grace and knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (2 Pet. 3:18). Issues may arise that need to be specifically addressed by a faithful gospel preacher.

Over the years, many distortions of the truth have appeared and divided churches across the land. In the past century, the problem of premillennialism had to be addressed by faithful brethren. The problem of institutionalism and related issues have divided churches. Many other issues, some of them more sectional than others, have caused problems in various churches. The devil is always busy looking for opportunities to trouble God’s people. We do not intend to offer a history of these problems or issues—except to note that they are many! Rather, our point is that the mature preacher and a wise eldership must keep alert, study the Scriptures, and address any issue before it causes problems in the local church (Titus 1:9; Acts 20:26-29; 2 Tim. 1:13; 4:5). Topical preaching, therefore, needs to be timely and helpful in building a strong, sound church.

Besides preaching on a particular subject, the gospel preacher should seriously consider expository preaching. Many years ago, several older and gifted

gospel preachers informed this writer that an evangelist should preach through a book of the Bible on a verse-by-verse basis now and then. This is expository preaching. This acquaints the brethren with individual books of the Bible and certainly will place a verse in its proper context. Verses that are used as a “proof text” are sometimes taken out of context and do not really deal with the point being made in a topical lesson. The wording of the verse seems to fit the subject being presented, and is thus used in the lesson. The preacher, indeed, may be teaching the truth in his sermon, but if the passage on which he is basing his argument actually deals with a different matter, he is guilty of quoting or reading it “out of context.” Expository preaching through a section of Scripture keeps a preacher from making this mistake. So, it is a good practice to preach through a book of the Bible occasionally.

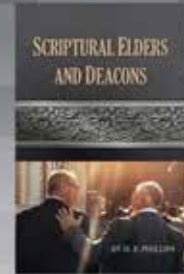
In the life of a gospel preacher, should he have a family, he will eventually have college-age children. Educational costs are high and can place a real strain on the budget. It is certainly in order for the wise family to be putting aside a college fund long before the children reach that age. This calls for financial discipline that should begin at least at the beginning of the marriage. This is not always easy to do, but preachers must do their best to set funds aside, though it may be a little each month at first. Teenagers, where appropriate, may also need to get part-time work and put aside funds for their education.

There are gifted preachers today that receive many invitations to “hold a gospel meeting” for the brethren. These men do a great job in presenting the gospel, and thus are very popular among the brethren. Yet, these experienced, mature gospel preachers have important responsibilities regarding the local church where they preach, and also family responsibilities. Thus, there is the need to balance all of this with the local church and with the needs of their own family. Some preachers have later expressed regret (because of family problems) that

they were “gone too much” and neglected their families, to their detriment. If their schedule is full, wise gospel preachers will learn when to say “no” or “perhaps later” to such invitations. Often there is an agreement between the preacher and the elders or brethren regarding how many meetings he can arrange each year. His family needs to be in on this decision as well.

While Sacred Scripture does not specifically say that Samuel was doing wrong, the text is clear that he was “busy here and there” (1 Kings 20:40) *doing the Lord’s work*, but was told, “your sons do not walk in your ways” (1 Sam. 7:15-8:5). This resulted in problems for God’s people (1 Sam. 8:7, 18). Preachers must not neglect their family responsibilities, since their wives and children, receiving proper attention, are also “*the Lord’s work*” and must be taken seriously (Eph. 6:4; Col. 3:21). Even when the children are older, they still need their father’s presence and counsel, perhaps even more than ever!

A middle-aged preacher may also be called upon to assume the responsibility of being an elder. The Bible certainly authorizes an elder to “labor in the word and doctrine” and receive “double honor” (i.e., financial support or wages) (1 Tim. 5:17-18). If a man possesses the spiritual maturity and godly character that the qualifications require in one, this should present no problems for mature brethren (1 Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; Acts 20:17-35; 1 Pet. 5:1-4; Eph. 4:11-16; Acts 11:30; 15:6). An elder that also preaches the gospel with a local church (meeting the qualifications referenced) will not abuse his opportunities in the pulpit in some inappropriate way. If he were to do such, he would disqualify himself as being worthy to preach or to be an elder! Many mature preachers serve as elders across the land today, and are doing an outstanding job of edifying the church and glorifying God. In some smaller churches, there could not even be an eldership if the preacher (assuming that he is qualified) did not serve.



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Should financial considerations present themselves when the annual budget is under review, the wise elder that is doing the preaching might consider excusing himself from that part of the budget dealing with his support. Some elderships ask the evangelist concerning his budgetary needs and then he is excused, while the matter is discussed and decided. Of course, if there are only two elders (including the preacher) then the other elder needs to get the sentiment of mature brethren, and then the eldership can come to an agreement. Of course, there may be other ways that a wise eldership can work this out. What is offered here is only a suggestion.

Some preachers are gifted with the ability to present the gospel by radio, television, or other forms of mass media. Many people, over the years, have learned the truth and have responded to the gospel through truth being presented on the radio, television, or the internet. Gospel preachers should be prepared to take advantage of such opportunities should they become available. Radio and TV air time can be very expensive and beyond the budget of the church. There are also less costly avenues on the internet that offer opportunities for the gospel preacher: Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Google Duo, Skype, etc. Gospel preachers employ these tools to make overseas calls and conduct studies with brethren and prospects regularly. Some of these programs can have multiple hook ups with teacher and students at home and abroad.

Those with the ability to write should use that talent to the glory of the Lord and the edification of others. There are periodicals that will use well-written articles that glorify the Lord and edify all who read them. The writer obviously needs to write something that is timely and useful. The article or paper must be well researched and accurate. It must be true to the Word of God and correct concerning any facts and details under consideration. To misrepresent or be inaccurate concerning an issue or an individual's position does more harm

than good. All need to write to be clearly understood, but also need to write and avoid being misunderstood. Good writers also are wise to have someone (with a good understanding of grammar) edit their article, etc. Editors can spot confusing sentences, flawed logic, wrong punctuation, incorrect references, etc. and thus help prevent the article or paper from being a disaster. Do not be too proud to ask for such help!

Mature preachers should give some thought to 2 Timothy 2:2 regarding young preachers that desire to learn, receive advice, or gain experience. If the church has the financial resources, it is a good work to have a young man (even with wife and children) come and work with an older, mature preacher and the congregation for a set period—or even for an indefinite time. Some churches have helped numerous young preachers gain experience and grow spiritually. This calls for careful thought and planning in order for there to be a truly helpful experience for the young preacher. His duties and responsibilities must be clearly defined and agreed to by all involved. The older, mature preacher must give this earnest prayer and careful thought, along with the elders and brethren, as to his role in helping to train the young evangelist. This experience can be a major factor in the prospective preacher's attitude and development as he goes forth to preach the gospel.

If the church cannot afford to support an additional evangelist, then the older, mature preacher ought to make himself available to help the young men to go grow spiritually and in their knowledge and understanding of the Bible. This means having a class for preachers (open to all) where studies in the Scriptures take place. Over the years, this writer has taken part in such classes with dozens of preachers—wherein we studied much of the Bible, as well as special timely topics, such as dispensationalism.

There have been many times when a mature preacher has sat with a younger man, answering his Bible questions, and helping him work through problems that

he has faced in preaching the gospel. Most of the issues and questions that were discussed were those that the mature preacher had faced in bygone years. Valuable experience and insight can be shared with a younger preacher that may not only save him much frustration, but also prevent his dismissal where he preaches. Such sessions can be very uplifting and valuable for a young man—helping him avoid serious pitfalls and perils.

The middle-aged preacher is at an age where his maturity and knowledge should be well in evidence—that is, if he has applied himself in study, prayer, and diligent, faithful service through the years. By this time, he ought to be aware of the talents that the Lord has given him and is ready to use them for the glory of his Lord and Master: “For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen” (Rom. 11:36). Let us, therefore, manifest the attitude of Isaiah, who said, “Here am I, send me” (Isa. 6:8). 📖



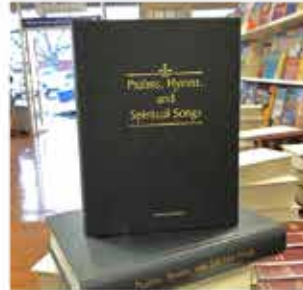
John Humphries

John has labored with churches of Christ in MD, PA, VA, NY, KY, and AL, and engaged in evangelistic efforts in numerous foreign countries, including over forty trips to India. He preached his first gospel sermon in South Carolina in 1955. He has served as an elder for churches in KY and AL. He has authored commentaries on Isaiah, Jeremiah and Lamentations for the Truth Commentary series. He currently lives in Calvert City, KY, with his wife, Edna. He can be reached at humphries.john@aol.com.

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The Importance of Truth

by Matthew Bassford

For faithful Christians, truth is foundational. We must know it, love it, live it, and speak it—in private conversation, in public proclamation, and in hymns of praise to God and edification of the saints.

Introduction

To those who love the Lord, the importance of truth cannot be overstated. The truth sets us free. We are sanctified in the truth. Jesus described Himself as the way, the truth, and the life.

Editing Hymns for Truth

It is not surprising, then, that if there is anything brethren get right about song worship, it is the truth part. Ever since the Restoration, the churches of Christ have been vigilant against error in hymns. In many cases, Christian hymnal editors have correctly amended hymns with questionable wording and excluded those that could not be salvaged.

Consider, for instance, the Fanny J. Crosby hymn, “To God Be the Glory.” As originally written, it contained the couplet,

The vilest offender who truly believes
That moment from Jesus a pardon receives.

Is this true? In Acts 2:37, the question posed by the devout Jews reveals that they have believed. If not, their earnest appeal to Peter (“What must we do?”) makes no sense. Only those who had accepted that God had made Jesus both Lord and Christ would feel the need to do anything.

Nonetheless, in the very next verse, Peter tells these newly minted believers they must repent and be baptized for the forgiveness of their sins. Whatever else happened in the moment they believed, they evidently did not receive a pardon from Jesus. We wouldn’t tolerate such

teaching in our pulpits, and we shouldn’t (and didn’t) tolerate it in our hymns either!

However, apart from that one troubling couplet, “To God Be the Glory” is a great hymn. The tune is stirring; the content is edifying and encouraging. It’s an obvious candidate for a repair job. According to brotherhood hymn expert D. J. Bulls, the hymn got the fix it needed in *Special Sacred Selections*. One of the editors, most likely Ellis Crum, rewrote it to read,

The vilest offender who truly believes
When buried with Jesus a pardon receives.

Not only does this follow the Acts 2 fact pattern (the Jews on the day of Pentecost were forgiven of their sins after baptism, not before), it also is an edit so deft as to be unnoticeable. I pay a fair amount of attention to hymn texts, but I didn’t know the alteration existed until I encountered the original online.

Even from a pure content perspective, “When buried with” is stronger than “That moment from.” The former connects with Romans 6:4, while the latter connects with nothing. The more Scripture a hymn contains, the richer and more truthful it is.

Overzealous Editing

Sadly, the history of truth-based hymn critique in the brotherhood has its share of blemishes. It is possible for editors, elders, song leaders, and even ordinary Christians to be so zealous in their “defense” of truth that they unnecessarily edit or exclude valuable hymns.

We see an example of such misdirected zeal in the *Sacred Selections* alteration of Robert Lowry’s “Christ Arose.” The chorus contains the line,

And He lives forever with His saints to reign.

There are smoother lines in the hymnal (Lowry was better as a composer than as a lyricist), but it certainly is truthful. As per 2 Timothy 2:12, we will reign with Jesus. While I don’t know exactly how the faithful will “reign with Him,” I know it will happen!

However, this unobjectionable lyric attracted the baleful eye of Ellis Crum. Brother Crum edited his hymnal with a heavy hand, particularly when it came to premillennialism. Some of the hymns needed emendation (if you’re going to include “Jesus Is Coming Soon” at all, you can’t include the line about seeing signs come to pass), but many did not. “Christ Arose” didn’t need alteration, but he altered it anyway, presumably because he was suspicious of any line that referred to the reign of Jesus in the future. The *Sacred Selections* version reads,

And He lives forever; death He overcame!

There are several problems here. It’s even more awkward than Lowry’s original, it introduces a pause in thought where there is no pause in the music (which makes the hymn harder to understand), and it replaces Lowry’s perfect rhyme (domain/reign) with an imperfect rhyme (domain/overcame). Bro. Crum made the hymn worse, and he did so unnecessarily.



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Taking His hand, helping each other home.

A Lesson for Us

All of this interests hymn geeks, no doubt, but it also holds a lesson for every one of us. Sometimes Christians appoint themselves hymn censors and approach our repertoire asking, “Can I find false doctrine in these hymns?” Often, the answer for those so inclined is “Yes.” Most of our hymns were written by authors who belonged to denominations. If we are eager to read denominational teaching into their work, we surely will find an opportunity.

However, this is not the most useful way to evaluate our song worship. If we go through deleting every hymn that *could* be understood wrongly, we also will destroy every hymn with content. Just look at the way people misunderstand the Bible! How could the work of a mere human survive such scrutiny?

Only hymns like “I’m Happy Today” will remain. Nobody thinks it teaches false doctrine, but it also doesn’t do much teaching at all, at least for anybody over the age of ten. When Scriptural ignorance is so rife among Christians, this isn’t the direction we need to be headed.

We should ask instead, “Can I sing this hymn with understanding and in good conscience?” When we do this, we are fulfilling the requirements of Scripture, and God is pleased. Is there any need for further inquiry?

This approach permits the rehabilitation of many great hymns. For example, I am reasonably sure that the last couplet of the fourth verse of “The Solid Rock” (“Dressed in His righteousness alone/Faultless to stand before the throne.”) was written to teach the Calvinist doctrine of imputed righteousness. However, that’s not the way I have to read it, and I don’t.

Instead, when I sing it, I have in mind the teaching of Galatians 3:27. Only because I have been clothed with Christ in baptism can I hope to be found righteous on the day of judgment. I don’t want God to consider my own personal righteousness at all! Because I can sing the couplet, I can sing the hymn, and the hymn is well worth singing.

Conclusion

Of course, the amount of truth in a hymn is meaningless unless it finds truth in our hearts. Biblical truth isn’t merely something we recognize externally. Rather, it’s something we must absorb internally. According to 2 Thessalonians 2:10, unless we have received the love of the truth, we cannot be saved, and that love must be evident in our worship.

We should love hymns that are filled with the truth. Nothing is more satisfying to a Christian who cherishes the Bible than singing a hymn that is scripturally rich! We must have enough integrity to

take what we sing and make it our own. God is the God of truth, not the God of our imaginations. His revelation must guide our conduct, not our think-so’s. This same truth is the truth that we must strive to impart to others, singing to teach and admonish, not by rote.

This is our task, but in order to succeed, we must have fitting tools. Hymns that clearly teach false doctrine don’t help, but neither does applying a scorched-earth strategy to our repertoire. If our zeal for truth results in our singing hymns without content, the result only can be described as bitterly ironic!

However, we can avoid this dire outcome by starting with the Scriptures. Hymnists and editors should be Scripture-centric, and so too should be church leaders and individual worshipers. Too often, hymn critics reveal not their grasp of Scripture but their ignorance. Only when we know what we should be singing can we be sure that we’re singing the right thing. **TL**



Matthew Bassford

Matt has worked with the Jackson Heights congregation in Columbia, TN, for almost four years. He and his wife, Lauren, have two children. His website is hisexcellentword.blogspot.com. He can be reached at mandlbassford@gmail.com.



By Bobby L. Graham

QUESTION.

Bobby answers several questions about the new birth.

ANSWER.

Question:

A woman from Nigeria asks, “Do water baptism inside our room, shaking the pastor’s hand, and church membership mean a born again experience has taken place?”

Answer:

I am uncertain concerning what you mean when you mention water baptism “inside the room.” The Bible teaches the need to be baptized in water for the forgiveness of one’s sins (Acts 2:38; 10:47), but the place of baptism would need to be where there is sufficient water to immerse/bury/submerge/dip the person in the water. If there was a tank or a tub large enough for that much water, so that immersion or burying of the person in water could take place, it could be

performed inside a room but also could be done outside a room or a house.

According to the teaching of the New Testament, when a person believes in Jesus Christ as the son of God, repents of his sins, and then is baptized so his sins can be forgiven, he is born again of water and the Spirit (John 3:3-5). This experience of being born again has nothing to do with a feeling of excitement, but is an act of obedience to the instructions of the Holy Spirit regarding salvation. There is no kind of feeling which validates or proves that the person has been born again. It is an act of faith/trust in the Lord above, so that one willingly complies with the Lord’s will (Jas. 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:22-23). We can understand the new birth from what these passages say concerning it: (1) it generates spiritual creatures/creation; (2) spiritual creatures are caused (begotten) by God’s Word; (3) the new birth is a figure of speech depicting conversion; when one is converted to Christ, that one is born again; and (4) new spiritual life results from this spiritual process, just

as new physical life results from human/plant/animal reproduction.


Forgiveness is a judicial act taking place in the mind of God, not in the sinner’s heart/mind. We can see that this is the case because Jesus instructed people they must be born again; it is an act that the person can obey or disobey. The apostle Peter, who wrote about being born again in his first chapter of his first epistle, is also the one who instructed the people on Pentecost regarding what they needed to do to be saved. From his instructions—that they repent and be baptized after he had learned of their faith (Acts 2:36-38)—we conclude he was telling them how to be born again on this day when the church had its beginnings, because they had to be born again (John 3:3-5).

When a person has obeyed the Gospel as outlined in the Scripture, the Lord saves that person and adds him to the church belonging to the Lord (Acts 2:47). Membership in the Lord’s church results from salvation, but it is not the means of obtaining salvation. A saved person does not need to join any church started by

men, either before or after baptism; but he needs to become a part of a faithful local congregation of Christians (people who have done what he did to become saved). According to Acts 9:26-28, this is what Saul of Tarsus did after he was saved: he became a part of a local church.

Having the pastor shake your hand has nothing to do with salvation or being born again. He might not know as much about the new birth as I have written in this answer to your question. Salvation does not depend upon the judgment of a human being, but upon one's willingness to accept the judgment of God, as expressed in the Scriptures, so that he obeys the Lord's will, and upon Christ's willingness to add that one to His church (Matt. 7:21-28).

I also call your attention to the fact that nothing like the one-man pastor system being in charge of a church is found in the New Testament. If you will study your Bible, you'll find out that pastors/elders/bishops always operate in the plural number in their oversight of a congregation (1 Pet. 5:1-4; Acts 20:17, 32). These words were used interchangeably of the same men, although each one signifies something special and distinct about the man, his position, or his work. Any decision about one's admission into the congregation would depend upon its overseers (plural), not the pastor (singular).



I trust that this bit of information will at least give some clarification to the matters that concern you. 



Bobby L. Graham

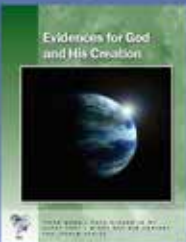
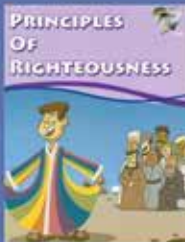
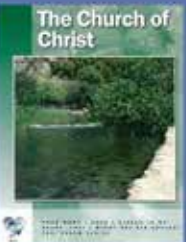
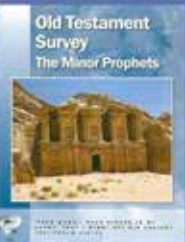
Bobby actively participates in fill-in preaching, Belize trips, teaching an hour each day at Athens Bible School, and in gospel meeting work. He and his wife, Karen, have three children. He can be reached at bobbygraham@pclnet.net.

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Go to the Potter's House

by Leon Mauldin

Jeremiah 18-19 uses imagery of the potter's house to communicate the concepts of God's sovereignty and man's freewill. In the broken pottery that was beyond repair, we see there can be a "point of no return."

The metaphor, "clay in the potter's hand," is sometimes used in the Bible to show the sovereignty of God, and His almighty power in accomplishing His plan and purpose. Such figures as the potter and the clay were familiar to those living in the biblical world, much more so than for most of us today.

In Jeremiah 18, the prophet Jeremiah was told to go to the potter's house, where he observed an object lesson. As the potter worked the clay at his wheel, the vessel was marred. He promptly shaped it into another vessel "as it seemed good to the potter to make" (vv. 3-4). The lesson Jeremiah was to convey is stated in verse 6: "O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter has done?" declares the LORD. Behold, like the clay in the potter's hand, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel." Yet, what God (the Potter) does with the clay (Israel) is not arbitrary. It depends upon Israel's choice of obedience or rebellion (note the use of the conditional "if" in vv. 8,10). Unfortunately, Israel chose the path of rebellion: "That is hopeless! So we will walk according to our own plans, and we will every one do the imagination of his evil heart" (v. 12).

Paul employed this same figure in addressing Timothy, noting that in a great house, there are vessels of honor and dishonor. Again, we have a choice in yielding/submitting and thus becoming vessels of honor, whereas the disobedient become vessels of dishonor (2 Tim. 2:20), described as "vessels of wrath prepared for destruction" (Rom. 9:22).

In the next chapter, Jeremiah was told to make further use of pottery, to take a potter's flask, along with some elders of Israel, to the Valley of Hinnom. There he was to break the flask and then say, "Thus says the LORD of hosts: So will I break this people and this city, as one breaks a potter's vessel, so that it can never be mended" (Jer. 19:11). Pottery thus broken

cannot be mended; it is beyond repair. This is the point Judah had reached. Though God would know and recognize each *individual* who repented and was loyal to Him, from a *national* standpoint, Judah was beyond repair. As a nation, it had reached the point of no return.



Caption 1: Potter at his wheel in Cappadocia



Caption 2: Broken Pottery from Excavations at Ramat Rachel in Israel

See our photo of a potter at his wheel. I took this photo at Cappadocia. Then, to illustrate the concept of pottery that is broken beyond repair, see the shot I took of brother Ferrell Jenkins at Ramat Rachel, in Israel. The site had recently been excavated; I'd never seen such a pile of broken pottery! Hopefully, these will help us visualize the events of Jeremiah 18-19.

May our one desire be to truly be obedient vessels molded by 'El Shaddai, God Almighty, used for His glory, as expressed in the words of the song, "Have Thine Own Way, Lord."

Have Thine own way, Lord! Have Thine own way! Thou art the Potter, I am the clay. Mold me and make me after Thy will, while I am waiting, yielded and still.

Have Thine own way, Lord! Have Thine own way! Search me and try me, Master, today! Whiter than snow, Lord, wash me just now, as in Thy presence humbly I bow.

Have Thine own way, Lord! Have Thine own way! Wounded and weary, help me, I pray! Power, all power, surely is Thine! Touch me and heal me, Savior divine.

Have Thine own way, Lord! Have Thine own way! Hold o'er my being absolute sway! Fill with Thy Spirit till all shall see Christ only, always, living in me. 🙏



Caption 3: Brother Ferrell Jenkins at Ramat Rachel

Sources

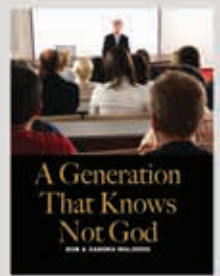
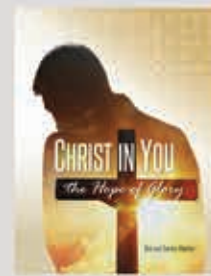
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Leon Mauldin

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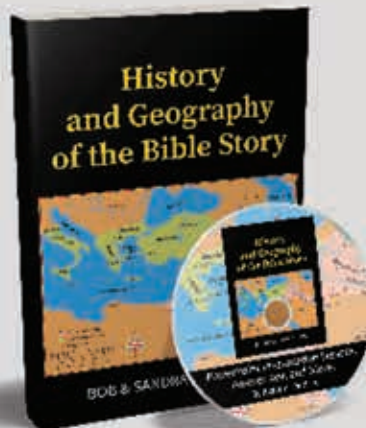
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What Is Biblical Fellowship?

by Kyle Pope

While “fellowship” is used in various ways today, a careful examination of the Greek word family used in the NT to communicate this concept reveals a specific scope and meaning. Our understanding of fellowship must reflect this focus.

The word “fellowship” describes the beautiful relationship of faith that connects true Christians to God and to all other true believers. Yet, in the religious world, not only among denominationalists, but also among our own brethren, this word is often used regarding everything from recreation halls built onto church meeting houses, to casual social interaction between Christians or non-Christians. In this study, let us examine the words used in the New Testament in connection with the concept of fellowship.

The word generally translated fellowship is the Greek noun *koinōnia*. Henry Thayer defines the word, “fellowship, association, community, communion, joint participation, intercourse” (*Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, 352). It describes the state of “association” or “joint participation” enjoyed by Christians. *Koinōnia* belongs to a family of words used in the New Testament to describe this joint participation. Other words in this family are *koinōneō*, the verb meaning “to fellowship;” *koinōnos*, a noun describing “one who fellowships;” *koinōnikos*, an adjective describing “the willingness to fellowship,” all derived from the root *koinos*, an adjective meaning, simply, “common.”

Koinōnia is properly a bond for a united purpose. The nature of the bond varies depending on the nature of the purpose. In Luke 5:10, for example, the Holy Spirit describes James and John as “partners (*koinōnos*)” with Simon in the fishing business. Here, their bond was

not spiritual, but the bond of a common occupation. Their shared purpose was to catch literal fish. In Matthew 23:30, Jesus offers another example. He rebuked the scribes and Pharisees for claiming they would not have been “partakers (*koinōnos*) with them” [i.e., their ancestors] “in the blood of the prophets” (NKJV). The bond in this instance was a common spirit, and the purpose was shared opposition to God’s prophets.

The two examples above concern “joint participation” but, the first involves fellowship in the fishing business and the second fellowship in persecution. The focus of the New Testament is on a very specific bond of fellowship. Philippians 1:5 describes this as “fellowship (*koinōnia*) in the gospel.” In John’s first epistle, the Holy Spirit tells us how this bond comes about. He writes, “That which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship (*koinōnia*) with us; and truly our fellowship (*koinōnia*) is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ” (1 John 1:3). This shows that “fellowship in the gospel” is a spiritual bond. This bond comes about when one accepts the gospel (i.e., believing and obeying the doctrine written by inspired apostles and prophets like John). When the gospel was first preached on the day of Pentecost, those who accepted it “continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship (*koinōnia*), in the breaking of bread, and in prayers” (Acts 2:42). This is not referring to social functions as a work of the church. The connection of the word, fellowship, with the phrase, “the apostles’ doctrine,” infers that fellowship in Christ

involves joint participation in the entire system of faith, towards the shared purpose of a “common (*koinos*) salvation” (Jude 3).

We should notice some things about this “fellowship in the gospel” from other texts where these words are used:

1. *Koinōnia* must not exist with those who “walk in darkness” (1 John 1:6) or who practice “lawlessness” (2 Cor. 6:14).
2. The Christian must not have “fellowship (*koinōnia*) with demons” (1 Cor. 10:20) nor “share (*koinōneō*) in other people’s sins” (1 Tim. 5:22). We are even told that in greeting someone who transgresses the doctrine of Christ, a Christian “shares (*koinōneō*) in his evil deeds” (2 John 11).

Koinōnia (or “fellowship”) involves a person’s relationship with God. The one who is in fellowship with God, is in fellowship with all others who are truly in fellowship with Him (1 John 1:3). 1 Corinthians 1:9 refers to this as “the fellowship (*koinōnia*) of His Son” and 2 Corinthians 13:14 speaks of it as “the communion (*koinōnia*) of the Holy Spirit.” Those in Christ are said to be “partakers (*koinōnos*) of the divine nature” (2 Pet. 1:4). Christians have received the things of God’s Spirit (1 Cor. 2:10) and Christ dwells in us through faith (Eph. 3:17).

This leaves us with an important question: *when exactly is a Christian practicing fellowship?* In one sense, a Christian is always in fellowship with



God and other Christians, yet not every activity Christians share is “fellowship in the gospel.” We saw above, when Peter, Andrew, James, and John were fishing together, it would not have been accurate to call that “fellowship in the gospel.” It was fellowship in the fishing business. So, what kinds of activities are “fellowship in the gospel”? 1 Corinthians 10:16 describes the observance of the Lord’s Supper as the “communion (*koinōnia*) of the body of Christ.” In this text, the church (i.e., the body of Christ) jointly participates in the memorial emblems of the broken body of Jesus. The same text compares this with the sacrifices under the old covenant. Those who ate from the sacrifices of the tabernacle (or temple) were “partakers (*koinōnos*) of the altar” (10:18). When we participate together in those things that involve the gospel, we are *partakers* of the gospel of Christ and engaged in “fellowship in the gospel.” Four times in the New Testament, the word *koinōnia* is used in reference to material or financial contributions that support the preaching of the gospel (Rom. 15:26, 2 Cor. 8:4; 9:13; Heb. 13:16). Gentile Christians who helped their Jewish brethren were described in Romans 15:26-27 as having “shared

(*koinōneō*) in their spiritual things” (NASB).

In our day, the word fellowship is often used to refer to the eating of a common meal. While we know that early Christians ate with one another as a result of the love they shared for each other (Acts 2:46), the word fellowship is never used in the New Testament to refer to a common social meal. Christians should spend time with one another outside of the worship assembly, yet, if we begin to think of participation in social functions as “fellowship in the gospel,” we are misapplying a biblical concept. May we all continue to study this issue, striving always to use “Bible names for Bible things.” **TT**



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Are Social Functions Fellowship?

by Ron Halbrook

Christians are fellows with God and each other, and their fellowship relates to this spiritual relationship, not to shared meals, social interaction, and secular activities—which are the domain of the home, not the church.

Introduction

The inspired apostle John expressed the fulness of the fellowship we have as Christians when he wrote, “That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ” (1 John 1:3). Does that fellowship include the church organizing, sponsoring, and overseeing social functions?

Defining the Term Fellowship

Fellowship involves sharing based on common ties or interests. Fellows have fellowship. In the New Testament, it refers to the common spiritual relationship shared by Christians with God and each other. Our union or partnership with God automatically makes us brothers and partners with each other. Fellowship is expressed in concrete ways by people who share this bond—it can be seen in action.

The sharing of faith, relationship, and actions by Christians is described in the New Testament, especially by a family of words rooted in the Greek noun *koinos*, meaning something shared in common. Related terms include the nouns *koinōnia*, for sharing in common or joint participation, and *koinōnos*, a person who shares or partakes in something, and the verb *koinōneō*, meaning to have fellowship, to become a partner or associate.

As humans, we relate to each other in many ways: the common bond of humanity, family ties, national

identification, business associations, civic and political partnerships, educational endeavors, recreational functions, athletic contests, and social activities such as sharing meals. In other words, we share all sorts of things based on a wide range of mutual interests and bonds. In the broadest sense, fellowship or sharing can apply to this whole range of activities among all kinds of people, but the New Testament does not use it that way.

We have a deeper bond of unity, a spiritual fellowship, with God because we are made in His image and are reconciled to Him in Christ (Gen. 1:27; Col. 1:18-22). When the New Testament speaks of fellowship among Christians, it refers to this spiritual relationship with God and each other. The word is never applied to other commonalities we share, such as

our humanity, our earthly families, or civic, recreational, and social functions, such as sharing meals.

Searching the Scriptures Regarding the Term Fellowship

1 John 1:3-7 highlights the deep spiritual relationship signified by the term, fellowship:

That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full. This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto 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 the truth: But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.

Here, the noun *koinonia* is used four times in reference to the spiritual bond Christians have to God and to each other. John is not teaching that we share social meals, birthday parties, wedding showers, fishing trips, movies, basketball games, and similar secular activities with the Father and the Son, and then with each other. We share a right relationship with the Father and the Son because we are cleansed by the blood of Christ and walk in righteousness rather than sin. There is no hint in this passage of the church sponsoring social functions.

2 Peter 1:1-4 provides another beautiful picture of our unity in Christ. Peter addressed saints who “have obtained like precious faith with us,” have “all things that pertain unto life and godliness,” and have become “partakers (noun *koinonos*) of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.” We partake in the righteous and holy nature of God when we escape a life of sin by being baptized into Christ (Rom. 6:1-7, 16-18). The gospel teaches us all things that pertain to this new life. There is no instruction here about sharing social meals, though such meals can be both healthy and pleasant.

When Jude wrote about “the common salvation,” he urged saints to “earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (v. 3). The salvation saints share in common (noun *koinos*) requires that we vigorously defend the teaching upon which it is based. To follow a different doctrine destroys that common salvation. There is nothing here about sharing in social functions. “Love feasts” in verses 12-13 are not church sponsored social meals; rather, Jude here warns against false teachers figuratively “feeding themselves” as in Ezekiel 34 by spreading error to promote themselves rather than feeding God’s people the truth.

The New Testament speaks of fellowship that Christians should and should not have in serving God. His promises regarding our final salvation will never fail us, and He called us “unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord” (1 Cor. 1:9). This fellowship (noun *koinonia*) with Christ includes the truth He gave us, participation in His sufferings, and the salvation He provides, but we are not engaged in social functions with Him.

Sharing in the Lord’s Supper is a spiritual “communion” (noun *koinonia*) in the benefits of the body and the blood of Christ which was offered for our sin (1 Cor. 10:16). Likewise, the Jews were “partakers of the altar” (noun *koinonos*) when they ate a portion of the sacrifices they offered, i.e., their sins were forgiven in view of the promised Messiah. Saints must not participate in idol feasts lest they “be participants with demons” (NIV; noun *koinonos*). None of the activities pictured here pertains to social functions, but it is clear that the Lord’s Supper, rather than a social meal, is the Christian’s fellowship meal. Paul said, “And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation (1 Cor. 11:34).

Paul warned the church at Corinth not to receive false teachers: “what fellowship hath light with darkness? (2 Cor. 6:14) Brethren at Jerusalem signified their unity in faith and practice with Barnabas and Paul by extending” the right hands of fellowship” (Gal. 2:9). The noun *koinonia* in these passages refers to sharing in the truth, not in social activities.


The collection and its use are “fellowship” because they express our shared faith, relationship, and work in God’s kingdom. Acts 2:42 includes “the fellowship” (noun *koinonia*) disciples share in worship. In Greek, the article “the” precedes fellowship, indicating a specific act of worship when the saints contribute funds into the treasury. It was used especially for benevolence because the huge number of conversions resulted in many emergency needs. They “had all things common” (noun *koinos*),

i.e., a common treasury, and even sold possessions when necessary to meet the pressing needs (Acts 2:44-45; cf. 4:32).

Many passages show that the treasury was used for benevolence to needy saints (2 Cor. 8:4, noun *koinonia*) and for evangelism (Phil. 4:15, verb *koinoneo*) but never for social activities as expressions of the church’s fellowship.

A Distinct Line of Separation

So-called “fellowship” halls/rooms provided by churches are unscriptural and are misnomers in terms of speaking as the Bible speaks (1 Pet. 4:11). The early church assembled to participate in their spiritual fellowship with God and each other in Acts 2:42 and 46 (“daily with one accord in the temple”). Individual saints made their own arrangements to share social meals “in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts” (Acts 2:46, NIV).

When the line is crossed separating the church’s work from individual activities, the church soon loses its distinctive spiritual nature. It becomes all things to all men, as broad and wide as the human imagination can reach with all sorts of meals, parties, games, contests, social services, secular educational offerings, athletics, political activities, job and business training, medical and dental clinics, and the-sky-is-the-limit. The church reflecting “the manifold wisdom of God” in the New Testament is corrupted into a worldly institution created by man in the image of his own misconceptions about “religion” and “fellowship” (Eph. 3:10). 



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Is Worship Fellowship?

by David Dann

True worship affords the children of God the blessed privilege of jointly participating with Him and His people in spiritual things.

Introduction

John the apostle explained his reason for writing his first inspired letter to Christians as follows: “that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ” (1 John 1:3, NKJV). John’s words emphasize both the vertical and horizontal aspects of fellowship—the child of God has fellowship with the God of heaven while at the same time having fellowship with his brothers and sisters in Christ. The term so often translated “fellowship” or “communion” (*koinonia*) in the New Testament is defined as “fellowship, association, community, communion, joint participation” (*Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon*, 352). According to W.E. Vine, fellowship is “sharing in common” (Vine, s.v. “Fellowship”). In the context of the church in the New Testament, fellowship always involves sharing in spiritual activity. God’s people share with Him in this special spiritual bond while at the same time sharing in spiritual things with fellow believers. One key area in which this spiritual sharing is evident is in worship. Please consider what the Bible says about worship and fellowship.

What Is Worship?

Vine summarizes his comments on the terms translated “worship” in the New Testament as follows: “it is not confined to praise; broadly it may be regarded as the direct acknowledgement to God, of His nature, attributes, ways and claims, whether by the outgoing of the heart

in praise and thanksgiving or by deeds done in such acknowledgment” (Vine, s.v. “Worship”). Worship of the God of heaven is characterized by expressions of reverence which are both prescribed by, and directed toward, Him. The Bible describes worship as a specific action in which one engages at a specific time and place (cf. Gen. 22:5; 2 Sam. 12:20; Acts 8:27-28; 24:11). Rather than all of life constituting “worship,” one worships God when he determines to engage in a specific spiritual act of reverence which is directed toward Him.

According to the New Testament, Christians are authorized to worship God through prayer (Acts 2:42), singing (Col. 3:16), teaching the doctrine of Christ (Acts 11:26), and by giving of their means (1 Cor. 16:1-2) and partaking of the Lord’s Supper (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:23-26) when assembled with the church on the first day of the week. God is properly worshiped by those who offer their reverent expressions of praise, thanksgiving, and devotion to Him in harmony with what He has prescribed for worship in His word.

How Is Worship Connected to Fellowship?

Sinners enter into fellowship with God through the sacrifice of His Son when they believe and obey the gospel of Christ (Gal. 3:26-27). Those who believe and practice the truth maintain fellowship with God (1 John 1:6-7). The apostle Peter reaffirms the words of the psalmist as follows: “For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and His ears are open

to their prayers; but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil” (1 Pet. 3:12). While God receives and accepts the worship of those who maintain fellowship with Him by obeying His instruction, He rejects the worship of those who are not in fellowship with Him. Jesus made this plain in His rebuke of the scribes and Pharisees, saying, “Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying: ‘These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men’” (Matt. 15:7-9). Worship is offered in vain by those who worship while entangled in sin and error. God will not accept worship that is offered by those who are not in fellowship with Him.

Why Is Worship Considered Fellowship?

Worship involves sharing in spiritual activity. On Pentecost, about three thousand people entered into fellowship with God by meeting the terms of salvation through His Son (Acts 2:41). Following this, the Bible says, “They continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship (*koinonia*), in the breaking of bread, and in prayers” (v. 42). The first followers of Christ shared together in spiritual activity in collective worship of God.

The Lord’s Supper involves fellowship. Paul writes, “The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion (*koinonia*) of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the

WORSHIP

communion (*koinonia*) of the body of Christ? (1 Cor. 10:16). The Lord promised His disciples, saying, “But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father’s kingdom” (Matt. 26:29). In partaking of the unleavened bread and fruit of the vine in remembrance of the sacrifice of Christ, each worshiper shares in spiritual activity with the Lord Himself.

Giving involves fellowship. Paul refers to the collection taken by local churches and used to relieve needy saints as “the gift and the fellowship (*koinonia*) of the ministering to the saints” (2 Cor. 8:4), as “liberal sharing (*koinonia*) with them” (9:13), and as “a certain contribution (*koinonia*) for the poor among the saints” (Rom. 15:26). Members of the church jointly participate in the spiritual work of relieving needy saints by giving on the first day of the week (cf. 1 Cor. 16:1-4). In addition to this, Paul referred to the financial support he had received from the church in Philippi, saying, “I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy, for your fellowship (*koinonia*) in the gospel from the first day until now” (Phil. 1:3-5). In taking up a collection on the first day of the week, each worshiper is sharing in spiritual activity in relieving needy saints and contributing to the support of those who preach the gospel.

Teaching involves fellowship. Constant teaching and preaching represent a key

aspect of the spiritual activity in which worshipers engage each week (cf. Acts 11:26; 20:7). Paul instructed the churches of Galatia, saying, “Let him who is taught the word share (*koinonia*) in all good things with him who teaches” (Gal. 6:6). In participating in the proclamation of God’s word, both the teacher and the hearers share in spiritual activity involving evangelism and edification.

Singing involves fellowship. Paul instructed the church in Colosse, saying, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord” (Col. 3:16). As they sing in worship, God’s people jointly participate in a pursuit that is done “to the Lord” while at the same time having been designed to serve the purpose of “teaching and admonishing one another.” By engaging in song worship, the members of the church share in a spiritual activity that honors God and edifies each participant.

Prayer involves fellowship. In his first letter to the church in Corinth, Paul describes joint participation in the prayers offered in the assembly in which one brother leads and the others are able to “say ‘Amen’ at your giving of thanks” (1 Cor. 14:16). In joining together in prayer to God, members of the church share in spiritual activity by bringing their expressions of praise, thanksgiving, and supplication before His throne.

Conclusion

What a great privilege it is to be able to participate with the Lord and with fellow believers in offering to God that which He has prescribed in His word. The fellowship with God and fellow believers that is experienced by those who worship Him in spirit and in truth is truly one of the greatest spiritual blessings found in Christ. **T**

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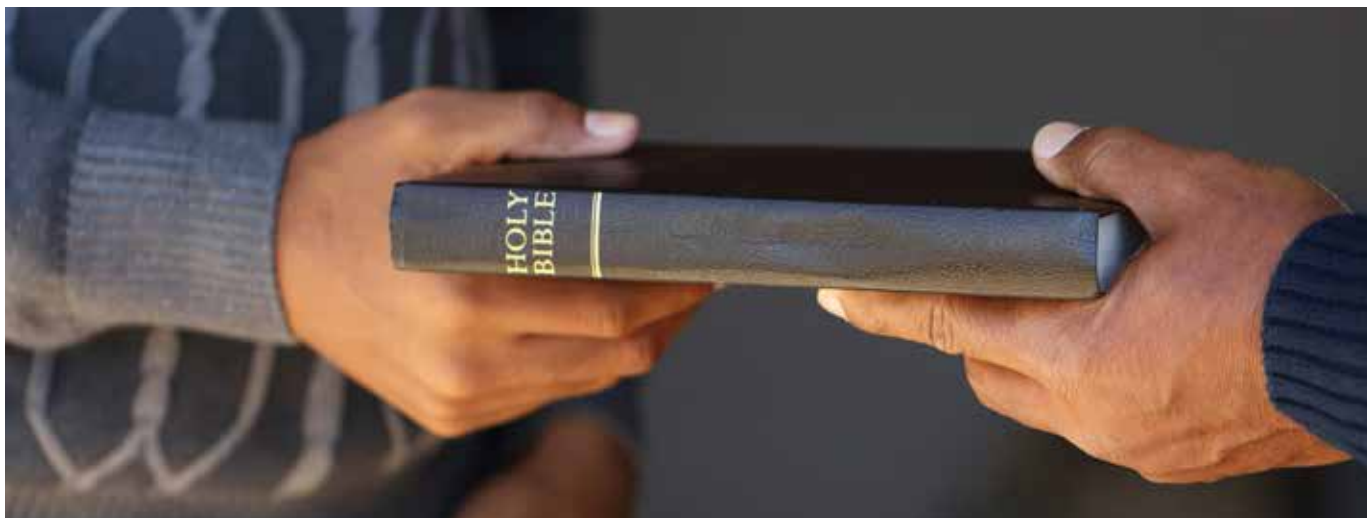
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Is Everything that Christians Do Together “Fellowship in the Gospel”?

by Harold Hancock

This article represents a study of the New Testament word, “fellowship,” contrasting its biblical usage with the modern day views which emphasize social and secular activities.



To many in the world, and even to some in the church, most forms of association and everything done together is “fellowship.” It matters not if it is eating together, sharing conversation over a cup of coffee, or doing a good deed for another—to these people, it is “fellowship!” The New Testament uses the word “fellowship,” but its use is far more restricted and limited than the modern view just expressed.

In the New Testament, the word “fellowship” is most often translated from the Greek word, *koinonia* (cf. Acts 2:42; 1 Cor. 1:9; 2 Cor. 6:14; 8:4; Gal. 2:9; Eph. 3:9; Phil. 1:5; 2:1; 3:10; 1 John 1:3, 6, 7). This Greek word may also be translated “contribution” (Rom. 15:26), “communion” (2 Cor. 10:16; 13:14), or “sharing” or “to share” (Phile. 6; Heb. 13:16).

Under the heading of “Communion,” *The New Bible Dictionary* deals with these words translated from the Greek, *koinonia*, and quotes A.R. George from his book, *Communion With God in the New Testament*: “The important thing is that these words (belonging to the *koin-* family) refer primarily, though not invariably, to participation in something rather than association with others: and there is often a genitive to indicate that in which one participates or shares” (George, 133; Martin, 233).

The statement by A.R. George seems to be proven true when the New Testament passages on fellowship are carefully considered. The Christian has, or can, have fellowship with God (1 John 1:3, 7), with Christ (1 Cor. 1:9; 1 John 1:7), with the Holy Spirit (2 Cor. 13:14),

with other Christians (1 John 1:7), in the Lord’s Supper (1 Cor. 10:16), in the ministering to saints (2 Cor. 8:4), in the gospel (Phil. 1:5), in the sufferings of Christ (Phil. 3:10), and in the mystery of Christ (Eph. 3:1-10, esp. v. 6). However, John makes it plain that our fellowship with God, Christ, and fellow-believers is established by our hearing and accepting the message of the apostles (1 John 1:3) and by walking in the light (1 John 1:7). This requires believing in Jesus Christ, putting Him on in baptism, and sharing in the work and worship done in His name. This fellowship is more than association—it demands a participation in Christ.

Perhaps the Christian’s relationship to the world further emphasizes that fellowship is more participation than

association. Christians are in the world and must often associate with people of the world through family, work, school, and social events (1 Cor. 5:10). Many individuals with whom Christians associate may not be in Christ; some of these people may at times willfully engage in sinful practices. They are perhaps a part of a false religion. Mere association with these people does not constitute biblical “fellowship” with them or with their sinful deeds. Christians have “fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness” when they participate in sinful activities (Eph. 5:11). They have “fellowship” with a false religion when they participate in that religion, or give consent or approval to those things that are false (2 John 2:9-10). It is important that we understand that not all association is fellowship. It is important that we distinguish between the world’s use of “fellowship” and the New Testament use of “fellowship.”

Notice, also, how true it is that in the New Testament “there is often a genitive to indicate that in which one shares.” This is reflected in most of the New Testament passages related to fellowship. Consider a few examples:

1 John 1:3 says, “That which we have seen and heard we declare to you that you may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship (a fellowship is stated, HH) with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ” (the genitive showing the area of fellowship is named, HH).

1 Corinthians 10:16 says, “The cup of blessing we bless, is it not communion” (a statement of fellowship, HH) of the blood of Christ (the genitive showing the area or thing in which we have fellowship, HH). The bread which we break, is it not communion” (a statement of fellowship, HH) of the body of Christ” (the genitive showing the area or thing in which we have fellowship when partaking of the bread, HH).

Philippians 1:3-5 says, “I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine making request for you with joy, for your fellowship (a statement of fellowship) in the gospel”

(the genitive showing where and what the fellowship was in, HH).

This pattern holds true for most, if not all, of the New Testament passages speaking of fellowship. It is also worth noting that at no time does the New Testament speak of “fellowship” with a genitive of mere social interaction.

One passage that needs to be examined further is Acts 2:42, which says, “They continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in breaking of bread, and in prayer.” Many read this as if early Christians continued in four things: (1) the apostles’ doctrine; (2) fellowship; (3) the breaking of bread (i.e., the Lord’s Supper [Acts 20:7]), and (4) prayer. Many feel free to define “fellowship” in this passage as it is used in modern vernacular—social interactions or eating common meals together. Acts 2:46, which says, “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,” is often cited for support of this position. However, Acts 2:46 no more defines the “fellowship” mentioned in Acts 2:42 than it does “the apostles’ doctrine,” or the “prayer” of Acts 2:42. It is not hermeneutically sound to choose arbitrarily Acts 2:46 as the definition of “fellowship” in Acts 2:42. It is not hermeneutically sound to take what was done “from house to house” and make it a congregational work of the church.

May we suggest that when one considers that “there is often a genitive to indicate that in which one participates or shares” and the structure of Acts 2:42, the “fellowship” spoken of is that found in taking the Lord’s Supper. The text says, “And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine *and* in fellowship,” “*in* breaking of bread” (notice there is no “and” introducing this phrase as there is in the preceding phrase and following phrase), “*and* in prayer.” “In breaking of bread” is descriptive of the fellowship, not something separate and apart from the fellowship. Scriptures Note further: “*And*

they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and in fellowship” (a statement of fellowship), “*in breaking of bread*” (the genitive showing the area of fellowship), “*and in prayer.*” This fits the pattern already noted with the other “fellowship” passages: “there is often a genitive to indicate that in which one participates or shares.” This same truth is taught in 1 Corinthians 10:16, which affirms that we have communion, or fellowship, with the body and blood of Jesus when eating the bread and drinking the cup.

We should not take lightly the fact that the word “fellowship” (*koinonia*) is used in Scripture in specific ways: It describes the Christian’s relationship with God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, and fellow-disciples. It refers to the worship and works done together in Christ and for Christ. Let us not misuse it in referring to other common relationships and deeds, while ignoring the genitives given to “fellowship” in the biblical context. Don’t be fooled by such sophistry! The word “fellowship” as used in the New Testament, in no way authorizes churches to build or maintain fellowship halls and recreational centers.

It is good and desirable that Christians associate together socially, but that association is not referred to as “fellowship” in the Scriptures (Acts 2:46). The “fellowship” spoken of in the Scriptures is greater than that; it describes our relationship with God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, and fellow-Christians, and our participation together in the worship and works of faith. ■

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When and How Is Fellowship Broken?

by Mark Mayberry

Evil attitudes, a spirit of factionalism, doctrinal error, and false teaching all break the bond of fellowship. This principle applies both vertically and horizontally.

The divine command, “You shall be holy, for I am Holy,” repeatedly occurs in the Old and New Testaments (Lev. 19:1-2; 1 Pet. 1:13-16). During the Mosaic era, holiness was defined in terms of conformity to God’s law regarding physical cleanliness/uncleanness (Lev. 11:44-45; 20:22-26), regarding morality (Ps. 106:34-39), and regarding worship (Lev. 10:1-3). In the present Christian era, the Mosaic code governing clean and unclean foods has been set aside (Col. 2:13-14, 20-23; cf. Acts 10:9-16). Instead, holiness is defined in moral and spiritual terms—confirming to God’s pattern in all areas of life (including worship), and abstaining from sinful lusts that war against the soul (1 Pet. 1:13-16; 2:4-12).

How Is the Bond Broken?

Sin breaks the bonds of fellowship between God and man. Moses recognized this reality: “For we have been consumed by Your anger and by Your wrath we have been dismayed. You have placed our iniquities before You, our secret sins in the light of Your presence. . .” (Ps. 90:7-12, esp. v. 7). Isaiah echoed the same truths:

Hear the word of the LORD, you rulers of Sodom; Give ear to the instruction of our God, you people of Gomorrah. What are your multiplied sacrifices to Me? says the LORD. I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fed cattle; and I take no pleasure in the blood of bulls, lambs or goats. When you come to appear before Me, who requires of you this trampling of My courts? Bring your worthless offerings no longer, incense is an abomination to Me. New moon and sabbath, the calling

of assemblies—I cannot endure iniquity and the solemn assembly. I hate your new moon festivals and your appointed feasts, they have become a burden to Me; I am weary of bearing them. So when you spread out your hands in prayer, I will hide My eyes from you; Yes, even though you multiply prayers, I will not listen. Your hands are covered with blood (Isa. 1:10-15).

Behold, the LORD’S hand is not so short that it cannot save; nor is His ear so dull that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear. For your hands are defiled with blood and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken falsehood, your tongue mutters wickedness. No one sues righteously and no one pleads honestly. They trust in confusion and speak lies; they conceive mischief and bring forth iniquity. They hatch adders’ eggs and weave the spider’s web; he who eats of their eggs dies, and from that which is crushed a snake breaks forth. Their webs will not become clothing, nor will they cover themselves with their works; their works are works of iniquity, and an act of violence is in their hands. Their feet run to evil, and they hasten to shed innocent blood; their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity, devastation and destruction are in their highways. They do not know the way of peace, and there is no justice in their tracks; They have made their paths crooked, whoever treads on them does not know peace (Isa. 59:1-8).

The blessed bond of fellowship between God and His people is restored and maintained through repentance, sanctification, and renewed commitment

to His cause and code of conduct (Isa. 1:18-20; 2 Cor. 6:14-18; Eph. 5:6-14). Jesus, the prophesied Messiah, is our peace. He abolished the distinction between Jew and Gentile, making both one, reconciling all to God through His shed blood (Eph. 2:11-22).

What about the spiritual relationship that we share with fellow Christians in both a congregational setting (Rom. 16:14; 1 Cor. 16:20), and in the broader sense of the brotherhood (Rom. 16:16; 1 Pet. 2:17)? The bond is broken when a brother sins against a brother, but refuses all private and public attempts designed to lead him to repentance (Matt. 18:15-17). It is broken when an individual causes dissensions and hinderances contrary to the gospel (Rom. 16:16-20). It is broken when one pursues a sinful lifestyle (1 Cor. 5:9-13). It is broken when one leads an unruly life and refuses to follow the traditions/instructions received from inspired apostles (2 Thess. 3:6-13). It is broken when one manifests a factional spirit (Titus 3:8-11). It is broken when one does not abide in the doctrine of Christ—which is inclusive, not only of who Jesus is but also of what Jesus taught (2 John 7-11).

Mending What Is Broken

Christianity is more than paying lip-service to pious platitudes—instead, we must be doers of the word (Jas. 1:21-22). Sin is serious business: eternity hangs in the balance.

The bonds of spiritual fellowship are broken by sin and restored through genuine repentance. This is well



illustrated by the tragic examples of David (Ps. 32:1-7) and the Corinthians (2 Cor. 7:11).

It is also affirmed in the Apocalypse. The church at Ephesus was told, “Therefore remember from where you have fallen, and *repent* and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place—unless you repent” (Rev. 2:5). The church in Pergamum was told, “Therefore *repent*; or else I am coming to you quickly, and I will make war against them with the sword of My mouth” (Rev. 2:16). The church at Thyatira (which was tolerating a wicked false teacher in their midst) was admonished: “But I have this against you, that you tolerate the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, and she teaches and leads My bond-servants astray so that they commit acts of immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols. I gave her time to *repent*, and she does not want to *repent* of her immorality. Behold, I will

throw her on a bed of sickness, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they *repent* of her deeds. And I will kill her children with pestilence, and all the churches will know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts; and I will give to each one of you according to your deeds” (Rev. 2:20-23). Erring saints at Sardis were commanded: “So remember what you have received and heard; and keep it, and *repent*. Therefore, if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come to you” (Rev. 3:3). After rebuking the lukewarm Laodiceans, Jesus said, “Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; therefore be zealous and *repent*” (Rev. 3:19).

The bond of spiritual fellowship is restored as faithful brethren refuse to countenance error, courageously take a stand for truth, and lovingly practice biblical discipline. When properly administered and received, such expressions of “tough love” help the

offender recognize his lost condition, leading to genuine repentance and full restoration (2 Cor. 7:5-16; 2 Thess. 3:14-15). The prophet Nathan possessed such a spirit when he courageously confronted King David, and said, “You are the man!” (2 Sam. 12:1-12, esp. v. 7). May we also manifest similar conviction and compassion in restoring erring sinners:

My brethren, if any among you strays from the truth and one turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins (Jas. 5:19-20). **IT**



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When and How Is Fellowship Maintained?

by Bruce Reeves

To share fellowship with God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit, we must walk in the light (1 John 1:5–2:6). To maintain fellowship with each other, we must manifest the right disposition and adhere to the right doctrine (Eph. 4:1–6).

Introduction

Every devoted disciple has asked, “How can we maintain fellowship as God’s people?” In Ephesians 4:1–6, the apostle Paul presents a divine program for overcoming sinful attitudes, division, and false teaching—all of which threaten our oneness as Christians. When the unity of believers is fractured, our hearts are filled with sadness and pain. No doubt, we have all witnessed congregations torn asunder, relationships destroyed, the work of the Lord hindered, and devotion to Christ abandoned through division. Yet, God’s purpose is for His children to strive together for the faith of the gospel with “one mind” (Phil. 1:27). Paul wrote to the Corinthians, “Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment” (1 Cor. 1:10).

From Cain and Abel until the present, brother has risen against brother, and nation against nation. This world is marked by dissension, division, and strife. Even in religion, the order that humanity has chosen for itself is fighting and quarreling: sect against sect and party against party. This behavior is diametrically opposed to the will of Christ. Jesus said, “I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me” (John 17:20–21). It is

only through surrendering to the Holy Spirit’s teaching that we can enjoy the oneness of which Christ speaks.

The Calling of Christ

Paul begins by imploring Christians to walk worthy of their calling in Christ (Eph. 4:1). This calling transforms our relationships with others and leads us to live in harmony with God’s divine purpose (1 Thess. 2:12; 2 Thess. 2:12–13; 1 Pet. 1:22; 2:9). The Lord teaches us that one of the identifying marks of genuine discipleship is to show love for one another (John 13:34–35). Since we mutually share in the blessings of Christ, we ought to treat one another with affection, compassion, and humility (Phil. 2:1–2).

It is worthwhile to note the relationship between the terms “walk” (Eph. 4:1) and the phrase “the unity of the Spirit” (Eph. 4:3). The “unity of the Spirit” is only enjoyed by those who “walk in the Spirit” (Gal. 5:13–26). The “works of the flesh” prevent us from “walking by the Spirit,” being “led by the Spirit,” and “living in the Spirit” in that we are refusing to receive the “word of Christ” into our hearts (Gal. 5:16, 18, 25; Col. 3:16). First, one begins to have hostility or enmity toward a brother and does not recognize the spiritual poison that is filling his soul. Then the hostility expresses itself in sinful anger, tension, and friction. Next, if the soul is not cleansed of this growing defilement, jealousy will burn in the heart and even develop into hatred. Now we see someone who has entirely departed from the

Lord’s purpose. What can we do to avoid walking down this dark path?

The Attitude of Christ

Fellowship among God’s people can only be enjoyed when we have the attitude of Christ (Phil. 2:5; Col. 3:12–14). Believers are encouraged to “walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph. 4:1–3). We are given the divine formula for the attitude that promotes unity among Christians. While “humility” does not deny our boldness in the proclamation of Jesus, it must lead us to acknowledge how undeserving we are of God’s amazing grace as we show His love toward others. Lowliness of mind renounces selfish ambition and self-exaltation and embraces the true mind of Christ (Phil. 2:1–8). In areas of opinion and personal judgment, we must bear the weaknesses of others and strengthen them (Rom. 15:1). This involves self-examination concerning our words, actions, and posts and may lead us to become more sacrificial and discerning.

We are also encouraged to show gentleness or meekness toward one another in the family of God (Eph. 4:2). This quality does not translate into spinelessness or weakness, but gracious reasonableness in our disposition (Phil. 4:5) It is the strength of character that expresses self-control even in times of controversy. Moses and Jesus were



powerful men, but were also "meek" (Num. 12:3; Matt. 11:28-30). Paul emphasizes our need to be "longsuffering" and patient as we show tolerance for one another in love (Eph. 4:3). We are to be an enduring people who pursue the building of faithful relationships with fellow-believers. To be forbearing, we must exercise self-restraint, resist a hypercritical spirit and hasty judgments, and remain resolute in manifesting the love of the Lord (1 Cor. 13:4-7).

We will give our all to be "diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:3). The term translated as "endeavoring" means to make haste or give diligence. Oneness among saints does not occur accidentally and only happens when we value it vital to our relationship with God. To "keep" or "preserve" unity is to guard and protect our bond of peace.

The Truth of Christ


Our fellowship is built on the truth of the gospel. Paul beautifully describes the seven great "ones" of our unity in Christ, "There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all" (Eph. 4:4-6). The New Testament warns us of the danger of compromise by emphasizing the foundation of our fellowship. Jesus's

prayer for the unity of His disciples was grounded in the truth of the word of God (John 17:17, 19). John explains that we have fellowship with one another because we each have fellowship with Christ through obedience to the gospel. He writes, "What we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed, our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ" (1 John 1:2). We have fellowship with God and His apostles as we abide in the proclamation of their teaching and walk in His light and love (Acts 2:42; 1 Cor. 11:2; 1 John 1:9-2:5; 2 John 9-11).

We enjoy our fellowship through the Lord's grace and obedience to the truth:

If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin" (1 John 1:6-7).

Some have attempted to present this passage as a defense of neo-Calvinism to broaden boundaries of fellowship. The immediate context determines the meaning of any verse of Scripture, and this one is no exception to that principle. There is nothing that should indicate an automatic cleansing of the sinner who refuses to repent and confess his errors (1 John 1:9; 2:1). What should we do as

Christians when we sin? The Scripture teaches us to repent of our sins and confess our errors to God. Fellowship cannot be preserved biblically by refusing to teach on issues regarding our worship, the work of the church, marriage, divorce, and remarriage, modesty, lascivious dancing, or other critical issues that confront congregations today. Biblical fellowship is not protected by shaping a mindset that softens and desensitizes the Lord's people to our collective responsibility of serving God with a godly attitude in truth. The unity of Christians is not well served by those who, with ambiguity and craftiness, steer churches away from a zealous and strong stand for the doctrine of Christ in the name of "love and unity." The unity we pursue is "the unity of the Spirit"! It is the oneness produced by the Holy Spirit through the revelation of the gospel. It is in this teaching that we exemplify the attitude of Christ, the truth of the gospel, and the desire to edify and equip one another to glorify our Father. What a wonderful fellowship we enjoy in our Lord and Savior! 



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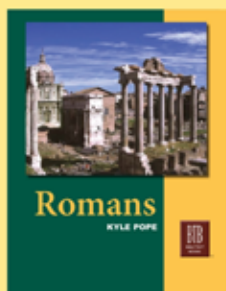
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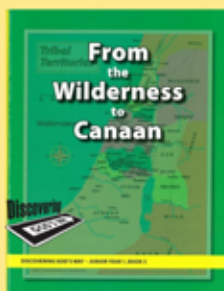
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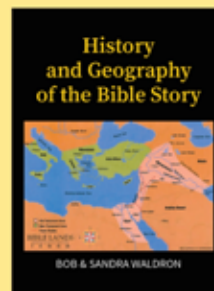
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San Juan Church of Christ

1414 Hawk Parkway, Unit C
Sun. Worship 11 a.m. | Bible Study 2 p.m. & 1:30 p.m.
(970) 249-8116 | sanjuanchurchofchrist.org

FLORIDA

DESTIN

South Walton Church of Christ

64 Casting Lake Rd.
Sun. Bible Study 9 a.m. | Worship 10 a.m. & 6 p.m. | Wed. Bible Study 7 p.m.
(850) 622-3817 | southwaltonchurchofchrist.com
Location change coming in 2022: 497 Church St Santa Rosa Beach, FL 32459
GENEVA

Church of Christ

Ave. C & 2nd St.
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 a.m. | Worship 10:45 a.m.
(407) 349-9998

MARY ESTHER

Church of Christ

6 Ln. Dr.
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 a.m. | Worship 10:30 a.m. & 5 p.m. | Wed. Bible Study 7 p.m.
Evangelist: Joey Rankin (850) 244-9222

ORLANDO

Church of Christ at S. Bumby

3940 S. Bumby Ave.
Sun. Communion: 9:30 a.m. | Bible Study 10 a.m. | Praise & Preaching: 10:55 a.m. (No Evening Service) | Wednesday 7 p.m.
Evangelist: Ken Chapman
Office: (407) 851-8031 | bumby.org
Note: Call for current worship and Bible study times.

PANAMA CITY BEACH

Beach Church of Christ

8910 Front Beach Rd.
Sun. Bible Study 10 a.m. | Worship 11 a.m. & 6 p.m. | Wed. Bible Study 7 p.m.
(850) 234-2521

SEFFNER

Church of Christ

621 E. Wheeler Rd.
Sun. Bible Study 10 a.m. | Worship 10:50 a.m. & 6 p.m. | Wed. Bible Study 7:30 p.m.
Evangelist: Bobby Witherington
(813) 684-1297 | seffnercoc.org

GEORGIA

PINE MTN. VALLEY

Church of Christ

Route 116 (near Callaway Gardens)
Sun. Bible Study 10 a.m. | Worship 11 a.m. & 6 p.m. | Wed. Bible Study 7:30 p.m.
Evangelist: Tommy W. Thomas
(706) 628-5117 or 628-5229 | pmvchurch.com

IDAHO

BLACKFOOT

Church of Christ

370 N. Shilling | P.O. Box 158-83221
Sun. Bible Study 10 a.m. | Worship 11 a.m. | Wed. Bible Study 7:30 p.m.
(208) 785-6168 or 681-1552

IOWA

DES MOINES

Church of Christ

1310 N.E. 54th Ave.
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 a.m. | Worship 10:40 a.m. | Wed. Bible Study 7 p.m.
(515) 262-6799

ILLINOIS

CHICAGO

Church of Christ

1514 West 74th St.
Sun. Bible Study 9 a.m. | Worship 10 a.m. & 6 p.m. | Wed. Bible Study 7 p.m.
Evangelist: James E. Scott
Bldg. (773) 224-9279 & (708) 339-6126

DOWNERS GROVE

Church of Christ

1236 63rd St. (Dir: 1.5 miles E of I355)
Sun. Bible Study 9 a.m. | Worship 9:55 a.m. & 6 p.m. | Wed. Bible Study 7:30 p.m.
Evangelist: Steve Wolfgang
(630) 968-0760 | dgcoc.org

ChurchDirectory

GLEN ELLYN

Glen Ellyn Church of Christ

796 Prairie Ave.
Glen Ellyn, IL 60137
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 a.m. | Worship
10:30 a.m. | Sun. Evening 5 p.m.
Evangelist: Keith E. Brown
(630) 858-2290 & (630) 377-3990

MATTOON

Southside Church of Christ

1100 S. 17th St.
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 a.m. | Worship
10:30 a.m. & 6 p.m. | Wed. Bible Study
7 p.m.
(217) 234-3702

SOUTH HOLLAND

Southeast Church of Christ

16224 S Vincennes Ave.
Sun. Bible Study 9 a.m. | Worship 10 a.m.
& 4 p.m. | Wed. Bible Study 7 p.m.
Evangelist: Donald Hawkins (708)
339-1008
southeastchurchofchrist.com

INDIANA

CLARKSVILLE

Clarksville Church of Christ

407 W. Lewis & Clark Parkway, 47129
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 a.m. | Worship
10:30 a.m. & 6 p.m. | Wed. Bible Study
7:30 p.m.
Evangelist: Brian Anderson
(812) 944-2305 or (812) 948-9917 |
clarksvillechurchofchrist.org

JAMESTOWN

Church of Christ

Sun. Bible Study 9:30 a.m. | Worship
10:25 a.m. & 4 p.m. | Wednesday 7 p.m.
(765) 676-6404 | jamestowncoc.com

NOBLESVILLE

Stony Creek Church of Christ

15530 Herriman Blvd, 46060
Sun. Bible Study 10:00 a.m. | Sunday
Worship 11:00 a.m. | Wed. Bible Study
7:00 pm
Evangelist: John Smith | preacher-
john54@att.net
317-501-8035 or 317-501-0249 or 317-
701-1204

OOLITIC

Church of Christ

400 Lafayette Ave. | P.O. Box 34
Sun. Bible Study 9:45 a.m. | Worship
10:30 a.m. & 6 p.m. | Wed. 7 p.m.
(812) 279-4332

PEKIN

Church of Christ

(First St. & Karnes Ct.)
Sun. Bible Study 9:45 a.m. | Worship
10:30 a.m. & 5 p.m. | Wed. Bible Study
7 p.m.
Evangelist: Jeremy Goen
(812) 967-3437 or 967-3520 | pekinchur-
chofchrist.com

KENTUCKY

BEAVER DAM

Church of Christ

1235 Williams St.
Sun. Worship 10 a.m. | Bible Study After
a.m. Worship & 6 p.m. | Wed. Bible Study
7 p.m.
Evangelist: Jerid Gunter
(270) 274-4451

BENTON

Fairdealing Church of Christ

8081 US Hwy 68-East
Sun. Bible Study 9:00 a.m. | Worship
10:00 a.m. | Wed. Bible Study 6 p.m.
Churchofchristatfairdealing.com | (270)
227-3262
(Dir: Conveniently located near Kenlake
State Resort Park on the western shore
of the lake.)

BRANDENBURG

Brandenburg Church of Christ

612 Broadway
Sun. Bible Study 9:45 a.m. | Worship
10:30 a.m. & 5 p.m. | Wed. Bible Study
6:30 p.m.
Evangelist: Charles J. White | (270)
422-3878

CAMPBELLSVILLE

Sunny Hill Dr. Church of Christ

107 Sunny Hill Dr.
Worship 9:30 a.m. & 11:30 a.m. | Bible
Study 10:30 a.m. | Wed. Bible Study 7 p.m.
Evangelist: Steve Lee
270-789-1651 | sunnyhillcoc.com

CANEYVILLE

Caneyville Church of Christ

103 N. Main St. | P.O. Box 233
Sun. Bible Study 10 a.m. | Worship 10:45
a.m. & 5 p.m. | Wed. Bible Study 7 p.m.
Evangelist: Jarrod Jacobs (270) 589-4167
or (270) 274-3065

DANVILLE

Church of Christ

385 E. Lexington Ave.
Sun. Worship 10 a.m. | Bible Study 11:15
a.m. & 5 p.m. | Wed. Bible Study 7 p.m.
Evangelist: B.J. Sipe | (859) 236-4204

FRANKLIN

31-W North Church of Christ

1733 Bowling Green Rd.
Sun. Bible Study 9 a.m. | Worship 10 a.m.
& 6 p.m. | Wed. Bible Study 7 p.m.
Evangelist: Steve Monts
(270) 776-9393 | 31wchurchofchrist.com

LEITCHFIELD

Mill St. Church of Christ

733 Mill St. Hwy 62 E.
Sun. Bible Study 10 a.m. | Worship 10:55
a.m. & 5 p.m. | Wed. Bible Study 7 p.m.
Evangelist: Dan McMahan
(270) 971-1492 | millstreetchurchofchrist.
org

LOUISVILLE

Valley Station Church of Christ

1803 Dixie Garden Dr.
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 a.m. | Worship
10:30 a.m. & 6 p.m. | Wed. Bible Study
7:00 p.m.
Evangelist: Michael Hardin | michaelhar-
din1123@att.net | (502) 937 2822

Shepherdsville

Hebron Lane Church of Christ

3221 East Hebron Lane
Sun. Bible Study 9 a.m. | Worship 10 a.m.
| Wed. Bible Study 7:30 p.m.
Evangelist: Ron Halbrook & Connie W.
Adams
(502) 957-5115 or (502) 955-1748 |
hebronlanechurchofchrist.com

LOUISIANA

GONZALES

Southside Church of Christ

405 Orice Roth Rd. | 70737 (Baton Rouge
area)
Sun. Bible Class 9:30 a.m. | Worship 10:30
a.m. & 6 p.m. | Wed. Bible Study 7 p.m.
Evangelist: R.J. Evans (rjevans@eatel.net)
| (225) 622-4587

MANY

Lakeside Church of Christ

12095 Texas Hwy. (Hwy. 6 W.)
12 miles west of Many
Sun. Bible Study 10 a.m. | Worship 11 a.m.
& 5 p.m. | Wed. Bible Study 7 p.m.
(318) 256-9396

MAINE

PORTLAND

Church of Christ

856 Brighton Ave. (Breakwater School) |
Leave Maine Turnpike at Exit 48
Sun. Bible Study 10 a.m. | Worship 11 a.m.
w/ second service immediately following
a.m. worship.
Mid-week Bible Study Please call for
times & places
(207) 839-3075 or 839-8409

MICHIGAN

CEDAR SPRINGS

W. Michigan Church of Christ

Sr. Citizen Center | 44 Park St. (Grand
Rapids Area)
Sun. Worship 11 a.m. | Bible Study 12:30
p.m. | Wed. Bible Study 7 p.m.
Evangelist: Joseph Gladwell
(616) 975-2778 | cedarsprings98@gmail.
com

Roscommon

*N. Michigan Church of Christ***

414 South Main Street
Sun. Bible Study 10:00 a.m. | Worship
11:00 a.m. | Wed. Bible Study 6:00 p.m.
Evangelist: Ryan Thomas
(810) 837-1302 or 989-389-3226 | north-
ernmichiganchurchofchrist.com

MISSISSIPPI

CLINTON

McRaven Rd. Church of Christ

301 McRaven Rd. (I20, exit 36)
Sun. Bible Study 9 a.m. | Worship 10 a.m.
& 6 p.m. | Wed. Bible Study 7 p.m.
Evangelist: Leonard White
(601) 925-9757 or 924-2645

MERIDIAN

7th St. Church of Christ

2914 7th St.
Sun. Bible Study 9 a.m. | Worship 10 a.m.

Grandview Church of Christ

2820 Grandview Ave.
Sun. Bible Study 10 a.m. | Sun. Worship
11 a.m. | Wed. 6:30 p.m.
Ron Cooper: (601) 934-3675 | roncoo-
per@bellsouth.net
Ricky Ethridge: (601) 737-5778 | ricky-
marsha@bellsouth.net

SOUTH HAVEN

Church of Christ

2110 E State Line Rd. (Exit I-55) (Memphis area)
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 a.m. | Worship 10:30 a.m. | Wed. Bible Study 7 p.m.
Evangelist: James A. Brown
Building (662) 342-1132

MISSOURI

BLUE SPRINGS

Southside Church of Christ

4000 SW Christiansen
Sun. Worship 9 a.m. | Bible Study 10 a.m. | Worship 11 a.m. | Wed. Bible Study 7 p.m.
Evangelist: Brett Hogland | (816) 228-9262

BRANSON

Eagle Rock Rd. Church of Christ

432 Eagle Rock Rd.
Sun. Worship 9:30 a.m. | Bible Study 10:30 a.m. | Sun. Evening Worship 2 p.m. | Wed. Bible Study 6 p.m.
Evangelist: Philip North | (417) 239-1036 | primrosenor@suddenink.net | eaglerockroadchurchofchrist.org

CAPE GIRARDEAU

Cape County Church of Christ

2912 Bloomfield Rd
Sun. Bible Study 9:15 a.m. | Worship 10 a.m. | Wed. Bible Study 7 p.m.
Seth McDonald & Jerry Lee Westbrook
(573) 837-1001 | capecountycoc@gmail.com | capecountycoc.com

FAIR GROVE

Church of Christ

217 N. Orchard Blvd.
Sun. Bible Study 9 a.m. & 10 a.m. | Worship 11 a.m. | Wed. Bible Study 7 p.m.
Evangelist: Walter Myers
(417) 830-8972 or (417) 736-2663

KENNETT

Church of Christ

703 Harrison St.
Sun. Bible Study 10 a.m. | Worship 11 a.m. & 6 p.m. | Wed. Bible Study 7 p.m.
Evangelist: Nolan Glover
(573) 888-6778 or (870) 650-1648 | westsidechurchofchrist.us

SAINT JAMES

Church of Christ

685 Sidney St.
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 a.m. | Worship 10:15 a.m. & 5 p.m. | Wed. Bible Study 7 p.m.
Evangelist: Lynn Huggins | (573) 265-8628

SAINT JOSEPH

County Line Church of Christ

2727 County Line Rd.
Sun. Bible Study 9 a.m. | Worship 9:50 a.m. | Wed. Bible Study 7 p.m.
(816) 279-4737 | countylinechurchofchrist.com

NEBRASKA

BEATRICE

Church of Christ at 7th & Bell

Sun. Bible Study 9 a.m. | Worship 10 a.m. & 6:30 p.m.
233-4102 or 228-3827 | churchofchrist-7bell.com

NORTH CAROLINA

CHARLOTTE

Charlotte Church of Christ

5327 S. Tryon Street
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 a.m. | Sun. Worship 10:30 a.m. | Wed. Bible Study 7:30 p.m.
(704) 525-5655 | charlottechurchofchrist.org

OHIO

BEAVERCREEK

Knollwood Church of Christ

1031 Welford Dr.
Sun. Bible Study 10:00 a.m. | Sun. Worship 11:00 am & 3:00 p.m. | Wed. Bible Study Adults: 1:00 p.m. & All ages: 7:00 p.m.
Evangelist: Heath Rogers
(937) 426-1422 | knollwoodchurch.org

DAYTON

West Carrollton Church of Christ

28 W. Main St., 45449
Sun. Worship 9 a.m. | Bible Study 9:30 a.m. | Worship 10:25 a.m. | Wed. Bible Study 7 p.m.
Evangelists: Michael Grushon (937) 866-5162 or Alan Beck (937) 469-3311 | wc-coc.org

FRANKLIN

Franklin Church of Christ

6417 Franklin-Lebanon Rd. 45005
Sun. Bible Study 10 a.m. | Worship 10:45 a.m. | Tues. Bible Study 6:30 p.m.
Evangelist: Josh Lee
(937) 789-8055 or (937) 746-1249 | franklin-church.org

MANSFIELD

Southside Church of Christ

687 Mansfield-Lucas Rd.
Sun. Bible Study 10 a.m. | Worship 10:45 a.m. | Wed. Bible Study 4:30 p.m.
James Bond: (419) 564-3878 or Mr. Kim Walton: (419) 651-3488
Bldg: (419) 522-8982 | northsidecocf.us

NEW LEBANON

New Lebanon Church of Christ

1973 W Main St.
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 a.m. | Worship 10:30 a.m., & 5 p.m. | Wed. Bible Study 7 p.m.
Evangelist: Bruce Hastings (937) 687-7150 or (937) 478-0367

MARIETTA-RENO

Marietta-Reno Church of Christ

80 Sandhill Rd. Reno, OH 45773
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 a.m. | Worship 10:30 a.m. & 6:30 p.m. | Wed. Bible Study 7 p.m.
Evangelist: Mark Childers | (304) 615-1091
(740) 374-9827 | mariettarenochurchofchrist.org

NORTHWOOD

Frey Rd. Church of Christ

4110 Frey Rd. (Toledo Area)
Sun. Bible Study 10 a.m. | Worship 11 a.m. & 6 p.m. | Wed. Bible Study 7 p.m.
Evangelist: Donald Jarabek
(419) 893-3566 & (567) 694-5062

OKLAHOMA

MCALESTER

North A St. Church of Christ

2120 No. A St.
Sun. Bible Study 9:45 a.m. | Worship 10:45 a.m. & 5:30 p.m. | Wed. Bible Study 7 p.m.
Evangelist: Rob Lungstrum
(918) 931-1362 or (918) 423-3445

OREGON

SWEET HOME

Church of Christ

3702 E. Long St.
Sun. Bible Study 10 a.m. | Worship 11 a.m. & 7 p.m. | Wed. Bible Study 7:30 p.m.
Bldg: (541) 367-1599

SOUTH CAROLINA

SUMTER

Woodland Church of Christ

3370 Broad St. Extension
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 a.m. | Worship 10:30 a.m. & 5:30 p.m. | Wed. Bible Study 7 p.m.
Evangelist: A.A. Granke, Jr. | (803) 499-6023

WEST COLUMBIA

Airport Church of Christ

4013 Edmund Hwy. (Hwy. 302)
Note: See our web site for current assembly schedule.
Evangelist: Terry W. Benton
(803) 834-6978 | airport-church-of-christ.com

TENNESSEE

COLUMBIA

Mooresville Pike Church of Christ

417 Mooresville Pike
(.8 mi. N. of Hwy. 50/Jas. Campbell)
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 a.m. | Worship 10:30 a.m. & 3:30 p.m. | Wed. Bible Study 7 p.m.
(931) 388-5828 or (931) 381-7898 | mooresvillepikecoc.com

COSBY

Cosby Church of Christ

4894 Hooper Hwy. | 37722
(15 mi. E. of Gatlinburg on Hwy. 321)
Sun. Bible Study 10a.m. | Worship 11 a.m. & 5 p.m. | Wed. Bible Study 6:00 p.m.
Evangelist: Olie Williamson
(423) 487-5540 or (423) 748-0844

KINGSTON SPRINGS

Kingston Springs Church of Christ

350 North Main St.
Sun. Bible Study 9 a.m. | Worship 10 a.m. & 5 p.m. | Wed. Bible Study 7 p.m.
Evangelist: Steve Walker
ksccoc.com

ChurchDirectory

MOUNT PLEASANT

Locust St. Church of Christ

108 Locust St.
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 a.m. | Worship
10:30 a.m. & 5 p.m. | Wed. Bible Study
7 p.m.
Evangelist: Daniel H. King, Sr.
(931) 379-3704 or (931) 964-3924 |
lscoc.com

MURFREESBORO

Cason Ln. Church of Christ

1110 Cason Lane
Sun. Bible Study 9 a.m. | Worship 10 a.m.
& 5 p.m. | Wed. Bible Study 7 p.m.
Bldg: (615) 896-0090 | casonlanechurch.
org

NASHVILLE

Hillview Church of Christ

7471 Charlotte Pike
Sun. Bible Study 9 a.m. | Worship 10 a.m.
& 5 p.m. | Wed. Bible Study 7 p.m.
(615) 952-5458 or (615) 356-7318
Evangelist: Lee Wildman

Perry Heights Church of Christ

423 Donelson Pike
Sun. Bible Study 9 a.m. | Worship 9:55
a.m. & 6 p.m. | Wed. Bible Study 7 p.m.
Evangelist: Johnny Felker
(615) 883-3118 | perryheights.faithweb.
com

TEXAS

ALLEN

Twin Creeks Church of Christ

1414 W. Exchange Pkwy
Sun. Bible Study 9:00 a.m. | Worship 10
a.m. & 5:00 p.m. | Wed. Bible Study 7:00
p.m.
Evangelist: Jerry King (214) 504-0443
(972) 727-5355 | twincreekscoc.com

ALVARADO

I-35 Church of Christ

E. Service Rd. off I-35, N. of Alvarado
Sun. Bible Study 10:00 a.m. | Worship
11 a.m. & 6:00 p.m. | Wed. Bible Study
7:00 p.m.
(817) 295-7277 or 790-7253

ALVIN

Adoue St. Church of Christ

605 E. Adoue St
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 a.m. | Worship
10:30 a.m. & 6 p.m. | Wed. Bible Study
7:30 p.m.
Evangelist: Mark Mayberry
(346) 216-1707 | ascoc.org

BAYTOWN

Church of Christ at Pruett & Lobit

701 North Pruett St.
Sun. Bible Study 9:45 a.m. | Worship
10:40 a.m. & 6:30 p.m. | Wed. Bible Study
7 p.m.
Bldg (281) 422-5926 or Weldon (713)
818-1321 | biblework.com

BEAUMONT

Dowlen Rd. Church of Christ

3060 Dowlen Rd.
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 a.m. | Worship
10:30 a.m. & 6 p.m. | Wed. Bible Study
7 p.m.
Evangelist: Max Dawson
(409) 866-1996 | dowlenroad.com

EDNA

Church of Christ

301 Robison St.
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 a.m. | Worship
10:30 a.m. & 6 p.m. | Wed. Bible Study
7 p.m.
Evangelist: Phillip Stuckey
(361) 782-5506 or (361) 782-2844 |
ednachurchofchrist.org

EL PASO

Eastridge Church of Christ

3277 Pendleton Rd.
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 a.m. | Worship
10:30 a.m. & 5 p.m. | Wed. Bible Study
7 p.m.
(915) 855-1524

FORT WORTH

West Side Church of Christ

6110 White Settlement Rd. 76114
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 a.m. | Worship
10:30 a.m. & 6 p.m. | Wed. Bible Study
7:30 p.m.
(817) 738-7269

HOUSTON

Fry Rd. Church of Christ

2510 Fry Rd. (77084)
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 a.m. | Worship
10:20 a.m. & 6 p.m. | Wed. Bible Study
7:30 p.m.
Evangelist: Mark White
fryroad.org

IRVING

Westside Church of Christ

2320 Imperial Dr. (closest to DFW Airport)
Sun. Bible Study 9 a.m. | Worship 9:50
a.m. & 6 p.m. | Wed. Bible Study 7:30 p.m.
Evangelist: Mark Roberts
(972) 986-9131 | justchristians.com

NACOGDOCHES

Stallings Dr. Church of Christ

3831 N.E. Stallings Dr.
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 a.m. | Worship
10:20 a.m. & 6 p.m. | Wed. Bible Study
7 p.m.
Evangelists: Randy Harshbarger & Jay
Taylor

SAN ANTONIO

Pecan Valley Church of Christ

268 Utopia Ave. (Dir: I-37 S.E. Exit Pecan
Valley)
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 a.m. | Worship
10:30 a.m. & 5 p.m. | Wed. Bible Study
7 p.m.
Evangelist: Jesse Garcia
(210) 660 0409 | pecanvalleychurchof-
christ.org

SHERMAN

Westwood Village Church of Christ

314 N. Tolbert
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 a.m. | Worship
10:30 a.m. & 5 p.m. | Wed. Bible Study
7 p.m.
Evangelist: Ronald Stringer

TEMPLE

Leon Valley Church of Christ

4404 Twin City Blvd.
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 a.m. | Worship
10:30 a.m. & 6 p.m. | Wed. Bible Study
7:30 p.m.
Evangelist: Jason Garcia (yourfriendjgar@
gmail.com) or (leonvalleychurch@gmail.
com)
254-939-0682 | leonvalleychurch.org

TEXARKANA

Franklin Dr. Church of Christ

2301 Franklin Dr.
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 a.m. | Worship
10:15 a.m. | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 p.m.
Evangelist: Bryan Garlock
(870) 772-0746 | txkchurch.com

WACO

Sun Valley Church of Christ

340 E Warren St. (in Hewitt, a suburb of
Waco)
Sun. Bible Class 9:30 a.m. | Worship 10:30
a.m. & 5:00 p.m. | Wed. Bible Study 7 p.m.
Evangelist: Marc Smith
(254) 292-2482 or 652-7698

VIRGINIA

CHESAPEAKE

Tidewater Church of Christ

217 Taxus St.
Sun. Bible Study 10 a.m. | Worship 11 a.m.
& 6 p.m. | Wed. Bible Study 7 p.m.
Evangelist: Steven Matthews
(757) 436-6900 | tidewaterchurchofchrist.
com

RICHMOND

Courthouse Church of Christ

8330 Doublecreek Court, Chesterfield, VA
23832 (Dir: Metro Area; Courthouse Rd. at
Double Creek Ct. 2.2 miles S of Rt. 288)
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 a.m. | Worship
10:30 a.m. & 5 p.m. | Wed. Bible Study
7 p.m.
Evangelist: Nathan L. Morrison
(804) 778-4717 | courthousechurchof-
christ.com

Forest Hill Church of Christ

1208 W. 41st St.
Sun. Bible Study 10 a.m. | Worship 11 a.m.
& 6:00 p.m. | Wed. Bible Study 7:00 p.m.
Evangelist: Jack Bise, Jr. (804) 233-5959

RIDGEWAY

Church of Christ

2970 Old Leaksville Rd.
Sun. Bible Study 10 a.m. | Worship 11 a.m.
& 5:30 p.m. | Wed. Bible Study 7 p.m.
(276) 956-6049 | churchofchristatridge-
way.com

ROANOKE

Blue Ridge Church of Christ

929 Indiana Ave. N.E. (5 min. from
Roanoke Convention Center)
Sun. 1st Lesson 9:15 a.m. | Bible Study 10
a.m. | Worship 11 a.m. | Wed. Bible Study
7:30 p.m.
Evangelist: Brent Paschall
(540) 344-2755 | blueridgecoc.org

VIRGINIA BEACH

Southside Church of Christ

5652 Haden Rd.
Sun. Bible Study 10 a.m. | Worship 11 a.m.
Robert Mallard (757) 464-4574

WASHINGTON

BELLINGHAM

Mt. Baker Church of Christ

1860 Mt. Baker Hwy.
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 a.m. | Worship
10:30 a.m. & 6 p.m. | Wed. Bible Study
7 p.m.
Evangelist: Joe Price
(360) 752-2692 or (360) 380-2960 |
bibleanswer.com/mtbaker

TACOMA

Manitou Park Church of Christ

Meeting at Gray Middle School, 6229 S.

Tyler St., Tacoma, WA 98409

Note: Please see webpage for updated meeting location and times.

Sun. Bible Study 10 a.m. | Worship 11 a.m.

| Wed. Bible Study 7 p.m. (Online)

(253) 242-3098 | tacomachurch@gmail.

com | tacomachurch.com

WEST VIRGINIA

CLARKSBURG

Westside Church of Christ

7 Old Davisson Run Rd

Sun. Worship 9:30 a.m.

(304) 622-5433 | westsidechurchofchrist-

ww.net

FAIRMONT

Eastside Church of Christ

1929 Morgantown Ave.

Sun. Bible Study 10 a.m. | Worship 10:45

a.m. & 6 p.m. | Wed. Bible Study 7 p.m.

(304) 363-8696 or (304) 844-2437

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