

The Practice of Fellowship (1)

THE MEANING AND LIFE OF FELLOWSHIP

Scripture Reading:

1 Cor. 1:9; 1 John 1:3, 6-7; Phil. 2:1; 2 Cor. 13:14; John 4:24

1 John 1:3, 6-7 “³ That which we have seen and heard we report also to you that you also may have fellowship with us, and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. ⁶ If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and are not practicing the truth; ⁷ But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from every sin.”

Phil. 2:1 “If there is therefore any encouragement in Christ, if any consolation of love, if any fellowship of spirit, if any tenderheartedness and compassions”

2 Cor. 13:14 “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.”

John 4:24 “God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truthfulness.”

I. Fellowship is the issue of the eternal life and is actually the flow of the eternal life within all the believers, who have received and possessed the divine life—1 Cor. 1:9; 1 John 1:6-7:

- A. All genuine believers are in this fellowship—Acts 2:42; 1 John 1:6-7.
- B. Fellowship is a mutual flow; something flows into us from God, and something flows from us to God; at the same time, as God’s people something flows mutually among us.
- C. To live in fellowship means to live in God’s presence.

II. Fellowship is carried on by the Spirit in our regenerated spirit; hence, it is called the fellowship of the Holy Spirit” (2 Cor. 13:14) and “fellowship of [our] spirit” (Phil. 2:1):

- A. God being the Spirit—John 4:24:
 - 1. The strongest and highest life in the universe is the Spirit of God.
 - 2. The God whom we contact is not physical; He is invisible and untouchable, yet He is full of life, very living and strong.
- B. Man having a spirit—Job 32:8a; Prov. 20:27; 1 Thes. 5:23; Heb. 4:12:

Job 32:8 “But there is a spirit in man, And the breath of the Almighty gives them understanding.”

 - 1. Man’s spirit is his inward organ for him to contact God, receive God, contain God, and assimilate God into his entire being as his life and his everything.
 - 2. The spirit of man is for man to worship God (John 4:24), to be regenerated by God (John 3:6b), and to be joined to God (1 Cor. 6:17; 2 Tim. 4:22) that man may walk and live in an organic union with God (Rom. 8:4b) to fulfil God’s purpose.

- C. Our fellowship with God is the mutual fellowship between the human spirit and the divine Spirit; therefore, for man to contact God and fellowship with God, he must be in spirit and exercise his spirit—Phil. 2:1; 2 Cor. 13:14.
- D. Fellowship is sensed in our spirit – Rom. 8:6b; 2 Cor. 3:17.
Rom. 8:6b “.... the mind set on the spirit is life and peace.”
2 Cor. 3:17 “Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.”

III. The Christian life is a life of fellowship—Acts 2:42; Phil. 2:1:

- A. Whether we live a Christian life in reality depends on whether we are living a life in fellowship with God or are independent from God:
 - 1. Being independent from God means that we have broken our relationship with Him and have lost the mutual flow with Him—1 John 1:6; cf. Gen. 3:8.
 - 2. A believer who is severed from God is a Christian in name and position only, but he is no longer a Christian in his practical living—cf. Rev. 3:1.
 - 3. The principle of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is according to the principle of independence from God – living without God, without needing God, without having God, without depending on God, and without contacting God—Gen 2:16-17; 4:3-5, 16-24.
 - 4. We should not focus on doing things that are right, good, or godly; rather, we should focus on whether we are joined to God, connected to Him, and in a mutual flow with Him when doing things that are right, good, or godly; we should focus on not being separated from God.
- B. A life of fellowship not only has the aspect of not being independent from God but also has the aspect of not being individualistic—1 John 1:3:
 - 1. If we desire to be a normal believer, we must not be independent from God and individualistic toward the brothers and sisters; we not only need God, but we also need the other believers.
 - 2. In the Bible the believers are likened to sheep; sheep are always in a flock—John 10:16.
 - 3. There is hardly anything in our Christian life that does not require fellowship with the saints (1 Cor. 1:2); there are bound to be risks and mistakes in anything we initiate, decide and do on our own.
- C. This kind of living, which is neither independent nor individualistic, is the normal life of a believer.

IV. Fellowship is the foundation for our growth and service:

- A. A genuinely spiritual person remains in his spirit, enjoys God’s presence, and has life, peace, and freedom; he is also satisfied and strengthened—Rom. 8:6b; 2 Cor. 3:17.
- B. Since he lives in fellowship with God, the divine life can flow into him and become his constitution; as a result, he can always express the life of God and impart this life into others—1 John 5:16.
- C. It is possible that some of us who do not have the fellowship of life, yet we still give messages, pray, visit, or administrate the church; this kind of work, which

is not in fellowship with God, is merely a job, and it cannot impart life into others.

- D. Fellowship is the key to all our spiritual experiences, whether they are related to our life, our living, or our work; if we desire to be used by God, we must pay attention to this fellowship—cf. Mark 3:14.

V. Learning to fellowship with the Lord is the most important lesson for the Lord's serving ones:

- A. A person who desires to be used by the Lord needs the Lord's visitation, and he must be willing to pay the price; furthermore, he must learn to fellowship with the Lord—cf. Luke 1:28-30, 34-38.
- B. To be used by God is to let Him flow out of us in order to supply others; however, if we do not let Him flow into us, He cannot flow out of us; the best way to let God flow into us is to fellowship with Him.
- C. The Lord always demands something of us in our fellowship with Him because there are too many matters and things within us, in our living and in our environment that replace Him; hence we do not express much of His element—Matt. 12:33-34.
- D. The experience of being touched by God in our fellowship with Him and surrendering to Him is very precious; this experience will not only enable us to be used by the Lord; it will also keep us fresh and living—John 7:38b.
- E. When we sense that our experiences, testimonies, or messages are old, there must be a problem in our fellowship with the Lord; we have either lost this fellowship, or we do not fellowship as much; as a result, we do not have new experiences, and we are not useful.

References: Lessons for New Believers, Lesson 21; Fellowshiping with the Lord for the Mingling of God with Man, Ch. 2.