

THEY HAD FELLOWSHIP. V44-45

A. The basis of their unity was Christ and this brought them together.

B. The Greek word is "koinonia." It means "communion" fellowship, sharing in common, something widespread, familiar and ordinary. It comes from the word "common" which is the heart meaning of the word.

A sister term is "koin o inos" , meaning a partnership, an associate. It has as its root the acts of sharing in something. (See 1 Cor. 10:20)

C. One commentator defines it, "the expression of genuine Christianity among the members of God's family"

D. What fellowship includes:

1. Biblical Fellowship has at its heart, Love and Acceptance: Eph. 3:17-19

Sharing, something with someone.

Sharing of something with someone.

We accept each other with our faults, problems and failures. Esteem others higher than ourselves. That would solve about 95% of problems that come up.

READ Philippians 2:1-10...

The word "esteem" means "to lead before the mind, to suppose, consider, esteem." In other words we esteem the other person not based on what they actually do, but we graciously think of them higher than they really may be. We give them the benefit of the doubt. We show them grace and mercy. We extend to them love...and it is not based on whether they desire it or even fully deserve, but on the love God has given us.

2. It means that abrasiveness, being insensitive, showing resentment and a judgmental spirit must be replaced with an "agape" love. "Agape" is the Greek word translated in our New Testament "love." It is the word used for the love God shows to us in sending Jesus Christ to die for our sins. It is a unselfish love, which seeks the highest good of the other person, getting behind them so as to help them reach God's goal and will for their lives.

3. Biblical Fellowship is a Family relationship: You become a part of the Family of God on Earth.

I hope all of us see ourselves as a family. When we joined this church we joined this family. Our home is in heaven. Thus as strangers here in the world, we are out numbered, and different from the world, being believers, having our sins forgiven and having received the promise of eternal life. It is sad that some in our churches, by their lack of devotion to their church, show they love the world more.

4. Fellowship requires having concern and a spirit of restoration one to the other. Galatians 6:1-2 "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."

- a. We are to bear the burdens of one another.**
- b. Especially of a brother or sister who is in need or has fallen spiritually, or morally.**
- c. It requires prayer, but more it requires fellowship with the person. Fellowship in a common concern for one another. Being gentle with the offended, the offensive or person who has the problem.**

5. Fellowship requires confession and forgiveness.

James 5:16 "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

In order that confession and forgiveness are able to be effective, there must be freedom in the church and atmosphere that will allow it.

Gossiping, bitterness, back-biting and criticizing hinder the spirit of freedom for forgiveness and confession and will kill the spirit in the church and be like throwing cold water on the freedom to fellowship with each other.

So does being judgmental, or condemning, or feeling that you are better than the other person. One also must have the courage to be frank to share a failure or personal need. We each must recognize our own failures, faults and prejudices. We must as Jesus said, "Get the beam out of our own eye before we try to get the mote out of someone's eye."

6. Fellowship involves encouragement and availability. We seek to serve and help each other. You cannot do that if you have something against someone else. You cannot do it if you are not faithful to the Lord. Hebrews 10:23-25 says we are to hold to our faith without wavering.

We are to consider how we spur one another on to love and good deeds. We are faithfully meet together, exhorting (building one another up or encouraging one another.

7. Fellowship Involves Informality and Flexibility. Heb. 13:1-2,14-16
Let brotherly love control all we do. Do not forget to entertain strangers. It doesn't mean show them a good time, but means to show love or hospitality towards others.

It means having a freedom in our fellowship, and not let ritual and ceremony rule it. V14-16

We should not let not ritual rule or tradition rule our fellowship, but experiencing our common bond in and to God. We should let our fellowship and praise to God be in actually doing the will of God, sharing and helping one another for this is what pleases the Lord.

Conclusion:

Fellowship with God, by accepting the Lord Jesus Christ is the being of Fellowship.

With God first, and because of that fellowship one with the other.

Are you in fellowship with God? Trusting in Christ. Are we in fellowship with one another.

Are we forgiving? Are we judgmental or considerate and sensitive to one another's needs?

Do we see ourselves as a vital part of this church, EACH ONE OF US, equally important and vital to seeing the work of the Lord done here?

Important Note: I came across this information and thought it insightful. I would love to give proper credit to the author. Unfortunately, the author is unknown. I pray the author will glorify God if this would help any who read, and that God will receive the praise.