

Fellowship Defined

1 John 1:3-7

Introduction: Fellowship is an issue at the very heart of our existence as Christians. Yet, few Christians even know what it is or how it is established. Many seem to think fellowship is restricted to our hospitality where others think it is strictly a relationship with God and Christ. We will endeavor to define fellowship as it is revealed in scripture.

I. Koinonian (fellowship) defined

A. Fellowship means common. It denotes an association, a partnership, some sharing in common. It involves a close relationship. In this relationship there is a sense of equality between the participants; unity between the members.

B. Koinonian in the New Testament is presented primarily as a relationship between believers and God. We get the English word communion from it which most often refers to the sharing in common that takes place at the Lord's Supper between Christians and Christ.

II. A defining passage (1 John 1:3, 6-7)

A. John declares Christ to his readers that they may have fellowship with them (1 John 1:3). Their fellowship with Christ is dependent upon their walk in the truth. As long as they live righteously they can have fellowship with them (1 John 1:7).

B. Common agreement in Christ is essential to fellowship; "*that you also may have fellowship with us*" (2 John 9). Fellowship requires common faith.

C. The same kind of relationships between us, God and other Christians exist not only in fellowship but in love (1 John 3:11, 23; 4:7-12; 2 John 5).

III. Fellowship between one another

A. Our fellowship with one another is dependent upon our walk with God (1 John 1:7).

1. Christians should not seek fellowship with evil (2 Cor. 6:14-18). We have no fellowship with evil because we have nothing in common with it. If we have fellowship with evil then we have no fellowship with God.

2. When a Christian decides to fellowship evil, their decision should sever our relationship in fellowship with them (1 Cor. 5:9-11).

B. Christians can associate with evil people but they cannot maintain fellowship with them (Eph. 5:11).

C. Unfortunately, many Christians go to great lengths to maintain fellowship with evil brethren. Please understand that fellowship with an evil brother (withdrawn, fallen away, false teacher, etc.) severs our fellowship with God because God has no fellowship with darkness. We cannot have fellowship with light and darkness at the same time! God does not fellowship those who fellowship darkness (2 John 9-11).

D. That is the very thing John has in consideration; whether or not the recipients of his letter will accept the truth he declares and thereby have fellowship with him (1 John 1:3-7). Fellowship with one another is not possible other than in a common belief in Christ.

IV. Fellowship with Christ

A. We entered our fellowship with Christ voluntarily (1 Cor. 1:4-9).

1. That call was the Lord's invitation to accept His grace (Mark 2:17; Lk. 5:32; Gal. 5:8).

2. That call into the fellowship of Christ can be severed if we allow it (Gal. 1:6).

B. When we have fellowship with Christ by walking in the light, than all our sins can be forgiven (1 John 1:7, 9). But if we are walking in darkness our sins won't be forgiven (2 John 9).

Conclusion: We do not enjoy any fellowship with Christ while walking in sin. If we claim Christ will accept my sin because I'm a Christian, the truth is not in us (1 John 1:6). "*In Him is no darkness **at all***" (1 John 1:5). However, if we walk in the light we have fellowship with one another and the blood of Christ cleanses us from all sin (1 John 1:7). Christ doesn't just forgive sins but he removes the stain of sin forever (1 John 1:9). Are you in fellowship with Christ?