

WHEN THE FELLOWSHIP BREAKS DOWN (The Cautions of Fellowship)

- A. The COMMONALITY of FELLOWSHIP.** The *definition* of “fellowship” (koinonia) is A SHARING OR JOINT PARTICIPATION INVOLVING A COMMON INTEREST, THINKING, OR PURPOSE BETWEEN INDIVIDUALS.

What is the basis of true biblical fellowship? It is a COMMON SALVATION. (Jude 1:3-4), a COMMON POSITION in Christ by the grace of God. (1 Cor. 1:9-10), along with COMMON DOCTRINE, starting with the Gospel (Phil. 1:12-18), as well as a COMMON FOCUS, THINKING, and PURPOSE – TO SERVE & PLEASE JESUS CHRIST & BRING GLORY OF GOD. (Phil. 2:1ff)

Principle to remember: the REALITY, QUALITY, and DEPTH of your fellowship with others will depend upon your agreement on the Gospel, sound doctrine, your attitude, and spiritual maturity.

- B. The CATEGORIES of FELLOWSHIP.** The *direction* of fellowship can be HORIZONTALLY with other BELIEVERS around JESUS CHRIST, or it can be VERTICALLY with GOD THE FATHER and the LORD JESUS CHRIST. (1 John 1:1-3)

What must you remember about love and fellowship with others, even believers? While we are to love all believers, this does not mean that we can always fellowship with them. In addition, the fellowship we enjoy with others will be affected by false doctrine along with one’s attitude & purpose. In addition, the intimacy of your fellowship with God and others has much to do with responsiveness to God’s Word.

C. The CAUSES of FELLOWSHIP.

1. The *design* of fellowship in Acts 2:41-47 involves genuine BELIEVERS in Christ who were gathering together for worship and were continually devoted to BIBLICAL INSTRUCTION, FELLOWSHIP, the BREAKING OF BREAD, and PRAYER.
2. The *description* of fellowship involves a joint participation with other believers regarding such privileges as MATERIAL GIVING or MONETARY SHARING (Rom. 15:26-27; 2 Cor. 8:4, 9:13; Heb. 13:16), SUPPORTING OR SHARING IN THE FURTHERANCE OF THE GOSPEL (Phil. 1:5;), and even in SUFFERING FOR CHRIST (Phil. 3:10).

D. The CAUTIONS of FELLOWSHIP. The *distinctions* regarding fellowship are that you may be involved in ...

1. the _____ kind of fellowship (Phil. 1:5, 27, 4:14; Acts 19:8-11; Gal. 2:9) or ...
2. the _____ kind of fellowship. (Gal. 1:6-10, 2:11-21; 3:1-5; 4:15-20; 5:7-12)
 - 1 Cor. 10:14-22
 - 1 Cor. 11:17-22

- 1 Cor. 15:33-34
- 2 Cor. 6:11-7:3
- 2 Cor. 10:1-5, 11:3-4; 12:11-13; 13:10-14
- Ephesians 4:1-3, 12-13; 5:8-13
- 2 John 7-11
- 3 John 1:5-8
- Revelation 18:4-5
- Romans 16:17-18

In our DBC doctrinal statement, it reads: In seeking to strike a biblical balance regarding ministry and ecclesiastical separation, it is our understanding that believers need to...

- 1) mark and avoid false teachers who would seek to infiltrate or influence our local assembly (Rom.16:17-18; Acts 20:28-32; 1 Timothy 6:20-21).
- 2) refuse to approve of, minister with, or financially support churches or ministries that reject or distort the truths of the Word of God (2 John 7-11).
- 3) seek to minister to (by way of sound teaching and materials) the doctrinally confused or those in error who are open to grace teaching and where there is reason to believe that an individual or congregation may be helped by such a ministry to become more biblical in belief and practice, as long as we are not restricted in our message or asked to compromise our doctrinal position (Titus 3:10; 2 Timothy 2:22-26; Acts 19:8-10).
- 4) resist a prolonged personal ministry to individuals or groups if there is evidence that they intend to retain their compromised spiritual state or their relations with apostate organizations (2 Timothy 2:15-21).
- 5) seek to support, encourage and fellowship with other individuals, churches or ministries of like-precious faith around the Word of God, yet without entering into any official organizational unity (3 John 5-8).

Principle to remember: the _____ of your fellowship with others will depend upon your agreement on the Gospel, sound doctrine, your attitude, and spiritual maturity.