

The Practice of Fellowship (2)

THE EFFECT, TIME AND PLACE OF FELLOWSHIP

Scripture Reading:

2 Cor. 3:18; 1 Thes. 5:17; Dan 6:10; Lam. 3:22; Mark. 1:35

2 Cor. 3:18 “But we all with unveiled face, beholding and reflecting like a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord Spirit.”

1 Thes. 5:17 “Unceasingly pray.”

Dan 6:10 “Now when Daniel came to know that the writing had been signed, he went to his house (in his upper room he had windows open toward Jerusalem) and three times daily he knelt on his knees and prayed and gave thanks before his God, because he had always done so previously.”

Lam. 3:22 “It is Jehovah’s lovingkindness that we are not consumed, For His compassions do not fail; They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness.”

Mark. 1:35 “And rising very early in the morning, while it was still night, He went out and went away to a deserted place, and there He prayed.”

I. The effect of fellowship with God:

- A. According to the evidence in the Bible and our experience, the effect of fellowship has a negative and a positive aspect—John 3:30:

John 3:30 “He must increase, but I must decrease.”

1. On the negative side, fellowship with God continually removes the undesirable elements within us.
 2. On the positive side, the more a person fellowships with God, the more the element of God will be increased within him.
- B. We can identify at least three categories of things that should not be in us—sins, the world, and the self—1 John 1:8; 1 John 2:15; Matt. 16:24
1. Whether or not we have genuine fellowship with God can be seen by whether this function of removal is manifested in us.
 2. If it has been a long time since something has been removed from us, our fellowship with God has diminished or ceased.
 3. Any dealing produced through fellowship is not accomplished once for all.
 4. There is no regulation related to our dealing with things; rather, this is an effect produced spontaneously through fellowship.
- C. Even things given to us by God must be removed; He will require us at a certain point to offer to Him all our spiritual experiences, our spiritual gifts, and the fruit of our work, that is, what we have received from Him—Gen. 22:2.
- D. Those who live in fellowship do not uniformly express the same thing—cf. Matt. 11:18-19.
- E. God’s work is not to make us good, whole, or spotless; rather, it is to work Himself into us—2 Cor. 3:18; Gal. 4:19; Col. 2:19.

2 Cor. 3:18 "But we all with unveiled face, beholding and reflecting like a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord Spirit."

1. The increase of God's element can be compared to the process of metabolism in our body; in metabolism old elements are constantly replaced with new elements—Rom. 12:2.
 2. A person who learns to live in fellowship is constantly undergoing a metabolic change.
- F. Those in religion have an outward standard, but Christians do not; the only need of a Christian is to fellowship with God—1 John 2:27.

1 John 2:27 "And as for you, the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you have no need that anyone teach you; but as His anointing teaches you concerning all things and is true and is not a lie, and even as it has taught you, abide in Him."

II. The time to fellowship with God:

- A. Constantly—1 Thes. 5:17:

1 Thes. 5:17 "Unceasingly pray."

1. Practically speaking, fellowship with God, like breathing, should be constant and not limited by time.
2. We should learn to fellowship to such an extent that even when we quarrel and are upset with others, speaking angry words to them, we would still be in fellowship with God—cf. Matt. 11:20-24, 25; cf. Neh. 2:4-5.

- B. Setting aside fixed times—Dan. 6:10; Psa. 119:164; Psa. 55:17; Acts 10:3:

Dan 6:10 "Now when Daniel came to know that the writing had been signed, he went to his house (in his upper room he had windows open toward Jerusalem) and three times daily he knelt on his knees and prayed and gave thanks before his God, because he had always done so previously."

Psa. 119:164 "Seven times a day I praise You For Your righteous ordinances."

Psa. 55:17 "Evening and morning and at noontime I complain and moan, And He hears my voice."

Acts 10:3 "He saw clearly in a vision around the ninth hour of the day an angel of God coming in to him and saying to him, Cornelius."

1. If a Christian wants to learn to live before the Lord and have constant fellowship with Him, he needs to be one who touches God early in the morning.
2. According to our experience, it is best to set aside a time in the morning, before the day dawns; we have not had contact with any person or thing, and our outward environment and inner being are quieter—Lam. 3:22-23:

Lam. 3:22-23 "It is Jehovah's lovingkindness that we are not consumed, For His compassions do not fail; They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness."

3. In the Bible we find God's servants as examples of rising up early in the morning: Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Joshua, Gideon, Hannah, Samuel, David, Job, Mary, and the apostles.

4. Those who want to rise early should learn the lesson of going to bed early; God ordained that man would go to bed when the sun goes down and rise when the sun comes up, yet the devil stimulates man to be active when the sun goes down and to sleep when the sun comes up—cf. Eph. 5:8.
 5. A new believer especially should set aside time during which he can fellowship with God.
 6. We should spend at least twenty minutes fellowshiping with Him every day; the best is to have at least half an hour to one hour every morning.
- C. Drawing near to God in the morning and fellowshiping with Him not only causes our spirit to be fed and nourished but also causes our body to be healthy; if we touch and absorb God every morning, we will have an intelligent mind, clear thinking, and sound judgment.
- D. It may be necessary to make some resolution and determination and to find another brother or sister who has the heart to practice in order to remind and encourage one another.

III. The place to fellowship with God:

- A. Anytime and anywhere:
1. There is no place where we cannot fellowship with God.
 2. Whether we are traveling, working, taking a walk, or listening to a message, we can fellowship with God at all times and in all places.
- B. Setting aside a specific place:
1. In order to pray properly, a quiet place is needed.
 2. We should not say that since fellowshiping with God is a matter in spirit, the outward environment does not matter—Matt. 14:23

Mark. 1:35 “And rising very early in the morning, while it was still night, He went out and went away to a deserted place, and there He prayed.”

Reference: *Lessons for New Believers*, Lesson 22