

# The Christian and Fellowship

There was once a man who professed to be a Christian but didn't see the need to go to Church. He said he belonged to a noncongregational church! Another person when asked what Church he belonged to said that his Church was very small- it had one member. This attitude seems very prevalent in our society because of our insistence on self-reliance and our American concept of "rugged individualism." But is this view of the Christian Church valid? What should our relationship with other believers be like? In this lesson, we will look at the Biblical definition of fellowship and learn why fellowship is essential for Christians.

## What fellowship is

It is a conscientious attempt to encourage a fellow believer in their relationship with God (Hebrews 10:24-25). It is therefore others oriented (Romans 15:1, Philippians 2:3-4). Fellowship comes from the Greek word, *KOINONIA*, meaning communion, sharing in common.

## What fellowship is not

Fellowship is not "bellyship," getting together for meals, pot-lucks, etc. but without mutual encouragement in the Lord. It is not self oriented but considers how to encourage others in their faith in God.

## Scriptural "pictures" of the Church

<u>Picture</u>	<u>Characteristic</u>	<u>Quality</u>	<u>Scripture</u>
Body of Christ	Interdependent	Growing	Ephesians 4:12
Bride of Christ	Pure	undefiled	Revelation 21:2, 9
God's building	Temple	Holy	Ephesians 2:20- 22
God's field	Building	Fruitful	1 Corinthians 3:9
God's flock	Sheep	Dependent	1 Peter 5:2
Unleavened bread	Pure	Unmixed	1 Corinthians 5:6- 8
Salt of the earth	Flavor to the world	Useful	Matthew 5:13
Light of the world	Illuminating truth	Providing hope	Matthew 5:14

### **Emphasis on fellowship**

- Spiritual family emphasized over earthly family (Matthew 12:46-50)
- The early Church continually devoted to fellowship (Acts 2:42)
- We are fellow citizen with the saints and belong to God's family (Ephesians 2:19)
- Fellowship with one another can only occur when we are in fellowship with the Lord (1 John 1:3-7)

### **The result of fellowship**

A. Believers are encouraged to love and good works (Hebrews 10:24-25)

1. Mutual encouragement in the body of Christ
2. We will be reminded to live responsibly now because of the imminent "Day" (of judgment)
3. We should see the significance of fellowship

B. Love toward one another, a witness to the world (John 13:34-35)

C. Unity of believers, living in peace with others believers (Ephesians 4:1-5)

D. We are stronger (Ephesians 4:11-13; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12)

Question: Are you currently experiencing fellowship with believers? If so, how has it helped you spiritually? If not, what steps could you take to fellowship more often?