

The Mystery of Fellowship

(Ephesians 3:9) And to make all *men* see what *is* the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ.

A "mystery" in Scripture is a previously hidden truth, now divinely revealed; but in which a supernatural element still remains despite the revelation. In other words, the mystery is revealed but it needs the Spirit of God to illuminate the truth to us.

Fellowship Defined

Fellowship comes from the Greek word "Koinonia", from which two words are translated: fellowship and communion.

Fellowship means: companionship; mutual sharing; gathering of people having the same interests.

Communion means: to have in common; to share by all; participation and partnership.

Fellowship is the act of using a thing in common.

True Fellowship

True fellowship must be two-fold in order to be effective: Godward and man-ward.

Fellowship With God

(Philippians 2:1) If *there be* therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies.

Fellowship With Man

There must be a two-way communication with believers.

One is fellowship with one another, (1 John 1:7) *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.*

The second is the right hand of fellowship, agreeing to be partners. This fellowship is the union whereby we work together for the cause of doing the Lord's work and minister to people. (Galatians 2:9) *And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we *should go* unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.*

Spiritual Fellowship

(Acts 2:42) *And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.* In the fellowship that they had they prayed together, sang, praised and worshipped God together, exhorted and encouraged each other. They also ministered in the Word of God and ate together. This is the true meaning of Christian fellowship. When we have true fellowship, the Bible tells us that we are emptied from vessel to vessel, in other words, we encourage and edify each other. (Jeremiah 48:11) *Moab hath been at ease from his youth, and he hath settled on his lees, and hath not been emptied from vessel to vessel, neither hath he gone into captivity: therefore his taste remained in him, and his scent is not changed.*

Practical Fellowship

(Acts 2:44-46) *And all that believed were together, and had all things common; (45) And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all *men*, as every man had need. (46)*

And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart.

The Christians went from house to house, (Acts 2:46) And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart.

They communicated, (Hebrews 13:16) But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

They were generous and hospitable to each other, (Romans 12:13) Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality.

Getting to know and appreciate one another. This is the joy of true fellowship, meeting and sharing in spiritual and social needs.

Forbidden to Fellowship

There are five things that the Bible tells us that we are not to fellowship with.

The World, (Ephesians 5:11) And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove *them*.

Satanic spirits, (1 Corinthians 10:20) But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils.

Unrighteousness, (2 Corinthians 6:14) Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?

False religions, (Jude 4, BBE) For certain men have come among you secretly, marked out before in the holy Writings for this evil fate, men without the fear of God, turning his grace into an unclean thing, and false to our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

False doctrines, (2 John 1:9-11, BBE) Anyone who goes on and does not keep to the teaching of Christ, has not God: he who keeps to the teaching has the Father and the Son. (10) If anyone comes to you not having this teaching, do not take him into your house or give him words of love: (11) For he who gives him words of love has a part in his evil works.

Reasons to Break Fellowship

Heretics (teaches false doctrines) and heresies are proper grounds for breaking fellowship, (Titus 3:10, GW) Have nothing to do with people who continue to teach false doctrine after you have warned them once or twice.

Disorderly conduct, (2 Thessalonians 3:6) Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.

(1 Corinthians 5:11, GW) Now, what I meant was that you should not associate with people who call themselves brothers or sisters in the Christian faith but live in sexual sin, are greedy, worship false gods, use abusive language, get drunk, or are dishonest. Don't eat with such people.

The thing that God hates the most is disunity in the church, (Proverbs 6:16-19) These six *things* doth the Lord hate: yea, seven *are* an abomination (disgusting) unto him: (17) A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, (18) An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations (a heart full of evil designs), feet that be swift in running to mischief, (19) A false witness *that* speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren.

Because God hates disunity in the church, those that sow discord must be

disfellowshipped, (Romans 16:17, GW) Brothers and sisters, I urge you to watch out for those people who create divisions and who make others fall away [from the Christian faith] by teaching doctrine that is not the same as you have learned. Stay away from them.

Reasons for Unity and Fellowship

Difference of opinion of meats, holidays, and nationalities are not grounds for breaking fellowship, (Romans 14:1-6, GW) Welcome people who are weak in faith, but don't get into an argument over differences of opinion. (2) Some people believe that they can eat all kinds of food. Other people with weak faith believe that they can eat only vegetables. (3) People who eat all foods should not despise people who eat only vegetables. In the same way, the vegetarians should not criticize people who eat all foods, because God has accepted those people. (4) Who are you to criticize someone else's servant? The Lord will determine whether his servant has been successful. The servant will be successful because the Lord makes him successful. (5) One person decides that one day is holier than another. Another person decides that all days are the same. Every person must make his own decision. (6) When people observe a special day, they observe it to honor the Lord. When people eat all kinds of foods, they honor the Lord as they eat, since they give thanks to God. Vegetarians also honor the Lord when they eat, and they, too, give thanks to God.

Because God hates disunity in the church, that means that He desires unity in the church, (Ephesians 4:2,13) With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love. (13) Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

Unity is beautiful in the eyes of the Lord, (Psalm 133:1-3) Behold, how good and how pleasant *it is* for brethren to dwell together in unity! (2) *It is* like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, *even* Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments; (3) As the dew of Hermon, *and as the dew* that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the Lord commanded the blessing, *even* life for evermore.

The Mystery of Fellowship

(Ephesians 3:9) And to make all *men* see what *is* the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ.

The mystery of fellowship is this, even though we are sinners, God made a way for us to have fellowship with Him. (2 Corinthians 5:18-19) And all things *are* of God, who hath reconciled (restored, made peace between) us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; (19) To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

And even though the church is made up of people from different walks of life, we can come together to worship the Lord our God. We can have true fellowship with God and with fellow believers. (Ephesians 2:4-6) But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, (5) Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) (6) And hath raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus.

When the first church had true fellowship with God and with man, they also had great revival in their church, (Acts 2:47) Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

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